

HU

HUNGARIAN LESSON

Hungarian Alphabet 1 · Chapter 16 · Soft Consonants II

Hungarian Alphabet 1

Chapter 16 · The Soft Consonants II: NY and LY

abc The Other Two Soft Consonants — ny ly

The last two soft consonants are **ny** and **ly**. One of them is easy to say and the other is a spelling quirk: **ny** sounds like the "ny" in canyon (Spanish ñ), and **ly** sounds exactly like **j**, a plain "y". With them you can say all the numbers from 0 to 10, and read the signs for "open" and "closed".

🌟 Two New Letters

ny

Ny ny

like the "ny" in *canyon* or the Spanish ñ in *año*

respelled **ny**

Mouth tip: press the middle of the tongue against the roof of the mouth and let the sound out through the nose, as in *canyon*. It is **one letter**: *anya* is AW-nyaw, not "an-ya".

ly

Ly ly

said **exactly like j**, a plain "y" as in *yes*

respelled **y**

Remember: not "l" + "y". Long ago it was a soft "l", but today *ly* and *j* are one sound. *hely* = HEHY, *foljó* = FO-yoh.

ly and j Sound the Same, So Learn the Spelling

Because **ly** and **j** are pronounced alike, you can't tell from the sound which one a word uses: *foljó* (FO-yoh, "river") is spelled with *ly*, while *hajó* (HAW-yoh, "ship") is spelled with *j*. Hungarians learn the spelling of each word, just as English speakers learn *their* / *there*. For reading aloud it makes no difference: **both are "y"**.

Watch the Letters in Order: négy and nyolc

Read the letters in order, grouping the digraphs. In **négy** (four) you have *n* + *é* + *gy*: it's NAYDY, with a plain "n". In **nyolc** (eight) the *n* and *y* belong together as *ny*: it's NYOLTS.



Read It — New Words

You can read all of these. Stress is on the first syllable.

#	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	nyár	NYAHR	summer	ny
2	anya	AW-nyaw	mother	ny in the middle
3	kenyér	KEH-nyayr	bread	ny, long é
4	könyv	KEUNYV	book	ö then ny
5	nyelv	NYEHLV	tongue; language	two meanings
6	nyitva	NYIHT-vaw	open	on shop doors
7	hely	HEHY	place	ly = y
8	folyó	FO-yoh	river	ly = y
9	gólya	GOH-yaw	stork	ly = y
10	király	KIH-rah-y	king	final ly
11	melyik	MEH-yihk	which	a question word
12	milyen	MIH-yehn	what kind of; how	a question word



The Numbers 0 to 10 — Complete

NUMBER	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	NUMBER	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT
0	nulla	NUL-law	6	hat	HAWT
1	egy	EHDY	7	hét	HAYT
2	kettő · két	KEHT-teuu · KAYT	8	nyolc	NYOLTS
3	három	HAH-rom	9	kilenc	KIH-lehnts
4	négy	NAYDY	10	tíz	TEEZ
5	öt	EUT			

? More Question Words

With *ny* and *ly* you can now read the whole set of basic question words.

HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	EXAMPLE
hány	HAHNY	how many	Hány? (How many?)
melyik	MEH-yihk	which	Melyik? (Which one?)
milyen	MIH-yehn	what kind of; how	Milyen a kenyér? (What is the bread like?)

Together with *mi*, *ki*, *hol*, *hová*, *honnán*, *mikor* and *miért* from earlier chapters, that's every question word you need.

Real Hungarian Tip — Nyitva and Zárva

On shop doors and signs, **nyitva** (NYIHT-vaw) means "open" and **zárva** (ZAHR-vaw) means "closed". You'll see them everywhere, often next to opening hours, with the days written as you learned in Chapter 14: *hétfő–péntek* (Monday to Friday). Even before you can read a full sentence, those two words will save you a wasted trip.

Mini-Dialogs

① Mother and Father — Ki ez?

A:

Ki ez?

KIH EHZ?

Who is this?

B:

Ez az anya.

EHZ awz AW-nyaw.

This is the mother.

A:

És ő?

AYSH EUU?

And he?

B:

Ő az apa.

EUU awz AW-paw.

He is the father.

② Open or Closed? — Nyitva?

A:

Nyitva?

NYIHT-vaw?

Is it open?

B:

Nem, zárva!

NEHM, Zahr-vaw!

No, closed!

A:

Hétfőn?

HAYT-feuun?

On Monday?

B:

Igen, hétfőn zárva.

IH-gehn, HAYT-feuun Zahr-vaw.

Yes, closed on Monday.

③ A Book — Ez egy könyv

A:

Mi ez?

MIH EHZ?

What is this?

B:

Ez egy könyv.

EHZ EHDY KEUNYV.

This is a book.

A:

Magyar könyv?

MAW-dyawr KEUNYV?

A Hungarian book?

B:

Igen, magyar!

IH-gehn, MAW-dyawr!

Yes, Hungarian!

Review: Chapter 15 Words

Cover the English and read these again: **nagy** (big) · **egy** (one) · **hegy** (mountain) · **magyar** (Hungarian) · **gyerek** (child) · **ágy** (bed) · **gyár** (factory) · **gyors** (fast) · **kutya** (dog) · **tyúk** (hen) · **hattyú** (swan) · **gyertya** (candle).

Try It Yourself — Gyakorlatok

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

1. What sounds do **ny** and **ly** make?

▼ Show answer

ny = the "ny" of *canyon* (Spanish ñ). **ly** = a plain "y", exactly like j.

2. Read aloud and translate: **nyár** · **anya** · **könyv**

▼ Show answer

NYAHR (summer) · **AW-nyaw** (mother) · **KEUNYV** (book)

3. Read aloud and translate: **hely** · **folyó** · **gólya**

▼ Show answer

HEHY (place) · **FO-yoh** (river) · **GOH-yaw** (stork)

4. Count from 0 to 10 in Hungarian.

▼ Show answer

nulla · egy · kettő · három · négy · öt · hat · hét · nyolc · kilenc · tíz

5. What do **nyitva** and **zárva** mean?

▼ Show answer

Open and closed, as on shop doors.

6. Why can't you tell by sound whether a word is spelled with **ly** or **j**?

▼ Show answer

Because both are pronounced as a plain "y". You learn the spelling of each word (*fol*yó with ly, *haj*ó with j).

Coming Up in Chapter 17

The last six letters: **dz** and **dzs**, and the rare letters **q**, **w**, **x**, **y** (found mostly in names and foreign words). After that, all 44 letters of the Hungarian alphabet will be done.