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HUNGARIAN LESSON

Hungarian Alphabet 1 • Chapter 2

• Back Vowels

Hungarian Alphabet 1

Chapter 2 · Back Vowels: O Ó

abc More Back Vowels — o ó

In Chapter 1 you met **a** and **á**. Today you add the next pair of back vowels, **o** and **ó**. Unlike **a** / **á**, these two are the **same sound**, short and long. You'll also read your first full Hungarian question: *Hol a ház?* ("Where is the house?").

BACK VOWELS	SHORT	LONG	RESPELLED
Chapter 1	a	á	aw · ah
Chapter 2 (today)	o	ó	o · oh
Chapter 3	u	ú	(next chapter)

🌟 Two New Vowels — o ó

O

O · o

short, like the "o" in *more* but without the "r" and without gliding to "oo" — respelled **o**

back vowel · short

Mouth tip: round your lips into a neat "O" and keep them still while you say a short, pure vowel. Scottish speakers have an advantage: the vowel of Scots *no* and *go* doesn't glide, so it is close.

Ó

Ó · ó

the same sound, held about twice as long, like the "o" in *boat* without the glide — respelled **oh**

back vowel · long

Mouth tip: same rounded lips and same position as *o*, but hold it steady. Don't let it slide into "ow" (English *go* in a southern accent) or "oo".

o and a: Two Rounded Back Vowels

Both **a** ("aw", as in *hot*) and **o** are produced at the back of the mouth with rounded lips. The difference is how **open** the mouth is: **a** has the mouth wider open, and **o** has a smaller, rounder shape. Say "hot" (a) and then "more" without the r (o), and feel your jaw close slightly.

Don't Confuse o with ö

A letter with two dots, **ö**, is a completely different vowel from **o** (it's a *front* vowel, which you'll meet in Chapter 6). The same goes for **ó** (one acute accent) against **ő** (the "double acute"). Always check the marks.

Read It — New Words

You can now read all of these. Two flags: **j** is said "y" (Chapter 14), and **s** is said "sh" (Chapter 13). Those two letters are in the table, with notes, because the words are so useful.

#	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	NOTE
1	ló	LOH	horse	long ó
2	tó	TOH	lake	long ó
3	hó	HOH	snow	also means "month"
4	jó	YOH	good	j is said "y"
5	óra	OH-raw	hour; clock; lesson	long ó, then short a
6	hol	HOL	where	short o
7	bor	BOR	wine	tapped r
8	kor	KOR	age; era	short o
9	ott	OTT	there	double t: hold the t

#	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	NOTE
10	orr	ORR	nose	double r: a longer tap
11	rokon	RO-kon	relative (family member)	stress on RO
12	sok	SHOK	many, much	s is said "sh"

A Short and Long Pair: kor and kór

The only difference between **kor** (KOR, "age, era") and **kór** (KOHR, "disease, illness") is the length of the vowel. This is why the accent marks matter: a missing accent can change a word completely. Think of the accent as a "hold it" mark.

Your First Questions and Answers

With *hol* ("where"), *ott* ("there") and *a / az* ("the"), you can ask and answer where things are. Notice that Hungarian doesn't need a word for "is" here: *Hol a ház?* is literally "Where the house?"

① Where Is the House? — Hol a ház?

A:

Hol a ház?

HOL aw HAHZ?

Where is the house?

B:

Ott a ház.

OTT aw HAHZ.

The house is there.

② Where Is the Apple? — Hol az alma?

A:

Hol az alma?

HOL awz AWL-maw?

Where is the apple?

B:

Ott az alma.

OTT awz AWL-maw.

The apple is there.

③ Where Is the Lake? — Hol a tó?

A:

Hol a tó?

HOL aw TOH?

Where is the lake?

B:

Ott a tó. Jó!

OTT aw TOH. YOH!

The lake is there. Good!

Real Hungarian Tip — Double Letters Are Long

In *ott* and *orr*, the doubled consonant means a **long** consonant: you hold the sound for an extra beat, like the "t" in the English phrase "hot-tub" or the double "r" in a Scottish "burr". Hungarian doubles consonants freely, and they change meaning (*hal* "fish" and *hall* "hears" are different words). Chapter 18 returns to this in detail. For now, just hold doubled letters slightly longer.

Review: Chapter 1 Words

Cover the English and read these again: ház (house) · tál (dish) · ma (today) · apa (father) · alma (apple) · nap (sun, day) · hal (fish) · lap (page) · kar (arm) · kár (a pity) · ablak (window) · barát (friend).

Try It Yourself — Gyakorlatok

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

1. Say the four back vowels you know, in order, with their respellings: a · á · o · ó

▼ Show answer

a = aw (short, rounded) · á = ah (long) · o = o (short) · ó = oh (long).

2. How do O and Ó differ, compared with a and á?

▼ Show answer

o and ó are the **same sound**, short and long. a and á differ in both length *and* sound.

3. Read aloud and translate: ló · tó · hol

▼ Show answer

LOH (horse) · TOH (lake) · HOL (where)

4. What is the difference between **kor** and **kór**?

▼ Show answer

Only the length of the vowel: KOR means "age, era"; KOHR means "disease".

5. Say in Hungarian: "Where is the house?" and "Where is the apple?"

▼ Show answer

Hol a ház? and Hol az alma? (*a* before a consonant, *az* before a vowel.)

6. What does **ott** mean, and what does the double *t* tell you?

▼ Show answer

"There". The double *t* is a **long** consonant, so hold the "t" for an extra beat.

Coming Up in Chapter 3

The back vowels finish with **u** and **ú**. You'll then read *út* (road), *hús* (meat) and *nulla* (zero), and see the full set of six back vowels together.