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HUNGARIAN LESSON

Hungarian Alphabet 1 · Chapter 17 · Last Six Letters

Hungarian Alphabet 1

Chapter 17 · The Last Six Letters: DZ, DZS, Q, W, X, Y

abc The Final Letters — dz dzs q w x y

Six letters remain, and they're all **rare**. **dz** and **dzs** do appear in a few real words (dzsem, "jam"), whereas **q**, **w**, **x** and **y** are found mostly in family names and foreign words. When you've finished this chapter, you'll have met **all 44 letters** of the Hungarian alphabet.

a	á	b	c	cs	d	dz	dzs
e	é	f	g	gy	h	i	í
j	k	l	ly	m	n	ny	o
ó	ö	ő	p	q	r	s	sz
t	ty	u	ú	ü	ű	v	w
x	y	z	zs				

All 44 letters. Today's six are outlined; every other letter you have already met.

✨ dz and dzs

dz

Dz dz

a voiced "ts": like the "ds" in *adds*, one quick sound

respelled **dz**

dzs

Dzs dzs

the English "j" of *jam* and *judge*

respelled **dzh**

Remember: the English "j" sound is spelled **dzs** in Hungarian, because the letter *j* is already taken for

Tip: the voiced partner of *c* ("ts"). It's rare: *madzag* = MAW-dzawg (string), *bodza* = BO-dzaw (elderflower).

"y". *dzsem* = DZHEHM.

The "J" Swap — A Handy Summary

Hungarian **j** is the English "y" (*jó* = YOH), and the English "j" sound is Hungarian **dzs** (*dzsem* = DZHEHM, "jam"). So a Hungarian reading the word *jam* aloud would say "yam", and you now know why.

🌟 q, w, x and y

LETTER	SOUND	WHERE YOU'LL MEET IT
q	"kv"	Very rare. Hungarian usually spells the sound <i>kv</i> (<i>kvíz</i> , "quiz"). <i>q</i> survives in a few foreign names and terms.
w	"v"	Foreign words and names. The letter's name is <i>dupla vé</i> ("double v"), and WC is said <i>vécé</i> (VAY-tsay); web is said "VEHB".
x	"ks"	Loanwords: <i>taxi</i> (TAWK-sih), <i>fax</i> (FAWKS), <i>extra</i> (EHKS-traw).
y	"i"	On its own, mostly at the end of old-fashioned family names as a spelling of "i": <i>Esterházy</i> (ESH-tehr-hah-zih). Otherwise it's part of <i>gy</i> , <i>ly</i> , <i>ny</i> , <i>ty</i> .

Old Spellings in Surnames

Many Hungarian surnames keep old-fashioned spellings that are pronounced simply: **th** = **t** (*Tóth* = TOHT, *Horváth* = HOR-vaht), **ch** = **cs** (*Széchenyi* = SAY-cheh-nyih), and **y** = **i** at the end of a name (*Esterházy*). If you meet a Hungarian name that "breaks the rules", it's probably an old spelling.

📖 Read It — Words With the Rare Letters

#	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	dzsem	DZHEHM	jam	<i>dzs = "j"</i>
2	dzsungel	DZHUN-gehl	jungle	<i>dzs = "j"</i>
3	dzsúdó	DZHOO-doh	judo	<i>dzs; long ú</i>
4	dzsessz	DZHEHS-s	jazz	<i>ssz = a long "s"</i>
5	madzag	MAW-dzawg	string	<i>dz</i>
6	bodza	BO-dzaw	elderflower; elder	<i>dz</i>
7	taxi	TAWK-sih	taxi	<i>x = ks</i>
8	fax	FAWKS	fax	<i>x = ks</i>
9	extra	EHKS-traw	extra	<i>x = ks</i>
10	xilofon	KSIH-lo-fon	xylophone	<i>x = ks at the start</i>
11	WC	VAY-tsay	toilet	<i>w = v; said as the letter names</i>
12	web	VEHB	web; website	<i>w = v</i>

Mini-Dialogs

① A Taxi — Taxi!

A:

Taxi!

TAWK-sih!

Taxi!

② The Toilet — Hol a WC?

A:

Hol a WC?

HOL aw VAY-tsay?

Where is the toilet?

B:

Hol?

HOL?

Where?

A:

Ott, a téren!

OTT, aw TAY-rehn!

There, in the square!

B:

Balra.

BAWL-raw.

To the left.

A:

Köszönöm!

KEU-seu-neum!

Thank you!

③ Bread and Jam — Kenyér és dzsem

A:

Kenyér?

KEH-nyayr?

Bread?

B:

Igen, és dzsem!

IH-gehn, AYSH DZHEHM!

Yes, and jam!

A:

Jó!

YOH!

Good!

Review: Chapter 16 Words

Cover the English and read these again: nyár (summer) · anya (mother) · kenyér (bread) · könyv (book) · nyelv (language) · nyitva (open) · hely (place) · folyó (river) · gólya (stork) · király (king) · melyik (which) · milyen (what kind).



Try It Yourself — Gyakorlatok

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

1. How many letters does the Hungarian alphabet have, and how are they divided?

▼ Show answer

44 letters: 14 vowels (6 back, 4 front unrounded, 4 front rounded) and 30 consonant letters, including the digraphs cs, dz, gy, ly, ny, sz, ty, zs and the trigraph dzs.

2. What do **dz** and **dzs** sound like?

▼ Show answer

dz = a voiced "ts" (as in *adds*); dzs = the English "j" of *jam*.

3. How does Hungarian write the English "j" sound, and what sound does the Hungarian letter **j** make?

▼ Show answer

The English "j" is written **dzs** (*dzsem*); the Hungarian **j** is the "y" of *yes*.

4. Read aloud and translate: **dzsem** · **dzsúdó** · **dzsungel**

▼ Show answer

DZHEHM (jam) · DZHOO-doh (judo) · DZHUN-gehl (jungle)

5. How is the letter **w** pronounced, and how do Hungarians say "WC"?

▼ Show answer

w = "v". "WC" is said *vécé* (VAY-tsay).

6. Read aloud and translate: **taxi** · **fax** · **extra**

▼ Show answer

TAWK-sih (taxi) · FAWKS (fax) · EHKS-traw (extra). The letter x is "ks".

Coming Up in Chapter 18

All 44 letters are done. Chapter 18 shows why **length matters**: short and long vowels, and single and double consonants, can change a word's meaning. You'll learn the pairs, and how long digraphs like *ssz* and *ccs* are written.