HU

LANGUAGE COURSE

Hungarian Grammar 4

10 Chapters

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HUNGARIAN GRAMMAR 4

Contents

Chapter 1	The Verb Prefix Map	2
Chapter 2	Prefixes and Aspect	11
Chapter 3	Prefix Meanings	19
Chapter 4	Prefix Position	28
Chapter 5	Participles	36
Chapter 6	Verbal Forms	44
Chapter 7	Word Order Basics	52
Chapter 8	Focus	59
Chapter 9	Clauses and Comparison	66
Chapter 10	Putting It Together	75

🧭 Verb Prefixes — Az igekötők

Hungarian Grammar 1 gave you harmony and the two conjugations, Hungarian Grammar 2 the cases, and Hungarian Grammar 3 the tenses and moods. This course closes the grammar track with three things that decide whether a sentence sounds Hungarian: verb prefixes, participles and word order. Prefixes come first, because they change what a verb means and they are the part of word order that learners trip on most. This chapter is the map; Chapters 2 to 4 fill it in.

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A **verb prefix** (*igekötő*) is a small word that attaches to the front of a verb and changes its meaning: *megy* (goes) → *bemegy* (goes in), *kimegy* (goes out), *elmegy* (goes away). In a plain statement the prefix is written **together with the verb** and takes the stress. In several other sentence types it **splits off and stands after the verb**: *Kimegyek* (I go out) but *Nem megyek ki* (I am not going out). The prefix is never a separate noun-like word; it always belongs to its verb.

1. What a prefix does

English does this with small words after the verb: *go in, go out, go away, give back, write down*. Hungarian puts the same kind of word *in front* of the verb and writes it as part of it. Take one verb and watch the meaning move.

VERB	WITH A PREFIX	MEANING
megy (goes)	**be**megy	goes in
megy	**ki**megy	goes out
megy	**fel**megy	goes up
megy	**le**megy	goes down

VERB	WITH A PREFIX	MEANING
megy	átmegy	goes across, crosses
megy	elmegy	goes away, leaves

A prefix does one of two jobs, and many verbs do both. It can add a **direction** (*in, out, up, down*), or it can add a **shade of meaning** that is not a direction at all, most often that the action is **finished** (*olvas* reads → *elolvas* reads through). Chapter 2 is about that second job.

2. The ten main prefixes

Ten prefixes do most of the work. Learn them as five pairs of opposites and as a set of directions.

PREFIX	BASIC IDEA	OPPOSITE	EXAMPLES
be-	in, into	**ki-**	**bemegy** goes in · **bead** hands in · **bekapcsol** switches on
ki-	out	**be-**	**kimegy** goes out · **kiad** gives out, rents out · **kikapcsol** switches off
fel-	up	**le-**	**felmegy** goes up · **felkel** gets up · **feltölt** uploads, fills up
le-	down	**fel-**	**lemegy** goes down · **leül** sits down · **letölt** downloads
el-	away, off; also "through to the end"	**vissza-** (for "away")	**elmegy** goes away · **elad** sells · **elolvas** reads through
vissza-	back	**el-**	**visszajön** comes back · **visszaad** gives back · **visszahív** calls back
át-	across, over, through	(none)	**átmegy** crosses · **átad** hands over · **átír** rewrites
rá-	onto, on top	(none)	**rátesz** puts on · **ráír** writes on it · **ráül** sits on

PREFIX	BASIC IDEA	OPPOSITE	EXAMPLES
össze-	together	(**szét-**, apart)	**összead** adds up · **összegyűjt** collects · **összejön** gets together
meg-	no direction; mostly "done, completed"	(none)	**megír** writes (finishes) · **megvesz** buys · **megáll** stops

> **Watch out: *meg-* is the odd one out**
>
> The other nine all point somewhere. **meg-** does not: it mainly says "the action is completed". It is also the commonest prefix of all, which is why Chapter 2 gives it its own section. There are more prefixes beyond these ten (**haza-** home, **szét-** apart, **hozzá-** to, **tovább-** onward); Chapter 3 lists them.

3. One verb, many directions

The verb *jön* (comes) shows the system compactly: the same stem with each prefix gives a complete set of movements. Examples in the past, which keeps the prefix attached.

FORM	EXAMPLE	ENGLISH
bejön	**Bejött a szobába.**	He/she came into the room.
kijön	**Kijött a házból.**	He/she came out of the house.
feljön	**Feljött a hegyre.**	He/she came up the hill.
lejön	**Lejött a lépcsőn.**	He/she came down the stairs.
átjön	**Átjött a hídon.**	He/she came across the bridge.
eljön	**Eljött a buliba.**	He/she came along to the party.
visszajön	**Visszajött Edinburgh-ba.**	He/she came back to Edinburgh.
összejön	**Összejöttek vasárnap.**	They got together on Sunday.

4. Direction and meaning together

Some prefix verbs keep their direction and some drift away from it. Compare *vesz* (takes):

VERB	LITERAL SENSE	WHAT IT COMMONLY MEANS
levesz	takes down	takes down, takes off (a coat): **Leveszem a kabátot.**
felvesz	takes up	puts on (clothes), picks up, hires, records
kivesz	takes out	takes out, and also *rents* (a flat): **Kivettem egy lakást.**
elvesz	takes away	takes away, takes from someone
visszavesz	takes back	takes back
megvesz	(no direction)	buys: **Megvettem a jegyet.**

The first, second and fourth rows keep a clear direction; *felvesz* and *kivesz* show the drift. Chapter 3 treats these idiomatic meanings. For now the working habit is: **learn the prefix verb as its own dictionary entry**, not as a prefix plus a verb you "add up".

5. Prefixes and the cases you already know

A directional prefix usually agrees with the case ending of the place word. This is the Grammar 2 system (*Hungarian Grammar 2, chapters 5 and 6*) showing up a second time, and it lets you predict which prefix to use.

PREFIX	MATCHES	EXAMPLE
be-	into: *-ba / -be*	**Bemegyek az irodába.** · I go into the office.
ki-	out of: *-ból / -ből*	**Kimegyek az irodából.** · I go out of the office.
fel-	onto, up: *-ra / -re*	**Felmegyünk a Calton Hillre.** · We go up Calton Hill.
le-	off, down from: *-ról / -ről*	**Lemegyek a hegyről.** · I go down from the hill.
el-	away from: *-tól / -től*	**Elmegyek tőled.** · I am going away from you.

The same information twice, on purpose

The sentence *Bemegyek az irodába* says "in" twice: once in *be-*, once in *-ba*. That is not a mistake and not wasted; it is how Hungarian makes direction clear. You can often leave the case out when the place is obvious (*Bemegyek.* "I go in."), but you cannot drop the prefix and keep the direction: *Megyek az irodába* is possible but vaguer.

6. A look ahead: the prefix as a separate word

Chapter 4 has the full rules for when the prefix leaves the verb. For now, notice the two positions, because you will meet both from the first example.

SENTENCE TYPE	PREFIX	EXAMPLE
plain statement	attached, before the verb	**Kimegyek.** · I go out.
negation	after the verb, as a separate word	**Nem megyek ki.** · I am not going out.
positive command	after the verb	**Menj ki!** · Go out!
infinitive	attached to the infinitive	**kimenni** · to go out

The prefix is always the same word; only its place changes. If you remember one thing from this section, remember that **the dictionary form carries the prefix attached**, so a verb is looked up under *kimegy*, not under *megy*.

7. IT and everyday pairs worth learning now

Prefix pairs are easiest to learn as opposites. These are common in the support desk and at home.

ONE WAY	THE OTHER WAY	ENGLISH
bekapcsol	**kikapcsol**	switch on · switch off
letölt	**feltölt**	download · upload

ONE WAY	THE OTHER WAY	ENGLISH
bejelentkezik	kijelentkezik	log in · log out
felkel	lefekszik	get up · go to bed
bemegy	kimegy	go in · go out
elad	megvesz	sell · buy

In Use — Használatban

The prefixes at work in three short exchanges. The prefix stays attached to the verb in every statement; the two commands show the split to come in Chapter 4.

① On the support desk

A:

Letöltötted a frissítést?

Have you downloaded the update?

B:

Igen, letöltöttem. Most feltelepítem.

Yes, I have. I'm installing it now.

A:

Jó. Utána kikapcsolom a gépet.

Good. Then I'll switch the machine off.

② A walk in Edinburgh

A:

Felmegyünk a Calton Hillre?

Shall we go up Calton Hill?

B:

Felmegyünk, aztán lemegyünk a Princes Streetre.

Yes, and then we'll go down to Princes Street.

③ At the door

A:

Bejöhetek?

May I come in?

B:

Igen, gyere be!

Yes, come in!

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

IDEA	RULE	EXAMPLE
What a prefix is	a small word in front of a verb that changes its meaning	**megy → bemegy**
Spelling	attached to the verb in a plain statement	**Kimegyek.**
Direction pairs	be/ki · fel/le · el/vissza	**bemegy / kimegy**
Other directions	át- across · rá- onto · össze- together	**átmegy · rátesz · összead**
No direction	*meg-*: completion	**megír · megvesz**
Prefix and case	the prefix often agrees with the case ending	**be-** + **-ba**
Splitting	negation and commands put the prefix after the verb	**Nem megyek ki.** · **Menj ki!**
Dictionary	the prefix verb is its own entry	**kivesz** (rents)

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. Give the opposite of *bemegy*.

▼ Show answer

kimegy (goes out).

2. Give the opposite of *felmegy*.

▼ Show answer

lemegy (goes down).

3. Give the opposite of *letölt* (download).

▼ Show answer

feltölt (upload).

4. Say "I go in" in one word.

▼ Show answer

Bemegyek.

5. Say "He comes back" in one word.

▼ Show answer

Visszajön.

6. Which prefix goes with "into the office" (*az irodába*)?

▼ Show answer

be-, which matches *-ba*: **bemegyek az irodába**.

7. Which prefix mainly says "completed" rather than giving a direction?

▼ Show answer

meg-, as in **megír** and **megvesz**.

8. "I give the book back." Use *ad* and the right prefix.

▼ Show answer

Visszaadom a könyvet. The object is definite, so the verb takes the definite ending.

9. Does *elad* mean "gives away" or "sells"?

▼ Show answer

"Sells." *el-* plus *ad* has drifted from its literal sense, so learn it as its own verb.

10. Say "I write the number down" with *ír* and the prefix for "down".

▼ Show answer

Leírom a számot. The object is definite.

Coming up in Chapter 2: Prefixes and Aspect. Completed against ongoing action (*olvas, elolvas, megír*), the prefix with the past and the future, and the verbs whose prefix is "empty".

⏳ Finished or Going On — Befejezett és folyamatos

*Chapter 1 showed prefixes that point somewhere. This chapter is about the other job: telling the listener whether an action is **going on** or is **completed**. Hungarian Grammar 3 gave you one past tense and said that context and prefixes decide the shade of meaning; here are the prefixes doing that work.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A verb without a prefix describes an action as **a process or a habit**: *Olvastam a levelet* (I was reading the letter, or I read the letter). The same verb with a **completing prefix** describes it as **done, with a result**: *Elolvastam a levelet* (I read the letter through). The prefix is usually *meg-*, but each verb has its own favourite (*el-, ki-, fel-, le-*). In the present tense the completed form usually points to the **future**: *Holnap megírom* (I'll write it tomorrow, and finish it).

1. Worked pairs

Learn these as pairs: the plain verb, then the verb with its completing prefix.

ONGOING	COMPLETED	EXAMPLE (COMPLETED)
olvas reads	**el**olvas reads through	**Elolvastam a könyvet.** · I read the book through.
ír writes	**meg**ír writes (it) up	**Megírtam a levelet.** · I wrote the letter.
eszik eats	**meg**eszik eats up	**Megettem az almát.** · I ate the apple.
iszik drinks	**ki**iszik drinks up	**Kiittam a teát.** · I drank the tea.
néz looks	**meg**néz looks at, watches	**Megnéztem a filmet.** · I watched the film.
tanul studies	**meg**tanul learns	**Megtanultam a verset.** · I learned the poem.

ONGOING	COMPLETED	EXAMPLE (COMPLETED)
csinál does, makes	**meg**csinál gets it done	**Megcsináltam a feladatot.** · I did the task.
old dissolves, unties	**meg**old solves	**Megoldottam a hibát.** · I solved the fault.
épít builds	**fel**épít builds up, erects	**Felépítettük a házat.** · We built the house.
végez works at, finishes	**el**végez completes	**Elvégeztem a munkát.** · I completed the work.

> **Watch out: you cannot predict the prefix**
>
> *meg-* is the safest guess, but there is no formula: it is **elolvas** and not **megolvas**, **kiiszik** and not **megiszik** for "drink up", although **megiszik** exists too and is common in everyday speech. Learn each completed form with its verb, in the pairs above, and check a dictionary when unsure.

2. The prefix with the past

With the past tense (*Hungarian Grammar 3, chapters 2 and 3*), the prefix is the whole difference between "I was doing it" and "I got it done".

WITHOUT A PREFIX	WITH A PREFIX
Olvastam a levelet. I was reading the letter. / I read the letter (an activity).	**Elolvastam a levelet.** I read the letter through.
Ettem. I was eating. / I had a meal.	**Megettem.** I ate it up.
Tanultam. I studied. / I was studying.	**Megtanultam.** I learned it (I now know it).
Írtam egy levelet. I was writing a letter.	**Megírtam a levelet.** I wrote the letter (it is finished).

Hungarian Basic Conversation 4, Chapter 5 gave the first look at *tanultam* against *megtanultam*. The pattern is general: if the sentence reports a **result**, use the completed form;

if it reports what you were busy with, use the plain one.

The completed form also fits a **chain of events**. In a story each step is a finished action, so each verb gets its prefix: **Megettem a vacsorát, aztán elmosogattam, és lefeküdtem.** (I ate dinner, then washed up, and went to bed.)

3. The prefix with the present and the future

Here Hungarian differs most from English. A completed verb in the present tense is not "I am finishing it". It looks forward and means **"I will do it and finish it"**.

FORM	EXAMPLE	MEANING
plain present	**Most írom a levelet.**	I'm writing the letter now.
prefixed present	**Holnap megírom a levelet.**	I'll write the letter tomorrow (and finish it).
prefix + *fog*	**Meg fogom írni a levelet.**	I will write the letter (and finish it).
plain future	**Írni fogom a levelet.**	I will be writing the letter.

Hungarian Grammar 3, chapter 5 gave you the future with *fog* and said the present can carry a time word. For a verb with a completing prefix, the present alone is the ordinary way to talk about a single future event. Note where the prefix sits in the compound future: it comes **before *fog*** and the infinitive follows (**meg fogom írni**). Chapter 4 explains why.

> **Watch out: the English "I am doing it" trap**
>
> **Megírom a levelet** does *not* mean "I am writing the letter" (that is **írom**). Said without a time word it sounds like "I'll write it (right away)". If you want to say what is happening at this moment, use the plain verb.

4. Time words that go with each aspect

Two small signals help you choose. A **duration** goes with the plain verb; a **time taken to finish** goes with the completed one.

MEANING	PHRASE	EXAMPLE
for a length of time (ongoing)	**-ig** · **...-on át**	**Két órán át olvastam.** · I read for two hours.
in a length of time (completed)	**alatt**	**Két óra alatt elolvastam a könyvet.** · I read the book through in two hours.
still (ongoing)	**még**	**Még olvasom.** · I'm still reading it.
already (completed)	**már**	**Már elolvastam.** · I've already read it.

5. Verbs that do not take a completing prefix

State verbs and verbs of being have no "finished" version, because nothing is finished. You will not meet a completing prefix on these.

VERB	MEANING
van	is, exists
tud	knows how to, can
lakik	lives (in a place)
dolgozik	works (as a regular activity)

A few prefixed verbs of this kind exist, but they mean something new (for example **megismer**, "recognises, gets to know", from **ismer**, "knows (a person)"). Chapter 3 returns to that shift of meaning.

6. A sign to watch for: negation

When you deny a completed action, the prefix moves behind the verb (Chapter 4 has the full rule): **Nem olvastam el a levelet.** (I haven't read the letter through.) A denied plain verb has no prefix to move: **Nem olvastam a levelet.** (I wasn't reading the letter.) The two sentences are not the same, and the position of the prefix tells you which one you are hearing.

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

Completed and ongoing verbs in the same exchange.

① A letter

A:

Elolvastad a levelet?

Have you read the letter through?

B:

Igen, elolvastam. Holnap megírom a választ.

Yes, I have. I'll write the reply tomorrow.

② On the support desk

A:

Megoldottad a hibát?

Have you solved the fault?

B:

Még keresem az okát, de tíz perc alatt megoldom.

I'm still looking for the cause, but I'll solve it in ten minutes.

③ After dinner

A:

Mit csináltál este?

What did you do this evening?

B:

Főztem. Megfőztem a levest, aztán elmosogattam.

I cooked. I made the soup, then washed up.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

IDEA	RULE	EXAMPLE
Ongoing	the verb with no prefix	**olvastam**
Completed	the completing prefix (usually *meg-*)	**megírtam** · **elolvastam**

IDEA	RULE	EXAMPLE
Chain of events	prefix on each finished step	**megettem, elmosogattam**
Completed present	points to the future	**Holnap megírom.**
Completed future	prefix + *fog* + infinitive	**meg fogom írni**
For a time	*-ig* / *…-on át* with the plain verb	**két órán át olvastam**
In a time	*alatt* with the completed verb	**két óra alatt elolvastam**
Still · already	*még* + plain · *már* + completed	**még olvasom · már elolvastam**
No completed form	state verbs	**van · tud · lakik**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. Which means "I read the letter through": *olvastam a levelet* or *elolvastam a levelet*?

▼ Show answer

Elolvastam a levelet. The prefix reports the result.

2. Give the completed form of *ír* (writes).

▼ Show answer

megír.

3. "I ate the apple." Use the completed form of *eszik*.

▼ Show answer

Megettem az almát.

4. "I'll read it through tomorrow." Use the present tense.

▼ Show answer

Holnap elolvasom. The completed present points to the future.

5. Say the same with *fog*.

▼ Show answer

Holnap el fogom olvasni. The prefix comes before *fog*.

6. "I read for two hours."

▼ Show answer

Két órán át olvastam. (**Két órát olvastam** is also heard.) A duration goes with the plain verb.

7. "I read the book through in two hours."

▼ Show answer

Két óra alatt elolvastam a könyvet. *alatt* goes with the completed verb.

8. "I've already read it." Use *már*.

▼ Show answer

Már elolvastam.

9. Which of these has no completing prefix: *eszik, van, ír*?

▼ Show answer

van. A verb of being cannot be "finished".

10. "I have learned the poem" (*a vers*, accusative *a verset*).

▼ Show answer

Megtanultam a verset.

Coming up in Chapter 3: Prefix Meanings and Changing Meanings. How one verb changes with each prefix (*áll → megáll, feláll, kiáll*), idiomatic prefix verbs, double prefixes and

a learner's list of the commonest forty.

🔀 Same Verb, New Meaning — Ugyanaz az ige, más jelentés

Chapter 1 gave you the map of directions and Chapter 2 gave you completed action. This chapter is about what happens when a prefix takes a verb somewhere you could not have guessed. It ends with a learner's list of forty prefix verbs that are worth knowing by heart.

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A prefix verb has **three possible levels of meaning**: **literal** (the verb plus a direction: *kimegy*, goes out), **completing** (the same action finished: *megír*), and **idiomatic** (a new meaning of its own: *átmegy a vizsgán*, passes the exam). Guess the literal meaning first, then check the dictionary. Learn every idiomatic verb as a separate word, with an example sentence.

1. One verb, many prefixes

Three verbs that show the range. Each row keeps the verb and swaps the prefix.

áll — stands

FORM	MEANING	EXAMPLE
megáll	stops	**A busz megáll.** · The bus stops.
feláll	stands up	**Felállok a székről.** · I stand up from the chair.
leáll	stops, shuts down (a machine)	**A szerver leállt.** · The server has stopped.
beáll	steps in, joins	**Beállok a sorba.** · I join the queue.
kiáll	stands out, steps forward	**Kiáll a kapuból.** · He steps out of the goal.

FORM	MEANING	EXAMPLE
átáll	switches over	**Átállunk az új rendszerre.** · We switch to the new system.

néz — looks

FORM	MEANING	EXAMPLE
megnéz	looks at, watches, goes to see	**Megnézem a filmet.** · I'll watch the film.
benéz	looks in, drops in	**Benézek hozzád.** · I'll look in on you.
felnéz	looks up; looks up to someone	**Felnézek az égre.** · I look up at the sky.
lenéz	looks down; looks down on someone	**Lenéz a hegyről.** · He looks down from the hill.
átnéz	looks over, checks through	**Átnézem a naplót.** · I'll look through the log.
elnéz	overlooks; forgives a slip	**Elnézést!** · Excuse me! (literally "overlooking")

ad — gives

FORM	MEANING	EXAMPLE
megad	gives; pays; states (an address)	**Megadom a címet.** · I'll give the address.
kiad	issues, publishes; lets, rents out	**Kiadják a könyvet.** · They publish the book.
bead	hands in, submits	**Beadom a kérelmet.** · I submit the application.
elad	sells	**Eladom a kocsit.** · I'm selling the car.
átad	hands over	**Átadom a kulcsot.** · I hand over the key.
visszaad	gives back	**Visszaadom a könyvet.** · I give the book back.
felad	gives up; posts (a letter); sets (a task)	**Feladom a levelet.** · I post the letter.

FORM	MEANING	EXAMPLE
lead	hands in, delivers; also loses (weight)	**Leadom a munkát.** · I hand in the work.
összead	adds up	**Összeadom a számokat.** · I add up the numbers.

> **Watch out: the parts do not add up**
>
> **elad** is "sells", while "buys" is **megvesz**, a different verb altogether. *el-* plus *ad* gives "sells", not "gives away". Learn the meaning with the verb instead of working it out from the parts.

2. Idioms you cannot guess

The verb *megy* (goes) shows how far a prefix can travel. The literal ones are in Chapter 1; here are the ones that have wandered.

FORM	LITERAL	IDIOM
átmegy	goes across	passes (an exam): **Átment a vizsgán.** · He/she passed the exam.
elmegy	goes away	goes (to an event, and is there): **Elmegyek a koncertre.** · I'm going to the concert.
összemegy	goes together	shrinks (cloth): **Összement a pulóver.** · The jumper shrank.
kimegy	goes out	also "goes out of fashion": **Kiment a divatból.** · It went out of fashion.

More verbs whose meaning has to be learned as a unit:

FORM	PARTS	MEANING
megért	meg + ért	understands
elhisz	el + hisz	believes (what someone says)

FORM	PARTS	MEANING
kitalál	ki + talál	invents; guesses
felhív	fel + hív	rings up, phones
elfelejt	el + felejt	forgets
elkap	el + kap	catches

3. Other and longer prefixes

Beyond the ten of Chapter 1 there are more prefixes, including a set of longer ones that come from words ending in *-á / -é* (the "to" form of a postposition, *Hungarian Grammar 2, chapter 9*).

PREFIX	IDEA	EXAMPLES
haza-	home	**hazamegy** goes home
szét-	apart	**szétszed** takes apart
tovább-	onward	**továbbmegy** goes on
újra-	again	**újraindít** restarts · **újrakezd** starts again
elő-	forth, in front	**előad** performs, presents a talk
hozzá-	to, towards	**hozzáad** adds to · **hozzászól** comments
alá-	under	**aláír** signs
utána-	after, behind	**utánanéz** looks up, checks

Watch out: "double prefixes"

A verb normally takes one prefix at a time. The longer prefixes above are single prefixes that look like two syllables, not two stacked prefixes, and they behave like *meg-* and *ki-*: attached in a plain

statement, split off in negation. The past of *újraindít* keeps the prefix attached too: **Újraindítottam a szervert.** (I restarted the server.)

4. A learner's list of forty

Forty prefix verbs that come up again and again. Learn them in their groups; each is its own dictionary entry.

PREFIX	VERBS
meg-	**megért** understands · **megtalál** finds · **megkap** receives · **megkér** asks (someone to do something) · **megvár** waits for · **megmutat** shows · **megkérdez** asks (a question) · **megérkezik** arrives
el-	**elfelejt** forgets · **elmond** tells · **elvisz** takes away · **elintéz** arranges, sorts out · **elkezd** begins · **elkap** catches · **elhisz** believes · **elindul** sets off
fel-	**felhív** rings up · **felkel** gets up · **felvesz** puts on, picks up · **felad** gives up, posts · **felszáll** boards, gets on
le-	**leszáll** gets off · **leül** sits down · **lefekszik** goes to bed · **leír** writes down · **letölt** downloads
ki-	**kinyit** opens · **kitalál** invents, guesses · **kiválaszt** chooses · **kiad** publishes, rents out
be-	**becsuk** shuts · **bevisz** takes in · **beír** enters, writes in · **bejelentkezik** logs in
át-	**átvesz** takes over, receives · **átszáll** changes (trains) · **átnéz** looks over, checks
vissza-, össze-, hozzá-	**visszahív** calls back · **összehasonlít** compares · **hozzászól** comments

How to learn them

Do not learn the prefix and the verb separately. Write each verb on a card with its prefix attached and an example sentence, *one that uses it with a definite object* (**Megtaláltam a kulcsot.**), because the completed meaning needs it. Ten a week, in the groups above, covers the list in a month.

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

Three exchanges with prefix verbs from the list. The two splits in ① and ② (nem vette fel, szállok le) are previews of Chapter 4.

① A phone call

A:

Felhívtad Pétert?

Did you ring Peter?

B:

Igen, felhívtam, de nem vette fel.

Yes, I did, but he didn't pick up.

② On the bus

A:

Hol szállok le?

Where do I get off?

B:

A következő megállónál leszállsz.

You'll get off at the next stop.

③ A server fault

A:

Kitaláltad, mi a hiba?

Have you worked out what the fault is?

B:

Igen. Újraindítom a szervert, aztán átnézem a naplót.

Yes. I'll restart the server, then look through the log.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

IDEA	RULE	EXAMPLE
Three levels	literal · completing · idiomatic	**kimegy · megír · átmegy a vizsgán**

IDEA	RULE	EXAMPLE
One verb, many prefixes	each combination is its own meaning	**megáll** · **feláll** · **leáll**
Idiom	learn as a unit, with an example	**elad** (sells)
Longer prefixes	one prefix of two syllables	**hozzáad** · **aláír** · **utánanéz**
Again	*újra-*	**újraindít**
Study habit	cards with prefix attached and a sentence	**Megtaláltam a kulcsot.**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. What does *megáll* mean?

▼ Show answer

"Stops", as in **A busz megáll.**

2. What does *feláll* mean?

▼ Show answer

"Stands up."

3. "He passed the exam." Use *átmegy* and *a vizsgán*.

▼ Show answer

Átment a vizsgán.

4. What does *aláír* mean?

▼ Show answer

"Signs", from *alá-* (under) and *ír* (writes).

5. Give the meaning of *felszáll* and *leszáll*.

▼ Show answer

felszáll: gets on, boards. **leszáll**: gets off.

6. "I'll ring you" (I … you, present tense).

▼ Show answer

Felhívlak. The *-lak* ending for "I … you" works with a prefix verb too.

7. Give the opposite of *kinyit* (opens).

▼ Show answer

becsuk (shuts). **bezár** (closes, locks) is also common.

8. "I restart the server."

▼ Show answer

Újraindítom a szervert.

9. "I add up the two numbers."

▼ Show answer

Összeadom a két számot.

10. What do *elfelejt* and *elhisz* mean? Could you have guessed them from *el-*?

▼ Show answer

elfelejt: forgets. **elhisz**: believes (what someone says). The prefix *el-* no longer means "away" here, so they have to be learned as whole words.

Coming up in Chapter 4: Prefix Position. When the prefix stays in front of the verb and

when it moves behind it: negation, focus, questions, commands and the infinitive.

📍 Where the Prefix Goes — Hol áll az igekötő?

Chapters 1 to 3 gave you the prefixes, completed action and prefix meanings. You have already seen the prefix sit in front of the verb and, in a few examples, behind it. This chapter says exactly when each happens. It is the hardest part of the prefix system, but it follows one idea: ***the prefix and the stressed word compete for the same place directly before the verb****.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

In a **neutral** sentence, nothing is stressed except the verb itself, so the prefix takes the place before the verb and is written attached: *Kimegyek.* If something else needs that place (a **negative**, a **focused word**, a **question word**, a **positive command**), the prefix is pushed **behind the verb** and written as a separate word: *Nem megyek ki. ÉN megyek ki. Ki megy ki? Menj ki!* With an infinitive and a helper verb the prefix attaches to the *infinitive* when something blocks the place, and otherwise stands **before the helper**: *Ki akarok menni.* but *Nem akarok kimenni.*

1. The neutral sentence

With no negative, no stressed word and no question word, the prefix stays in front of the verb and carries the stress of the sentence. A time word, a place or a subject that is only a topic (what you are talking about) does not push it away.

SENTENCE	MEANING
Kimegyek.	I go out.
Tegnap kimentem a kertbe.	Yesterday I went out into the garden.
Péter elment.	Peter has left.
Megírom a levelet.	I'll write the letter.

SENTENCE	MEANING
Elmész?	Are you going? (a yes-or-no question)

A yes-or-no question has no question word, so the prefix stays where it is: **Elmész?**, **Bejelentkezel?**.

2. Negation

Nem takes the place before the verb, so the prefix moves behind it.

NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE
Kimegyek.	**Nem megyek ki.**
Elolvastam a levelet.	**Nem olvastam el a levelet.**
Megértem.	**Nem értem meg.**
Felhívtalak.	**Nem hívtalak fel.**

The order is always *nem + verb + prefix*. Chapter 2 noted that this is what separates "I haven't read it through" (**Nem olvastam el**) from "I wasn't reading it" (**Nem olvastam**).

3. Focus and question words

Hungarian puts the most important new piece of information directly before the verb (Chapter 8 treats this fully). When a word is in that place, the prefix goes behind the verb.

TYPE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
focus on the subject	**ÉN mentem ki.**	It was I who went out.
focus on a time word	**TEGNAP mentem el.**	It was yesterday that I left.
focus with *nem … hanem*	**Nem Péter ment el, hanem Anna.**	It wasn't Peter who left, but Anna.

TYPE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
question word	**Mikor mész el?**	When are you leaving?
question word	**Ki ment el?**	Who left?
question word	**Hová mész be?**	Where are you going in to?

> **Watch out: same words, different stress**
>
> **Tegnap kimentem.** (neutral: Yesterday I went out) and **TEGNAP mentem ki.** (focus: it was yesterday) use the same words, in a different order and with different stress. In speech the stressed word and the prefix cannot both be in front of the verb. In writing, the order is the only signal, so learn to read it.

4. Commands

A positive command (*Hungarian Grammar 3, chapter 7*) puts the prefix behind the verb. A prohibition with *ne* does the same, because *ne* takes the place before the verb, like *nem*.

POSITIVE COMMAND	PROHIBITION
Menj ki! · Go out!	**Ne menj ki!** · Don't go out!
Gyere be! · Come in!	**Ne gyere be!** · Don't come in!
Kapcsold ki a gépet! · Switch the machine off!	**Ne kapcsold ki a gépet!** · Don't switch the machine off!
Add vissza a könyvet! · Give the book back!	**Ne add vissza a könyvet!** · Don't give the book back!

5. The infinitive and helper verbs

The infinitive (**kimenni**, to go out) keeps its prefix attached. With a helper verb such as *akar, tud, kell, fog, szeretne* (*Hungarian Grammar 3, chapter 5*), the prefix has two possible places:

SITUATION	WHERE THE PREFIX GOES	EXAMPLE
neutral	before the helper verb	**Ki akarok menni.** · I want to go out.
negative	attached to the infinitive	**Nem akarok kimenni.** · I don't want to go out.
focus	attached to the infinitive	**ÉN akarok kimenni.** · I'm the one who wants to go out.
question word	attached to the infinitive	**Ki akar kimenni?** · Who wants to go out?

So with a helper the prefix is attached to the infinitive in the cases where the simple verb would put it behind: the helper verb sits in the place before the verb and the prefix cannot be before it. The same pattern holds for the other helpers:

HELPER	NEUTRAL	NEGATIVE
akar (wants)	**Ki akarom kapcsolni.** · I want to switch it off.	**Nem akarom kikapcsolni.**
tud (can)	**Meg tudom oldani.** · I can solve it.	**Nem tudom megoldani.**
fog (will)	**El fogok menni.** · I will go away.	**Nem fogok elmenni.**
kell (must)	**Ki kell menni.** · One must go out.	**Nem kell kimenni.** · One doesn't have to go out.

> ***meg kell csinálni* and its person forms**
>
> With *kell* the infinitive takes a personal ending when the "must" is about a particular person: **Meg kell csinálnom a feladatot.** (I must do the task.), **Meg kell csinálnod.** (You must do it.). The prefix stays in front of *kell*. A restart is the same: **Újra kell indítanom a programot.** Chapter 5 of Hungarian Grammar 3 covers *kell* and the helpers.

6. A one-glance procedure

To place a prefix, ask four questions in order:

QUESTION	IF YES	IF NO
1. Is there *nem* or *ne*?	prefix after the verb (or on the infinitive)	go on
2. Is a word stressed, or is there a question word, in front of the verb?	prefix after the verb (or on the infinitive)	go on
3. Is it a positive command?	prefix after the verb	go on
4. None of these (neutral sentence)	prefix attached in front of the verb, or in front of the helper	—

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

The four positions in three short exchanges.

① A trip

A:

Mikor mész el Budapestre?

When are you going to Budapest?

B:

Holnap megyek el, de előbb be kell fejeznem a munkát.

Tomorrow, but first I have to finish the work.

② On the support desk

A:

Ne kapcsold ki a gépet!

Don't switch the machine off!

B:

Nem kapcsolom ki. Csak újra kell indítanom a programot.

I won't. I only have to restart the program.

③ A rainy day

A:

Ki akarsz menni a kertbe?

Do you want to go out into the garden?

B:

Nem akarok kimenni, esik az eső.

I don't want to go out, it's raining.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

SITUATION	PREFIX	EXAMPLE
neutral	attached, in front	**Kimegyek.**
yes-or-no question	attached, in front	**Elmész?**
nem / ne	behind the verb	**Nem megyek ki. · Ne menj ki!**
focus, question word	behind the verb	**ÉN mentem ki. · Mikor mész el?**
positive command	behind the verb	**Menj ki!**
infinitive	attached to it	**kimenni**
helper + infinitive, neutral	in front of the helper	**Ki akarok menni. · Ki kell menni.**
helper + infinitive, blocked	on the infinitive	**Nem akarok kimenni.**

📝 Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. Make *Kimegyek* negative.

▼ Show answer

Nem megyek ki.

2. "Go out!" (to one person).

▼ Show answer

Menj ki!

3. "Don't go out!"

▼ Show answer

Ne menj ki!

4. "I want to go out."

▼ Show answer

Ki akarok menni. The prefix stands before the helper.

5. "I don't want to go out."

▼ Show answer

Nem akarok kimenni. The prefix is on the infinitive.

6. "I must hand in the work." Use *lead* and *kell*.

▼ Show answer

Le kell adnom a munkát.

7. "It was Péter who left." Put *Péter* in focus.

▼ Show answer

Péter ment el. (*Péter* stressed.)

8. "When are you leaving?" (*elmegy*, *mikor*)

▼ Show answer

Mikor mész el? The question word takes the place before the verb.

9. "I will go away" and "I will not go away."

▼ Show answer

El fogok menni. and **Nem fogok elmenni.**

10. Correct this: **Nem elmegyek.*

▼ Show answer

Nem megyek el. After *nem* the prefix goes behind the verb.

Coming up in Chapter 5: Participles. The present *-ó / -ő* (*író, olvasó*), the past *-t / -tt / -ott / -ett* (*megírt*) and the future *-andó / -endő*, used as adjectives, with their objects placed before them.

🧩 Verbs That Describe — A melléknévi igenév

*So far every verb in this course has been a finite verb, with a person and a tense. A **participle** turns a verb into an adjective: the reading girl, the written letter, the problem to be solved. Hungarian uses participles where English more often uses a relative clause ("the girl who is reading"), and it builds longer phrases before the noun than English allows.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

There are three participles, each made from the verb stem. The **present** ends in **-ó / -ő** (*olvasó*, reading). The **past** ends in **-t / -tt / -ott / -ett / -ött**, the same shape as the 3rd person singular past (*megírt*, written). The **future** ends in **-andó / -endő** (*megoldandó*, to be solved). A participle sits **before its noun**, and anything that belongs to the participle (an object, a place, a time) sits **before the participle**: *a levelet író lány*, "the letter-writing girl", the girl who is writing the letter.

1. The present participle: -ó / -ő

Add **-ó** to a back-vowel stem and **-ő** to a front-vowel stem (vowel harmony, *Hungarian Grammar 1, chapter 2*). It means "doing the action" and is active.

VERB	PARTICIPLE	EXAMPLE
olvas reads	**olvasó**	**az olvasó gyerek** · the reading child
tanul studies	**tanuló**	**a tanuló diák** · the studying pupil
dolgozik works	**dolgozó**	**a dolgozó nő** · the working woman
néz looks	**néző**	**a tévét néző férfi** · the man watching TV
épít builds	**építő**	**az építő munkás** · the building worker
hever lies	**heverő**	**az asztalon heverő könyv** · the book lying on the table

A few verbs use an irregular stem for the participle:

VERB	PARTICIPLE	MEANING
eszik	**evő**	eating
iszik	**ivó**	drinking
alszik	**alvó**	sleeping: **az alvó macska** · the sleeping cat
jön	**jövő**	coming, next (**a jövő hét** · next week; **a jövő** · the future)
van	**lévő**	being, situated: **a szobában lévő emberek** · the people in the room

2. The past participle: -t / -tt / -ott / -ett

The past participle has the shape of the 3rd person singular of the indefinite past (*Hungarian Grammar 3, chapter 2*): **megírt**, **elolvasott**, **nyitott**. With a transitive verb it is **passive**: it describes what was done *to* something. With an intransitive verb it is **active**: it describes who did the action.

VERB	PARTICIPLE	EXAMPLE
megír writes (up)	**megírt**	**a megírt levél** · the letter that has been written
elolvas reads through	**elolvasott**	**az elolvasott könyv** · the book that has been read
megrendel orders	**megrendelt**	**a megrendelt áru** · the goods ordered
főz cooks	**főzött**	**a főzött leves** · the cooked soup
nyit opens	**nyitott**	**a nyitott ajtó** · the open door
megérkezik arrives (intransitive)	**megérkezett**	**a megérkezett vendégek** · the guests who have arrived
elveszik gets lost (intransitive)	**elveszett**	**az elveszett kulcs** · the lost key

To say who did the action, use *által* (by): **a Péter által megírt levél** (the letter written by Péter). The participle keeps its prefix **attached**, whatever the sentence: **megírt**, never **írt meg*.

3. The future participle: -andó / -endő

The future participle means "which is to be done, which must be done". It is passive and often used on forms, notices and in work lists.

VERB	PARTICIPLE	EXAMPLE
megold solves	**megoldandó**	**a megoldandó probléma** · the problem to be solved
megír writes	**megírandó**	**a megírandó levél** · the letter still to be written
elolvas reads	**elolvasandó**	**az elolvasandó fejezet** · the chapter to be read
kitölt fills in	**kitöltendő**	**a kitöltendő űrlap** · the form to be filled in
tesz does, puts	**teendő**	**a teendők** · the things to be done (a to-do list)

> **Watch out: three participles, three senses**
>
> **a megírt levél** (written, finished), **az író lány** (writing, active) and **a megírandó levél** (to be written) look alike but point to different times. The prefix does the aspect work you met in Chapter 2: *megírt* is a finished letter; *írt levél* is simply "a letter that was written".

4. Participle phrases

The participle may bring its own objects and adverbials with it. They stand **before** the participle, and the whole phrase stands before the noun. This replaces the relative clause that English would use.

RELATIVE CLAUSE	PARTICIPLE PHRASE
A lány, aki a levelet írja the girl who is writing the letter	**A levelet író lány**
A technikus, aki a hibát javítja the technician who is fixing the fault	**A hibát javító technikus**
A macska, amely a kanapén alszik the cat that is sleeping on the sofa	**A kanapén alvó macska**
A levél, amelyet tegnap írtam meg the letter that I wrote yesterday	**A tegnap megírt levél**

The participle phrase is more compact and more at home in writing; the relative clause with *aki / ami* (Chapter 9) is the everyday choice in speech.

Negation. *Nem* stands in front of the participle: **a nem olvasott könyv** (the unread book), **a nem működő szerver** (the server that isn't working). With a prefix verb the prefix goes **before** *nem*: **a meg nem írt levél** (the letter that hasn't been written), **az el nem küldött üzenet** (the message that wasn't sent). This is the same split you met in Chapter 4, in the order *prefix + nem + participle*.

5. Participles as nouns

Many present participles have become ordinary nouns for the person or thing doing the action. They are common in everyday vocabulary, including the Hungarian course levels.

NOUN	MEANING	FROM
író	writer	**ír**
olvasó	reader	**olvas**
tanuló	student, learner	**tanul**
tanító	teacher (primary)	**tanít**

NOUN	MEANING	FROM
vevő	buyer, customer	**vesz**
eladó	seller; also "for sale"	**elad**
utazó	traveller	**utazik**
látogató	visitor	**látogat**
kezdő · haladó	beginner · advanced learner	**kezd · halad**

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

Participle phrases in everyday and workplace speech.

① In the office

A:

Hol van a tegnap megírt jelentés?

Where is the report written yesterday?

B:

Az asztalon lévő mappában van.

It's in the folder on the desk.

② On the support desk

A:

Mi a gond?

What's the matter?

B:

A hibát javító technikus még nem érkezett meg.

The technician who is fixing the fault hasn't arrived yet.

③ At home

A:

Ki az a kislány?

Who is that little girl?

B:

A kanapén alvó kislány a húgom.

The little girl asleep on the sofa is my sister.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

PARTICIPLE	FORM	EXAMPLE
Present	stem + *-ó / -ő*; active	**olvasó · néző · alvó**
Past	3rd sg past shape: *-t / -tt / -ott / -ett*; passive for transitive, active for intransitive	**megírt · megérkezett**
Future	stem + *-andó / -endő*; passive	**megoldandó · kitöltendő**
Position	before the noun; its objects and adverbials before it	**a levelet író lány**
Agent	*által*	**a Péter által megírt levél**
Negation	*nem* before the participle; prefix before *nem*	**a nem olvasott könyv · a meg nem írt levél**
As nouns	many present participles	**író · tanuló · eladó**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. Make the present participle of *olvas* and use it with *gyerek*.

▼ Show answer

olvasó → az olvasó gyerek (the reading child).

2. "The girl who is writing the letter", as a participle phrase.

▼ Show answer

A levelet író lány. The object stands before the participle.

3. Give the present participle of *alszik* (sleeps).

▼ Show answer

alvó, with the irregular stem *alv-*.

4. Give the past participle of *megír*, and say "the written letter".

▼ Show answer

megírt → **a megírt levél**.

5. Give the past participle of *elolvas*.

▼ Show answer

elolvasott (**az elolvasott könyv**, the book that has been read).

6. "The problem to be solved."

▼ Show answer

A megoldandó probléma.

7. What does *a kitöltendő űrlap* mean?

▼ Show answer

"The form to be filled in", with a future participle.

8. "The letter written by Péter."

▼ Show answer

A Péter által megírt levél.

9. "The unread book."

▼ Show answer

A nem olvasott könyv.

10. "The letter that has not been written", with *megír* and *nem*.

▼ Show answer

A meg nem írt levél. The prefix goes before *nem*.

Coming up in Chapter 6: Adverbial Participles and Verbal Nouns. The forms in *-va / -ve* (*nevetve, zárva*) and *-ván / -vén*, the verbal nouns in *-ás / -és*, and the adjectives in *-ható / -hető*.

🔧 More Things a Verb Can Become — Határozói igenév és névszói igenév

*Chapter 5 turned verbs into adjectives. This chapter turns them into **adverbs** (laughing, standing, having read), into **nouns** (reading, a download, something to eat) and into adjectives that say what can be done (readable, downloadable). These are the forms behind many everyday words and most notices on websites.*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

-va / -ve makes an **adverb** that says how or in what state an action happens (*nevetve*, laughing). **-ás / -és** makes a **noun** for the action itself (*olvasás*, reading). **-ható / -hető** makes an **adjective** meaning "can be done" (*olvasható*, readable). All three attach to the verb stem and follow vowel harmony (back: *-va, -ás, -ható*; front: *-ve, -és, -hető*).

1. The adverbial participle: -va / -ve

It describes how the subject does the main action, and it has the **same subject** as the main verb. It may be written as one word with a prefix.

VERB	FORM	EXAMPLE
nevet laughs	**nevetve**	**Nevetve mondta.** · He said it laughing.
sír cries	**sírva**	**Sírva jött haza.** · She came home crying.
áll stands	**állva**	**Állva dolgozom.** · I work standing up.
ül sits	**ülve**	**Ülve olvas.** · He reads sitting down.
hallgat listens	**hallgatva**	**Zenét hallgatva tanulok.** · I study listening to music.
olvas reads	**olvasva**	**A levelet olvasva sírt.** · She cried reading the letter.

An object before the form works exactly as in Chapter 5: **Zenét hallgatva**, **A levelet olvasva**.

With a completing prefix the form means "having done it": **Megírva a levelet, elment.** (Having written the letter, he left.) The prefix stays attached: **megírva**.

The resulting state with *van*

With the verb *van* (is), the same form says that something is in a state brought about by an action. This is how Hungarian says "is open, is closed, is switched on".

FORM	EXAMPLE	MEANING
nyitva	Az ajtó nyitva van.	The door is open.
zárva	Az iroda zárva van.	The office is closed.
be van kapcsolva	Be van kapcsolva a gép.	The machine is switched on.
ki van kapcsolva	Ki van kapcsolva a gép.	The machine is switched off.
meg van írva	Meg van írva a levél.	The letter has been written.

> **Watch out: the prefix and *van***
> In **be van kapcsolva** the prefix stands before *van*, as a separate word. In a one-word adverb it attaches: **Kikapcsolva hagyom a gépet.** (I leave the machine switched off.) The shop sign **Zárva** and **Nyitva** is the same form without *van*.

2. The literary form: -ván / -vén

-ván / -vén adds a shade of **reason or time** to the same idea ("since, because, while"). It is formal and mostly written, and you will meet it in newspapers, official letters and speeches rather than in conversation.

FORM	EXAMPLE	MEANING
látván	Látván a bajt, segített.	Seeing the trouble, he helped.

FORM	EXAMPLE	MEANING
tudván	**Tudván, hogy késni fog, felhívott.**	Knowing that he would be late, he rang.
azt mondván	**Azt mondván, hogy beteg, otthon maradt.**	Saying he was ill, he stayed at home.

In your own writing and speech, use *-va / -ve* or a clause with *mert* (because) instead.

3. The verbal noun: -ás / -és

The verbal noun names the action. Add **-ás** to a back stem and **-és** to a front stem.

VERB	NOUN	EXAMPLE
olvas	**olvasás**	**Az olvasás szórakoztat.** · Reading is entertaining.
tanul	**tanulás**	**A tanulás fontos.** · Studying is important.
kérdez	**kérdés**	**Van egy kérdésem.** · I have a question.
beszélget	**beszélgetés**	**Jó beszélgetés volt.** · It was a good conversation.
letölt	**letöltés**	**A letöltés gyors.** · The download is quick.
telepít	**telepítés**	**A telepítés sokáig tart.** · The installation takes a long time.
bejelentkezik	**bejelentkezés**	**A bejelentkezés sikertelen.** · The login failed.
ment saves	**mentés**	**Automatikus mentés.** · Automatic saving.

To say "the writing *of* the letter", the thing the action applies to stands first, and the verbal noun takes the possessive ending (*Hungarian Grammar 2, chapter 8*):

PHRASE	MEANING
a levél megírása	the writing of the letter

PHRASE	MEANING
a fájl letöltése	the download of the file
a program telepítése	the installation of the program
a rendszer újraindítása	the restart of the system

4. The *-ni* forms

The infinitive can serve as a subject, often after an adjective: **Olvasni jó.** (Reading is good.), **Nehéz megérteni.** (It is hard to understand.) The difference from *-ás* is that the infinitive names the general idea ("to read") and the verbal noun names the action as a thing (*az olvasás*).

Add **-való** to the infinitive for "something to do with": **tennivaló** (things to do), **ennivaló** (something to eat), **innivaló** (something to drink), **olvasnivaló** (something to read).

EXAMPLE	MEANING
Van egy kis tennivalóm.	I have a little to do.
Kérek valami olvasnivalót.	I'd like something to read.
Hozok valami ennivalót.	I'll bring something to eat.

5. "Can be done": -ható / -hető

Add *-hat / -het* (the ending for "can") to a verb stem and then *-ó / -ő*: the result is an adjective that says what can be done to something. Its negative ends in **-hatatlan / -hetetlen**.

VERB	CAN BE DONE	CANNOT BE DONE
olvas	**olvasható** · readable	**olvashatatlan** · illegible
megold	**megoldható** · solvable	**megoldhatatlan** · unsolvable
elér	**elérhető** · reachable, available	**elérhetetlen** · unreachable

VERB	CAN BE DONE	CANNOT BE DONE
letölt	**letölthető** · downloadable	**letölthetetlen** · not downloadable
hisz believes	**hihető** · believable	**hihetetlen** · unbelievable
lát sees	**látható** · visible	**láthatatlan** · invisible

Watch out: *nem elérhető* against *elérhetetlen*

On websites and in apps the everyday way to say a service is not available is **nem elérhető** ("not available right now"). **Elérhetetlen** is stronger: out of reach, impossible to get to. The same goes for most pairs: when you simply deny the state, use *nem* plus the *-ható* form.

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

The forms of this chapter in three exchanges.

① A closed office

A:

Nyitva van az iroda?

Is the office open?

B:

Nem, zárva van, de a weboldalon elérhető az információ.

No, it's closed, but the information is available on the website.

② An update

A:

Letölthető a frissítés?

Can the update be downloaded?

B:

Igen, a letöltés gyors, de a telepítés sokáig tart.

Yes, the download is quick, but the installation takes a long time.

③ At the desk

A:

Miért állsz?

Why are you standing?

B:

Mert nem tudok ülve dolgozni.

Because I can't work sitting down.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

FORM	MAKES	EXAMPLE
-va / -ve	adverb of manner; state with *van*	**nevetve · nyitva van**
prefix + *-va*	"having done"	**megírva**
-ván / -vén	formal reason or time adverb	**látván**
-ás / -és	noun for the action	**olvasás · letöltés**
"the V-ing of X"	X + verbal noun with possessive	**a levél megírása**
infinitive	subject: general idea	**Olvasni jó.**
-ni + való	"something to …"	**olvasnivaló**
-ható / -hető	adjective "can be done"	**olvasható · elérhető**
-hatatlan / -hetetlen	adjective "cannot be done"	**olvashatatlan**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. Give the *-va* form of *ír* (writes).

▼ Show answer

írva.

2. "He said it laughing."

▼ Show answer

Nevetve mondta.

3. "The door is open."

▼ Show answer

Az ajtó nyitva van.

4. "The machine is switched on."

▼ Show answer

Be van kapcsolva a gép.

5. Give the verbal nouns of *olvas* and *letölt*.

▼ Show answer

olvasás and **letöltés**.

6. "The installation of the program."

▼ Show answer

A program telepítése.

7. "I'd like something to read."

▼ Show answer

Kérek valami olvasnivalót.

8. Say "readable" and "illegible".

▼ Show answer

olvasható and **olvashatatlan**.

9. "A downloadable file."

▼ Show answer

Egy letölthető fájl.

10. Which form of this chapter means "saying that", and is it everyday or formal?

▼ Show answer

azt mondván. It is formal and mostly written.

Coming up in Chapter 7: Word Order: Topic and Neutral Sentences. The shape of a Hungarian sentence, topic then comment, neutral order with a prefix, where sentence adverbs go, and word order in questions.

🧱 The Shape of a Sentence — A mondat szerkezete

Hungarian word order is often called "free", and that is only half true. The grammatical roles are shown by the case endings (Hungarian Grammar 2), so the order is not needed for that, and it is used for something else: to show what the sentence is about and what the speaker wants to stress. Chapters 1 to 6 gave you the pieces; this chapter and the next show how they are arranged.

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A Hungarian sentence has a skeleton: **topic(s) → focus → verb → everything else**. The **topic** is what the sentence is about, and it comes first. The **focus** is the stressed new information, directly before the verb, and it is optional (Chapter 8). A **neutral sentence** is one with *no* focus: topics, then the prefix and verb together (Chapter 4), then the remaining parts. Both of these are neutral and mean the same thing, with a different starting point: *Péter tegnap elolvasta a könyvet* and *Tegnap Péter elolvasta a könyvet*.

1. Why order can move

In English, order shows who did what: "The dog bit the man" is not "The man bit the dog". In Hungarian the accusative *-t* already says who is the object, so the order is free to say something else.

SENTENCE	MEANING	WHAT THE SENTENCE IS ABOUT
A kutya megharapta a férfit.	The dog bit the man.	the dog
A férfit megharapta a kutya.	The man was bitten by the dog.	the man

Both sentences say that the dog bit the man. They differ in the **topic**: the first is about the dog, the second is about the man. In English you would switch to the passive; in Hungarian you move a word to the front.

2. Topic and comment

The **topic** is the thing you start from, usually something the listener already knows. The **comment** is what you say about it. A sentence can have one topic or several, and their order is fairly free.

TOPIC	COMMENT	MEANING
Péter	elolvasta a könyvet.	Peter read the book.
Péter tegnap	elolvasta a könyvet.	Peter read the book yesterday.
Tegnap Péter	elolvasta a könyvet.	Yesterday Peter read the book.
A könyvet	Péter elolvasta.	The book, Peter has read.
Én tegnap a boltban	megvettem a kenyeret.	Yesterday in the shop I bought the bread.

Three working rules follow from this:

- The **verb comes after the topics**, and the prefix is attached to it (*elolvasta, megvettem*).
- A **pronoun subject is usually dropped** (*Megvettem a kenyeret.*, *Hungarian Grammar 1*). Saying **Én** makes it a topic, with a hint of contrast: "As for me, ...".
- What **follows the verb** is the rest of the comment, and it is not stressed.

> **Watch out: do not copy the English order**
>
> English "Peter read the book yesterday" is Subject–Verb–Object–Time. A Hungarian sentence can say the same in several orders; most of them are fine and a few change the meaning (Chapter 8). The safe default is: **subject, time and place first, then prefix + verb, then the object**: **Péter tegnap elolvasta a könyvet.**

3. Sentence adverbs

Words that give the speaker's attitude to the whole sentence (*sajnos* "unfortunately", *talán* "perhaps") usually sit **at the start of the sentence** or **just after the topic**, before the verb,

without a focus effect.

ADVERB	AT THE START	AFTER THE TOPIC
sajnos unfortunately	**Sajnos Péter nem jön.**	**Péter sajnos nem jön.**
szerencsére fortunately	**Szerencsére megérkezett.**	**A vonat szerencsére megérkezett.**
talán perhaps	**Talán elmegy.**	**Péter talán elmegy.**
persze of course	**Persze, elolvastam.**	**Én persze elolvastam.**
általában usually	**Általában elmegyek.**	**Én általában elmegyek.**

Time words like **tegnap, ma, holnap** work the same way: they can be topics at the start, or follow the subject.

4. News sentences: verb first

When a sentence is **all news** (nothing is a known topic: "The letter has come!"), Hungarian often puts the prefix verb first and the subject after it.

NEWS SENTENCE	MEANING
Megjött a levél!	The letter has arrived!
Megérkezett a vonat.	The train has arrived.
Leállt a szerver.	The server has stopped.

Compare **A levél megjött.** (The letter — it has arrived), where the letter is a known topic.

5. Questions

Yes-or-no questions keep the statement's order and are marked only by rising intonation, and the prefix stays attached (*Chapter 4*). In writing, the particle *-e* can follow the verb (or the whole prefix verb), and it is required in an indirect question.

TYPE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
yes-or-no, spoken	**Péter elolvasta a könyvet?**	Has Peter read the book?
yes-or-no, with *-e*	**Elolvasta-e a könyvet?**	Has he read the book?
indirect question	**Nem tudom, elolvasta-e.**	I don't know if he has read it.

Question-word questions put the question word directly before the verb (it is the focus), and the prefix goes behind the verb.

QUESTION	MEANING
Mit vettél meg?	What did you buy?
Ki olvasta el a könyvet?	Who read the book?
Kit hívtál fel?	Whom did you ring?
Mikor jössz vissza?	When are you coming back?
Péter mit vett meg?	What did Peter buy? (Peter as topic)

6. Negative sentences

A negative neutral sentence puts *nem* before the verb and the prefix behind it (*Chapter 4*): **Péter nem olvasta el a könyvet.** The topics still come first.

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

Neutral sentences, a news sentence and a question.

① The book

A:

Péter elolvasta a könyvet?

Has Peter read the book?

② On the support desk

A:

Mit csinál a szerver?

What's the server doing?

B:

Persze, tegnap elolvasta.

Of course, he read it yesterday.

B:

Sajnos leállt.

Unfortunately it has stopped.

③ At home

A:

Megjött a posta?

Has the post come?

B:

Igen, megjött a csomagod.

Yes, your parcel has arrived.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

IDEA	RULE	EXAMPLE
Skeleton	topic(s) → focus → verb → rest	**Péter tegnap elolvasta a könyvet.**
Neutral sentence	no focus; prefix + verb after the topics	**Én megvettem a kenyeret.**
Topic	what the sentence is about; first	**A férfit megharapta a kutya.**
Sentence adverb	at the start or after the topic	**Péter sajnos nem jön.**
News sentence	prefix verb first, subject after	**Megjött a levél!**
Yes-or-no question	statement order, rising tone; optional *-e*	**Elolvasta-e?**
Question-word question	question word before the verb; prefix behind	**Mit vettél meg?**
Negative	*nem* before the verb, prefix behind	**Nem olvasta el.**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. In "topic → focus → verb → rest", which part is optional and carries the stress?

▼ Show answer

The **focus**. A sentence without one is a neutral sentence.

2. Put in neutral order: *elolvasta / a könyvet / Péter / tegnap*.

▼ Show answer

Péter tegnap elolvasta a könyvet.

3. "Peter has left." (neutral, prefix verb)

▼ Show answer

Péter elment.

4. Make *a férfi* (the man) the topic of "The dog bit the man."

▼ Show answer

A férfit megharapta a kutya.

5. Add "unfortunately" to *Péter nem jön*.

▼ Show answer

Péter sajnos nem jön. (or **Sajnos Péter nem jön.**)

6. Turn *Péter elolvasta a könyvet*. into a yes-or-no question.

▼ Show answer

Péter elolvasta a könyvet? (rising tone), or **Elolvasta-e a könyvet?**

7. "What did you buy?" (*megvesz*)

▼ Show answer

Mit vettél meg?

8. "I don't know if he has read it."

▼ Show answer

Nem tudom, elolvasta-e.

9. "The letter has arrived!" (a news sentence)

▼ Show answer

Megjött a levél!

10. Correct: **Kit felhívtál?*

▼ Show answer

Kit hívtál fel? After a question word the prefix goes behind the verb.

Coming up in Chapter 8: Focus. The stressed position directly before the verb (*Én vettem meg*), question words as focus, *csak, is, még*, contrast, and negation with focus.

🎯 The Stressed Place — A fókusz

*Chapter 7 gave you the neutral sentence, where nothing is stressed except the prefix and the verb. This chapter is about the position that **is** stressed: the place directly before the verb. Whatever stands there is the point of the sentence, the new or the contrasting piece. It is the reason the prefix leaves the verb in Chapter 4, and it is the closest Hungarian comes to English "It was X that...".*

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

The **focus** is the word or phrase directly **before the verb**, said with stress. It means: "this one, and not another". Only **one** focus is allowed, and when there is one the prefix moves **behind the verb**: *PÉTER vette meg a könyvet.* (It was Peter who bought the book.) A question word is always a focus, which is why the answer to a question also has a focus: *Ki vette meg? — Péter vette meg.*

1. Neutral against focus

The same words can make two different sentences. The neutral one reports an event; the focus one picks out one element.

NEUTRAL	FOCUS	FOCUSED WORD
Péter megvette a könyvet. Peter bought the book.	**PÉTER vette meg a könyvet.** It was Peter who bought the book.	the subject
Megvettem a könyvet. I bought the book.	**ÉN vettem meg a könyvet.** I was the one who bought it.	the subject pronoun
Péter megvette a könyvet.	**Péter A KÖNYVET vette meg.** It was the book that Peter bought.	the object
Tegnap megvettem. Yesterday I bought it.	**TEGNAP vettem meg.** It was yesterday that I bought it.	the time

NEUTRAL	FOCUS	FOCUSED WORD
A boltban megvettem. In the shop I bought it.	**A BOLTBAN vettem meg.** It was in the shop that I bought it.	the place

Without a prefix the order of the verb is just as telling: **JÁNOS hozta a könyvet.** (It was János who brought the book.) The focused word stands straight before *hozta*.

> **Watch out: the verb does not move, the focus does**
>
> Students sometimes think the verb "jumps" to second place. It is the other way round: the verb stays where it is and the focused word sits directly before it, with nothing in between. The prefix, which used to stand there, is pushed behind the verb, and any other topics come before the focus.

2. Questions and answers share the focus

A question word *is* a focus, so it takes the place before the verb. The answer fills that same place, which is a reliable test: **the answer to a question word is a focus**.

QUESTION	ANSWER
Ki vette meg a jegyeket? Who bought the tickets?	**Anna vette meg.** Anna did.
Mit vettél meg? What did you buy?	**A könyvet vettem meg.** The book.
Mikor jöttél vissza? When did you come back?	**Tegnap jöttem vissza.** Yesterday.
Hol vetted meg? Where did you buy it?	**A boltban vettem meg.** In the shop.

A yes-or-no question can have a focus too, and then it asks about that element: **Péter ment el?** (Was it Peter who left?) against **Péter elment?** (Has Peter left?).

More than one question word may stand before the verb: **Ki mit vett meg?** (Who bought what?). This is an exception to "one focus only".

3. Words that go with the focus

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
csak	only; it takes the focus place	**Csak Péter jött el.** · Only Peter came. **Csak egy könyvet vettem meg.** · I bought only one book.
is	also; it does *not* take the focus place	**Péter is eljött.** · Peter came too. **Én is megvettem.** · I bought it too.
még	still, yet; one more	**Még nem érkezett meg.** · It hasn't arrived yet. **Még egy kávét kérek.** · One more coffee, please.
éppen	just, exactly, at this very moment	**Éppen olvasok.** · I'm just reading. **Éppen te mondod ezt?** · You, of all people, say that?
éppen ezért	for that very reason	**Éppen ezért maradok otthon.** · That is exactly why I'm staying at home.

Csak behaves like a focus: the prefix goes behind the verb (**Csak Péter jött el**). *Is* is different, because it only adds "also" and leaves the verb's prefix in its neutral place (**Péter is eljött**). *Még nem* behaves like any negation: *nem* takes the place before the verb and the prefix follows (**Még nem érkezett meg**).

4. Contrast

A focus is naturally contrastive, and *nem … hanem* (not … but) states the contrast outright. The two focused elements each stand before their verb.

EXAMPLE	MEANING
Nem Péter ment el, hanem Anna.	It wasn't Peter who left, but Anna.
A könyvet vettem meg, nem a füzetet.	It was the book I bought, not the notebook.
Nem én indítottam újra, hanem Péter.	It wasn't I who restarted it, but Peter.

5. Negation and focus

A negative sentence can deny the whole event, or deny only the focus. The position of *nem* tells you which.

SENTENCE	WHAT IS DENIED
Péter nem ment el.	the event: Peter didn't leave.
Nem Péter ment el.	the focus: it wasn't Peter who left (someone else did).
Nem csak Péter jött el.	"only": not only Peter came.
Nem a könyvet vettem meg.	the focus: it wasn't the book I bought.

> **Watch out: the same *nem*, two meanings**
>
> In **Péter nem ment el**, *nem* stands before the verb and negates it. In **Nem Péter ment el**, *nem* stands before the focused word and negates that word. Chapter 4's rule is the same in both: the prefix is behind the verb whenever the place before it is occupied.

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

Focus in question and answer, in contrast, and with éppen ezért.

① The tickets

A:

Ki vette meg a jegyeket?

Who bought the tickets?

B:

Anna vette meg.

Anna did.

② On the support desk

A:

Ki indította újra a szervert?

Who restarted the server?

B:

Nem én indítottam újra, hanem Péter.

It wasn't me, it was Peter.

③ Waiting for the post

A:

Még nem jött meg a posta?

Hasn't the post come yet?

B:

Még nem. Éppen ezért maradok otthon.

Not yet. That's exactly why I'm staying at home.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

IDEA	RULE	EXAMPLE
Focus	stressed word directly before the verb	**PÉTER vette meg.**
Prefix	behind the verb when there is a focus	**TEGNAP vettem meg.**
Question word	always a focus; the answer is too	**Ki vette meg? — Anna vette meg.**
csak	"only"; takes the focus place	**Csak Péter jött el.**
is	"also"; prefix stays attached	**Péter is eljött.**
még nem	"not yet"; prefix behind	**Még nem érkezett meg.**
Contrast	*nem … hanem*	**Nem Péter ment el, hanem Anna.**
Negated verb or focus	*nem* before the verb, or before the focus	**Péter nem ment el.** · **Nem Péter ment el.**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. Put *Péter* in focus: *Péter elment.*

▼ Show answer

PÉTER ment el. The prefix goes behind the verb.

2. "It was yesterday that I bought it."

▼ Show answer

Tegnap vettem meg. (*Tegnap* stressed.)

3. Answer "Who bought the tickets?" with "Anna".

▼ Show answer

Anna vette meg a jegyeket. or simply **Anna vette meg.**

4. "Only Peter came."

▼ Show answer

Csak Péter jött el.

5. "Peter came too."

▼ Show answer

Péter is eljött. *is* does not push the prefix away.

6. "It wasn't Peter who left, but Anna."

▼ Show answer

Nem Péter ment el, hanem Anna.

7. "Peter didn't leave."

▼ Show answer

Péter nem ment el.

8. "It hasn't arrived yet."

▼ Show answer

Még nem érkezett meg.

9. Say "for that very reason".

▼ Show answer

Éppen ezért.

10. "Who bought what?"

▼ Show answer

Ki mit vett meg? Question words may stack before the verb.

Coming up in Chapter 9: Clauses and Comparison. The relative words *aki, ami, amit, amely*, *hogy*-clauses and *ha, mert, mivel, ahogy*, the comparative *-bb* and superlative *leg-*, and clause order.

🔗 Joining and Comparing — Mondatok és összehasonlítás

You now know how a single Hungarian clause is built, with its prefix, participles and focus. This chapter joins clauses together with relative words and conjunctions, and then compares things with -bb and leg-. Both topics depend on the word order of Chapters 7 and 8, because a subordinate clause keeps the same pattern as a main clause.

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

A **relative clause** starts with **aki** (a person), **ami** or **amely** (a thing), and it takes the case that its own verb needs: *a lány, aki a levelet írta*; *a könyv, amelyet vettem*. A **conjunction** joins two clauses: *hogy* (that), *ha* (if), *mert* (because). **Comparison** adds **-bb** to an adjective and **leg-** to the comparative: *nagy, nagyobb, legnagyobb*. A comma separates every subordinate clause from the main clause, always.

1. Relative clauses: aki, ami, amely

WORD	REFERS TO	EXAMPLE
aki (pl. **akik**)	a person	**A lány, aki a levelet írta, itt van.** · The girl who wrote the letter is here.
ami (pl. **amik**)	a thing, an idea, a whole clause	**Ez az, ami tetszik.** · This is what I like.
amely (pl. **amelyek**)	a thing or a person; more written	**A könyv, amely az asztalon van, régi.** · The book that is on the table is old.
amelyik	"which one" of several	**Amelyik tetszik, azt megveszem.** · I'll buy whichever I like.

These words take the cases of Hungarian Grammar 2, and you build them by putting the ending on the stem *ki-, mi-, mely-*. Their case is the case that **the verb of the relative clause** requires, not the case of the noun they refer to.

CASE	PERSON	THING
nominative	aki · A lány, aki ír.	ami · A dolog, ami fáj.
accusative	akit · A lány, akit láttam.	amit / amelyet · A könyv, amit/amelyet vettem.
dative	akinek · A lány, akinek írtam.	aminek
with	akivel · A nő, akivel beszéltem.	amivel · A program, amivel dolgozom.
in	akiben	amiben · A doboz, amiben a kulcs van.

> **Watch out: the comma and the verb ending**
> A relative clause is always set off by commas in Hungarian, even a short one: **A férfi, akit láttam, tanár.** And the verb in the relative clause follows the definiteness rule as usual: **A könyv, amit megvettem** (definite object *amit → megvettem*), but **Olyan könyvet keresek, amit nem olvastam.** (indefinite).

2. Correlative pairs: az, aki

Hungarian often says "the one who" with a demonstrative *az* in the main clause, matched by the relative in the subordinate clause. The pair agrees in case with its own clause.

PAIR	EXAMPLE	MEANING
az, aki	Az, aki ott áll, a tanárom.	The one who is standing there is my teacher.
az, ami	Az, amit mondtál, igaz.	What you said is true.
azt, akit	Azt, akit kerestem, megtaláltam.	I found the person I was looking for.

PAIR	EXAMPLE	MEANING
minden, amit	**Minden, amit tudok, a könyvekből tudom.**	Everything I know, I know from books.
mindenki, aki	**Mindenki, aki ott volt, látta.**	Everyone who was there saw it.

A well-known saying uses the shape: **Aki korán kel, aranyat lel.** (Whoever rises early finds gold.)

3. *hogy* and other conjunctions

Hogy introduces a clause that gives the content of what was said, thought or wanted. It follows the main verb and is separated by a comma. The main clause often has a pointing word, *azt* ("that"), anticipating it.

PATTERN	EXAMPLE	MEANING
said or thought	**Azt mondta, hogy jön.**	He said that he is coming.
wanted (subjunctive)	**Azt akarom, hogy gyere el.**	I want you to come.
purpose	**Azért tanulok, hogy jó munkát találjak.**	I study so that I find a good job.
reason	**Azért maradok otthon, mert esik.**	I'm staying at home because it's raining.

After words of wanting, asking and advising, the verb in the *hogy* clause is in the subjunctive (*Hungarian Grammar 3, chapter 8*).

The other common conjunctions:

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
ha	if, whenever	**Ha esik, otthon maradok.** · If it rains, I stay at home.

WORD	MEANING	EXAMPLE
mert	because	**Nem jövök, mert beteg vagyok.** · I'm not coming, because I'm ill.
mivel	since, given that (more formal)	**Mivel késő van, hazamegyek.** · Since it's late, I'm going home.
ahogy	as, the way that	**Úgy csinálom, ahogy te mondtad.** · I do it the way you said.
amikor	when	**Amikor megérkeztem, esett.** · When I arrived, it was raining.
mielőtt	before	**Mielőtt elmegyek, felhívlak.** · Before I leave, I'll ring you.
miután	after	**Miután elolvastam, megírtam.** · After I had read it, I wrote it.
amíg	while, until	**Amíg dolgozom, zenét hallgatok.** · While I work, I listen to music.
bár	although	**Bár fáradt vagyok, elmegyek.** · Although I'm tired, I'll go.

4. Comparison

The **comparative** adds **-bb** to the adjective, with a linking vowel after most consonant-final stems: *-abb* after back vowels, *-ebb* after front vowels. The **superlative** adds **leg-** to the comparative.

ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
gyors fast	**gyorsabb**	**leggyorsabb**
magas tall, high	**magasabb**	**legmagasabb**
olcsó cheap	**olcsóbb**	**legolcsóbb**
drága expensive	**drágább**	**legdrágább**

ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
szép beautiful	**szebb**	**legszebb**
új new	**újabb**	**legújabb**

A few adjectives are irregular, and you need to learn them:

ADJECTIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
jó good	**jobb**	**legjobb**
nagy big	**nagyobb**	**legnagyobb**
kicsi small	**kisebb**	**legkisebb**
sok much, many	**több**	**legtöbb**
kevés little, few	**kevesebb**	**legkevesebb**

To compare two things, use **mint** ("than"), or **olyan … mint** for "as … as":

PATTERN	EXAMPLE	MEANING
comparative + *mint*	**Péter magasabb, mint Anna.**	Peter is taller than Anna.
olyan … mint	**Olyan gyors, mint a másik szerver.**	It is as fast as the other server.
mint ahogy	**Jobb volt, mint ahogy vártam.**	It was better than I expected.
minél … annál	**Minél többet tanulok, annál jobban értem.**	The more I study, the better I understand.

An adverb compares the same way, with the *-an/-en* ending: **gyorsabban** (faster), **jobban** (better). The superlative can be made stronger with **az egyik legjobb** ("one of the best").

5. Clause order

A subordinate clause follows the same word-order rules as a main clause (Chapters 7 and 8), including the prefix rules. A few habits help:

- A **relative clause** follows the noun it describes.
- A **hogy-clause** follows the main verb.
- An **ha-clause** often comes first: **Ha esik, otthon maradok.**
- Every clause is separated by a comma, and the comma goes *before* the conjunction.

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

Relative clauses, reasons and comparison in three exchanges.

① The book

A:

Hol van a könyv, amelyet tegnap vettem?

Where is the book that I bought yesterday?

B:

Az asztalon van.

It's on the table.

② On the support desk

A:

Miért nem működik a program?

Why isn't the program working?

B:

Azért nem működik, mert nincs frissítve.

It's not working because it hasn't been updated.

A:

Ha frissítem, gyorsabb lesz?

If I update it, will it be faster?

③ A family photo

A:

Ki az a nő, akivel beszéltél?

Who is that woman you were talking to?

B:

Ő az unokahúgom, aki Edinburgh-ben él.

She's my cousin, who lives in Edinburgh.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

IDEA	RULE	EXAMPLE
Relative, person	*aki*, in the case its verb needs	**a nő, akivel beszéltem**
Relative, thing	*ami, amely*	**a könyv, amit/amelyet vettem**
Correlative	*az, aki · minden, amit*	**Az, amit mondtál, igaz.**
hogy	content, purpose; subjunctive after wanting	**Azt mondta, hogy jön.**
Reason	*mert, mivel*; *azért, mert*	**Mivel késő van, hazamegyek.**
Time and condition	*ha, amikor, mielőtt, miután, amíg*	**Ha esik, otthon maradok.**
Comparative	*-bb* (with a linking vowel)	**gyorsabb · szebb**
Superlative	*leg-* + comparative	**leggyorsabb**
Irregular	learn	**jobb · nagyobb · több**
"than" · "as … as" · "the more … the more"	*mint · olyan … mint · minél … annál*	**magasabb, mint Anna**

🖍️ Try It Yourself — Gyakorlás

Say the answer first, then click to check.

1. "The girl who wrote the letter."

▼ Show answer

A lány, aki a levelet írta.

2. "The book that I bought."

▼ Show answer

A könyv, amelyet megvettem. (*amit* is the everyday form.)

3. "Everything I know."

▼ Show answer

Minden, amit tudok.

4. "He said that he is coming."

▼ Show answer

Azt mondta, hogy jön.

5. "I study so that I find a good job."

▼ Show answer

Azért tanulok, hogy jó munkát találjak. The verb after *hogy* is in the subjunctive.

6. "If it rains, I stay at home."

▼ Show answer

Ha esik, otthon maradok.

7. Give the comparatives of *nagy* and *jó*.

▼ Show answer

nagyobb and **jobb**.

8. "Peter is taller than Anna."

▼ Show answer

Péter magasabb, mint Anna.

9. "The more I study, the better I understand."

▼ Show answer

Minél többet tanulok, annál jobban értem.

10. Give the superlative of *jó*.

▼ Show answer

legjobb.

Coming up in Chapter 10: Putting It Together. Prefixes, participles and word order in one table, a step-by-step decision procedure, an error-spotting clinic, and the Course Complete recap of the four-course grammar track.

🎯 One Sentence, All the Parts — Minden egy helyen

Nine chapters have given you the parts: the prefix map, aspect, prefix meanings, prefix position, the participles, the verbal forms, word order, focus, and clauses with comparison. This chapter puts them in one table and one procedure, then tests you on the mistakes that learners actually make. It closes the Hungarian grammar track, so it ends with a recap of all four courses.

THE RULE IN ONE BOX

Every Hungarian sentence answers four questions in order. **1. Which verb, and which prefix?** (meaning and finished or ongoing). **2. Is anything focused, negated or questioned?** If yes, it takes the place before the verb and the prefix moves behind. **3. Is a participle or a clause better than a main verb? 4. Is the form right?** (conjugation, harmony, case, from Hungarian Grammar 1 to 3). If you work through them in that order, the sentence builds itself.

1. The whole course in one table

TOPIC	KEY IDEA	EXAMPLE	CHAPTER
Prefix map	ten main prefixes; direction against meaning	**bemegy** · **kimegy** · **felmegy**	1
Aspect	plain = going on; prefixed = finished; prefixed present = future	**olvastam** · **elolvastam** · **Holnap megírom.**	2
Prefix meanings	literal, completing, idiomatic; learn each as a unit	**átmegy a vizsgán** · **elad**	3
Prefix position	in front in a neutral sentence; behind after *nem*, focus, a question word or a command	**Kimegyek.** · **Nem megyek ki.** · **Menj ki!**	4

TOPIC	KEY IDEA	EXAMPLE	CHAPTER
Participles	present *-ó/-ő*, past *-t/-tt*, future *-andó/-endő*; objects before them	**a levelet író lány · a megírt levél · a megoldandó probléma**	5
Verbal forms	*-va/-ve*, *-ás/-és*, *-nivaló*, *-ható/-hető*	**nevetve · letöltés · olvasható**	6
Word order	topic(s) → focus → verb → rest	**Péter tegnap elolvasta a könyvet.**	7
Focus	the stressed word before the verb; the answer to a question word	**PÉTER vette meg.**	8
Clauses and comparison	*aki, ami, hogy, ha, mert*; *-bb, leg-*	**A lány, aki ír. · jobb · legjobb**	9

2. A step-by-step procedure

Use the four steps on any sentence you want to build.

STEP	ASK	LOOK AT
1	Which verb and which prefix? Finished or going on?	Chapters 1 to 3
2	Is there a focus, *nem*, a question word or a command? Then the prefix goes behind the verb.	Chapters 4 and 8
3	Do you need a topic first? Should a participle or a clause replace a verb?	Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 9
4	Check the conjugation (definite or indefinite), the harmony and the case.	Hungarian Grammar 1, 2 and 3

Worked example A: "I will write the report tomorrow."

1. Verb *ír*; finished, so the prefix *meg-*: *megír*.
2. No focus, no negation: neutral, the prefix stays attached.

3. A time topic first: *Holnap*.
4. Definite object *a jelentést*, so the definite ending, and the completed present gives the future: **Holnap megírom a jelentést.**

Worked example B: "It was Anna who restarted the server yesterday."

1. Verb *újraindít* (restart).
2. *Anna* is the focus, so she stands before the verb and the prefix goes behind it.
3. A time topic first: *Tegnap*.
4. Past, definite object: **Tegnap ANNA indította újra a szervert.**

Worked example C: "The technician fixing the fault hasn't arrived yet."

1. Verb *javít*, a present participle takes the object before it: *a hibát javító technikus*.
2. Main verb *megérkezik*, negated with *még nem*: the prefix goes behind the verb.
3. Past tense: **A hibát javító technikus még nem érkezett meg.**

3. The error clinic

Ten typical mistakes. Find the error before you open the answer.

1. **Nem elmegyek.*

▼ Show answer

Nem megyek el. After *nem* the prefix goes behind the verb (Chapter 4).

2. **Ne kimenj!*

▼ Show answer

Ne menj ki! A prohibition with *ne* works like *nem*.

3. **Nem akarok menni ki.*

▼ Show answer

Nem akarok kimenni. With a blocked place, the prefix is attached to the infinitive.

4. **Kit felhívtál?*

▼ Show answer

Kit hívtál fel? A question word takes the place before the verb (Chapters 7 and 8).

5. **Csak Péter eljött.*

▼ Show answer

Csak Péter jött el. *Csak* takes the focus place, so the prefix moves behind the verb.

6. **A levelet írt lány.* (meaning "the girl who is writing the letter")

▼ Show answer

A levelet író lány. The present participle *-ó* is needed for an action in progress (Chapter 5).

7. **A lány, akit a levelet írta, itt van.*

▼ Show answer

A lány, aki a levelet írta, itt van. The girl is the *subject* of *írta*, so it is *aki*, not *akit* (Chapter 9).

8. **Azért tanulok, hogy találok munkát.*

▼ Show answer

Azért tanulok, hogy találjak munkát. After *hogy* of purpose, use the subjunctive.

9. **Két órán át elolvastam a könyvet.* ("I read the book through in two hours.")

▼ Show answer

Két óra alatt elolvastam a könyvet. "In" a length of time goes with *alatt* and the completed verb (Chapter 2).

10. **a nem megírt levél* ("the letter that has not been written")

▼ Show answer

a meg nem írt levél. The prefix stands before *nem* (Chapter 5).

🗣️ In Use — Használatban

The whole course in three exchanges.

① In the office

A:

Elküldted az e-mailt, amelyet tegnap megírtál?

Have you sent the e-mail you wrote yesterday?

B:

Nem, még nem küldtem el. Ma délután elküldöm.

No, not yet. I'll send it this afternoon.

② A walk in Edinburgh

A:

Ki akar felmenni a Calton Hillre?

Who wants to go up Calton Hill?

B:

Én akarok felmenni, mert onnan a legszebb a kilátás.

I do, because the view from there is the best.

③ On the support desk

A:

Mit mondott a technikus?

What did the technician say?

B:

Azt mondta, hogy a hibát javító program letölthető.

He said the program that fixes the fault can be downloaded.

📋 Quick Reference — Gyorstábla

SITUATION	RULE	EXAMPLE
Neutral sentence	topics, then prefix + verb	**Én megvettem.**
Negation, focus, question word, command	prefix behind the verb	**Nem vettem meg.** · **Ki vette meg?**
Infinitive and helper	prefix before the helper, or on the infinitive if blocked	**Meg akarom venni.** · **Nem akarom megvenni.**
Completed	the prefix; completed present = future	**Holnap megveszem.**
Participle phrase	object and adverbials before the participle	**a hibát javító technikus**
Verbal noun, "can be done"	*-ás/-és*, *-ható/-hető*	**letöltés** · **letölthető**
Relative clause, *hogy*	*aki/ami*, comma, subjunctive after wanting	**Azt akarom, hogy gyere.**
Comparison	*-bb*, *leg-*, *mint*	**gyorsabb, mint**

🎓 Course Complete — Hungarian Grammar 4

WHAT YOU CAN NOW DO

You can choose a verb prefix for direction, for meaning and for finished action. You can put the prefix in the right place in a neutral sentence, a negative, a question, a command and an infinitive. You can build the three participles, the adverbs in *-va/-ve*, the verbal nouns and the *-ható* adjectives. You can order a sentence by topic and focus, and join clauses with relative words and conjunctions. You can also compare things.

CHAPTER	TITLE	THE KEY IDEA
1	The Verb Prefix Map	ten prefixes; direction pairs; the prefix as a separate word
2	Prefixes and Aspect	finished against going on; the completed present as future

CHAPTER	TITLE	THE KEY IDEA
3	Prefix Meanings	one verb, many prefixes; idioms; forty common verbs
4	Prefix Position	in front in a neutral sentence; behind after *nem*, focus and commands
5	Participles	-ó/-ő, -t/-tt, -andó/-endő; object before the participle
6	Verbal Forms	-va/-ve, -ás/-és, -ható/-hető
7	Word Order Basics	topic, focus, verb; neutral sentences; questions
8	Focus	the stressed place before the verb; *csak, is, még*
9	Clauses and Comparison	aki, ami, hogy, ha, mert; -bb, leg-
10	Putting It Together	the whole table, four steps, a clinic

The four-course grammar track

COURSE	WHAT IT GAVE YOU
Hungarian Grammar 1	the sound system, vowel harmony, linking vowels, the two conjugations
Hungarian Grammar 2	the cases, possession and postpositions
Hungarian Grammar 3	the tenses and moods: past, future, conditional, imperative, subjunctive
Hungarian Grammar 4	prefixes, participles, word order and focus, clauses and comparison

What comes next: The grammar track is finished. To use it in real situations, continue with **Hungarian Intermediate 1** and the Hungarian Basic Conversation courses, which use prefixes, participles and focus in longer dialogues. Come back to this chapter's clinic whenever a sentence feels wrong: the answer is nearly always in the four steps.