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HUNGARIAN LESSON

Hungarian Alphabet 1 · Chapter 11 · Consonants I

Hungarian Alphabet 1

Chapter 11 · Consonants You Know I: B P D T G K

abc The Consonants Begin — b p d t g k

After ten chapters on vowels and harmony, the consonants begin, and the first six will feel familiar: **b, p, d, t, g, k**. They come in three pairs, one voiceless and one voiced in each. There's one important difference from English, which you can fix with a simple trick: in Hungarian, **p, t and k have no puff of air**.

🌟 Three Pairs

p · b

P p · B b

p as in *spin* (no puff) · b as in
bin

lips together

Tip: the lips make both sounds. For *b*, your voice buzzes in your throat; for *p*, it doesn't.

t · d

T t · D d

t as in *stop* (no puff) · d as in
do

tongue behind the upper teeth

Tip: the tongue tip touches just behind the upper front teeth. For *d*, the voice buzzes; for *t*, it doesn't.

k · g

K k · G g

k as in *sky* (no puff) · g as in
go (always hard)

back of the tongue

Tip: *g* is always the hard "g" of *go*, never the soft "g" of *gem*. For *g*, the voice buzzes; for *k*, it doesn't.

The "S" Trick: Taking the Puff Away

In English, *p, t, k* at the start of a word come with a small puff of air (hold a hand in front of your mouth and say "*pin*": you feel it). Hungarian *p, t, k* have **no puff**, like the sounds in *spin*, *stop* and *sky*. To practise: say "*spin*", then "*pin* without the puff"; "*stop*" then plain "*top*"; "*sky*" then plain "*key*". Spanish, French and Japanese work the same way.

Voiced Means "Buzz"

Put two fingers on your throat and say "ssss" (nothing) then "zzzz" (a buzz). That buzz is **voicing**. **b, d, g** are voiced: start the buzz at once, don't hesitate. **p, t, k** have no buzz. Hungarian also keeps **final b, d, g fully voiced**: unlike German, the *d* at the end of *ebéd* is still a clear "d" and doesn't turn into "t".

Read It — New Words

You can read all of these. Remember the vowel respellings from earlier chapters (aw, ah, o, oh, u, oo, eh, ay, ih, ee, eu, euu, ue, uue), and that stress is on the first syllable.

#	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	bolt	BOLT	shop	<i>b, t</i>
2	bátor	BAH-tor	brave	<i>long á; tapped r</i>
3	pék	PAYK	baker	<i>p and k, no puff</i>
4	kép	KAYP	picture; image	<i>k and p, no puff</i>
5	dal	DAWL	song	<i>short a</i>
6	idő	IH-deuu	time; weather	<i>two meanings</i>
7	adó	AW-doh	tax	<i>long ó</i>
8	tanár	TAW-nahr	teacher	<i>stress on TA</i>
9	tea	TEH-aw	tea	<i>two syllables</i>
10	gól	GOHL	goal (in football)	<i>hard g</i>
11	gép	GAYP	machine	<i>hard g</i>
12	kapu	KAW-pu	gate	<i>k, p: no puff</i>

Real Hungarian Tip — Foreign Words, Hungarian Spelling

Hungarian spells many foreign words **the way they sound**, which makes them easy to read: *kóla* (KOH-law, cola), *kakaó* (KAW-kaw-oh, cocoa), *tea* (tea), *gól* (goal), *káv*é (coffee). The letter **k** always stands for the "k" sound: Hungarian never uses *c* for it (*c* is "ts", Chapter 14).

A Peek Ahead — Double Letters

Doubled consonants are **long**: you hold the sound for an extra beat. You've already seen *ott* (there), *itt* (here) and *nulla* (zero). The same applies to *bb*, *pp*, *dd*, *tt*, *gg*, *kk*. Chapter 18 covers long consonants and the short/long pairs in detail.

Mini-Dialogs

① A Picture — Mi ez?

A:

Mi ez?

MIH EHZ?

What is this?

B:

Ez kép.

EHZ KAYP.

This is a picture.

A:

Kép? Jó!

KAYP? YOH!

A picture? Good!

② Where Is the Shop? — Hol a bolt?

A:

Hol a bolt?

HOL aw BOLT?

Where is the shop?

B:

Ott, a téren.

OTT, aw TAY-rehn.

There, in the square.

A:

És a kapu?

AYSH aw KAW-pu?

And the gate?

B:

A kertben.

aw KEHRT-behn.

In the garden.

③ Tea or Coffee? — Tea? Káv?

A:

Tea?

TEH-aw?

Tea?

B:

Nem, kávé!

NEHM, KAH-vay!

No, coffee!

A:

Jó!

YOH!

Good!

Review: Chapter 10 — Harmony

Test yourself: **papírban** (in the paper) · **hotelben** (in the hotel) · **kávéban** · **tévében** · **irodában** · **hídban** (exception). What decides each ending?



Try It Yourself — Gyakorlatok

Say each answer out loud first, then click to check.

1. Which three of the six letters are voiced (with a buzz in the throat)?

▼ Show answer

b, d, g. The voiceless partners are p, t, k.

2. How do you make a Hungarian **p**, **t** or **k** without the English puff?

▼ Show answer

Say it as in *spin*, *stop*, *sky* (the sound after the "s"): no puff of air.

3. Read aloud and translate: **bolt** · **dal** · **gól**

▼ Show answer

BOLT (shop) · DAWL (song) · GOHL (goal)

4. Read aloud and translate: **tanár · idő · pék**

▼ Show answer

TAW-nahr (teacher) · IH-deuu (time; weather) · PAYK (baker)

5. Read aloud and translate: **kóla · kakaó · tea**

▼ Show answer

KOH-law (cola) · KAW-kaw-oh (cocoa) · TEH-aw (tea). Hungarian spells foreign words as they sound.

6. Does Hungarian turn a final **d** into "t" (as German does)? Give an example.

▼ Show answer

No: the final **d** stays a clear "d", as in **ebéd** (EH-bayd, lunch).

Coming Up in Chapter 12

Seven more letters that look like English: **f v h m n l z**. They're mostly straightforward, with a few small differences in *h*, *v* and *l* to watch for.