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HUNGARIAN LESSON

Hungarian Alphabet 1 · Chapter 19 · Spelling and Names

Hungarian Alphabet 1

Chapter 19 · Spelling Aloud and Reading Names

Spelling Aloud and Reading Names — Betűzés és nevek

Every Hungarian letter has a **name**, used when you spell a word aloud, on the phone, or at a hotel desk. This chapter teaches the names, how a Hungarian dictionary orders the alphabet, and how to read six well-known place names.

The Letter Names

Most consonant names are the letter plus **-é** (*bé, cé, dé*) or **e-** plus the letter (*ef, el, em*). Digraphs have names too, and count as **one** letter: *cs* is "csé", *sz* is "esz".

LETTER	NAME (SAY IT)	LETTER	NAME (SAY IT)
a	AW	á	AH
b	BAY	c	TSAY
cs	CHAY	d	DAY
dz	DZAY	dzs	DZHAY
e	EH	é	AY
f	EHF	g	GAY
gy	DYAY	h	HAH
i	IH	í	EE
j	YAY	k	KAH

LETTER	NAME (SAY IT)	LETTER	NAME (SAY IT)
l	<i>EHL</i>	ly	<i>EHY</i>
m	<i>EHM</i>	n	<i>EHN</i>
ny	<i>EHNY</i>	o	<i>O</i>
ó	<i>OH</i>	ö	<i>EU</i>
ő	<i>EUU</i>	p	<i>PAY</i>
q	<i>KOO</i>	r	<i>EHR</i>
s	<i>EHS</i>	sz	<i>EHS</i>
t	<i>TAY</i>	ty	<i>TYAY</i>
u	<i>U</i>	ú	<i>OO</i>
ü	<i>UE</i>	ű	<i>UUE</i>
v	<i>VAY</i>	w	<i>DOOP-law VAY</i>
x	<i>IHKS</i>	y	<i>IHP-sih-lon</i>
z	<i>ZAY</i>	zs	<i>ZHAY</i>

The Rare Letters Have Odd Names

q is "kú", **w** is "dupla vé" (double v), **x** is "iksz" and **y** is "ípszilon". Spelling a name with a digraph? Say the digraph's own name once: *Szabó* is *esz*, *zé*, *a*, *bé*, *ó*.

Alphabetical Order

In a dictionary or a phone list, Hungarian treats each digraph as **one letter**, placed after its first letter: **c, cs, d, dz, dzs, e, g, gy, l, ly, n, ny, s, sz, t, ty, z, zs**. Accented vowels sit right after their plain partners (*a, á; o, ó, ö, ő*). So *cukor* (sugar) comes **before** *csak* (only), and *gomb* (button) comes before *gyerek* (child).

Reading Place Names

#	NAME	SAY IT	WHAT IT IS	NOTE
1	Budapest	<i>BOO-daw-pesht</i>	the capital	<i>s = sh</i>
2	Debrecen	<i>DEH-breh-tsehn</i>	city in the east	<i>c = ts</i>
3	Szeged	<i>SEH-gehd</i>	city in the south	<i>sz = s</i>
4	Győr	<i>DYEUUR</i>	city in the north-west	<i>gy = dy; long ő</i>
5	Pécs	<i>PAYCH</i>	city in the south-west	<i>é = ay; cs = ch</i>
6	Miskolc	<i>MIH-shkolts</i>	city in the north-east	<i>s = sh; c = ts</i>

Names Go Family Name First

Hungarians say the **family name first**: *Szabó Anna* is Anna Szabó. You will see this on signs, forms and phone lists.

Mini-Dialogs

① Spell It — Betűzés

A:

Mi a neve?

MIH aw NEH-veh?

What is your name?

② Where? — Hol van?

A:

Hol van Pécs?

HOL VAWN PAYCH?

Where is Pécs?

B:

Szabó Anna.

SAW-boh AWN-naw.

Anna Szabó.

A:

Hogy írják?

HODY EER-yahk?

How is it spelt?

B:

Esz, zé, a, bé, ó.

EHS, ZAY, AW, BAY, OH.

S-Z-A-B-O (with the accent).

B:

Délen.

DAY-lehn.

In the south.

③ Which Town? — Melyik város?

A:

Melyik város?

MEH-yik VAH-rosh?

Which town?

B:

Szeged!

SEH-gehd!

Szeged!

Review: Chapter 18 Words

tessék (please) · kell (must) · hall (hears) · hosszú (long) · hattyú (swan) · könny (tear).



Try It Yourself — Gyakorlatok

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

1. Spell *Győr* aloud with letter names (gy, ő, r).

▼ Show answer

gyé, ő, er: DYAY, EUU, EHR.

2. Which comes first in a Hungarian dictionary: *cukor* or *csak*?

▼ Show answer

cukor, because *c* comes before *cs*.

3. How many letters is *Szeged* in Hungarian alphabetical terms?

▼ Show answer

Five: sz, e, g, e, d (sz counts as one).

4. Read aloud: Debrecen · Miskolc · Pécs

▼ Show answer

DEH-breh-tsehn · MIH-shkolts · PAYCH

5. What is the name of the letter *w*?

▼ Show answer

dupla vé ("double v"): DOOP-law VAY.

6. Which name comes first in *Szabó Anna*: family name or given name?

▼ Show answer

The family name, Szabó.

Coming Up in Chapter 20

The last chapter: **reading practice** with longer sentences using everything you have learned, and a Course Complete recap. After that, Hungarian Basic 1 is the next step.