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HUNGARIAN LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 · Chapter 1 · Greetings & Goodbyes

Hungarian Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 1 · Greetings & Goodbyes

👋 Greetings & Goodbyes — Köszönések és búcsúzás

Welcome to your first Hungarian conversation lesson. By the end of this chapter you will be able to greet people at any time of day, thank them, apologise, ask how they are and say goodbye, choosing between the formal and informal style. Every Hungarian line has a **respelling beneath it** (the same key you used in Hungarian Alphabet 1), so you can read it aloud with confidence.

① Good Morning (formal) — Jó reggelt

A:

Jó reggelt kívánok, Nagy asszony!

YOH REHG-gehlt KEE-vah-nok, NAWDY AWS-sony!

Good morning, Mrs Nagy!

B:

Jó reggelt, Kovács úr! Hogy van?

YOH REHG-gehlt, KO-vahch OOR! HODY VAWN?

Good morning, Mr Kovács! How are you?

A:

Köszönöm, jól. És Ön?

KEU-seu-neum, YOHL. AYSH EUN?

Fine, thank you. And you?

B:

Én is jól vagyok, köszönöm.

AYN IHSH YOHL VAW-dyok, KEU-seu-neum.

I'm fine too, thank you.

② Meeting a Friend (informal) — Szia!

A:

Szia, Anna!

SIH-aw, AWN-naw!

Hi, Anna!

B:

Szia, Péter! Hogy vagy?

SIH-aw, PAY-tehr! HODY VAWDY?

Hi, Péter! How are you?

A:

Köszi, jól. És te?

KEU-sih, YOHL. AYSH TEH?

Fine, thanks. And you?

B:

Én is jól vagyok.

AYN IHSH YOHL VAW-dyok.

I'm fine too.

③ Evening at the Hotel — Jó estét

A:

Jó estét kívánok!

④ Good Night — Jó éjszakát

A:

Jó éjszakát!

YOH EHSH-tayt KEE-vah-nok!
Good evening! (Philip, arriving)

B:

Jó estét! Üdvözlöm!
YOH EHSH-tayt! UED-veuz-leum!
Good evening! Welcome!

A:

Köszönöm szépen!
KEU-seu-neum SAY-pehn!
Thank you very much!

B:

Szívesen!
SEE-veh-shehn!
You're welcome!

YOH AY-saw-kaht!
Good night!

B:

Jó éjszakát! Szép álmokat!
YOH AY-saw-kaht! SAYP AHL-mo-kawt!
Good night! Sweet dreams!

⑤ Excuse Me — Elnézést

A:

Elnézést!
EHL-nay-zaysht!
Excuse me!

B:

Semmi baj.
SHEHM-mih BAWY.
No problem.

A:

Bocsánat!
BO-chah-nawt!
Sorry!

B:

Nem baj!
NEHM BAWY!
Never mind!

⑥ Saying Goodbye — Viszontlátásra

A:

Viszontlátásra!
VIH-sont-lah-tah-shraw!
Goodbye! (formal)

B:

Viszontlátásra!
VIH-sont-lah-tah-shraw!
Goodbye!

A:

Szia, Anna! Viszlát holnap!
SIH-aw, AWN-nawt! VIHS-laht HOL-nawp!
Bye, Anna! See you tomorrow! (informal)

B:

Szia, Péter!
SIH-aw, PAY-tehr!
Bye, Péter!

Key Phrases — Fontos kifejezések

Hungarian has two styles of address. With **friends, family and people your age** you use the informal **te** (tegezés). With **strangers, shop staff, hotel staff and older people** you use the formal style (magázás), which is built on the 3rd person (Hogy van?, literally "How is he/she?"). In this chapter every phrase is given in both.

SITUATION	FORMAL (ÖN)	INFORMAL (TE)
Good morning	Jó reggelt (kívánok)! <i>YOH REHG-geht (KEE-vah-nok)</i>	Jó reggelt! <i>YOH REHG-geht</i>
Hello (daytime)	Jó napot (kívánok)! <i>YOH NAW-pot (KEE-vah-nok)</i>	Szia! <i>SIH-aw</i>
Good evening	Jó estét (kívánok)! <i>YOH ESHH-tayt (KEE-vah-nok)</i>	Szia! <i>SIH-aw</i>
Good night	Jó éjszakát! <i>YOH AY-saw-kaht</i>	Jó éjt! <i>YOH AYT</i>
Goodbye	Viszontlátásra! <i>VIH-sont-lah-tah-shraw</i>	Viszlát! / Szia! <i>VIHS-laht / SIH-aw</i>
How are you?	Hogy van? <i>HODY VAWN</i>	Hogy vagy? <i>HODY VAWDY</i>
Thank you	Köszönöm! <i>KEU-seu-neum</i>	Kösz! <i>KEU-sih</i>
Please (I ask you)	Kérem! <i>KAY-rehm</i>	Kérlek! <i>KAYR-lehk</i>
You're welcome	Szívesen! <i>SEE-veh-shehn</i>	Szívesen! <i>SEE-veh-shehn</i>
Excuse me / Sorry	Elnézést! / Bocsánat! <i>EHL-nay-zaysht / BO-chah-nawt</i>	Bocsi! <i>BO-chih</i>

Formal or Informal? A Simple Rule

If you would call the person by their first name in English, use **informal** (*Szia!*, *Hogy vagy?*). If you would say "Mr/Mrs" or "sir/madam", use **formal** (*Jó napot kívánok!*, *Hogy van?*). In shops, hotels and offices, start formal: nobody will mind.



Which Greeting When — Napszakok

WHEN	SAY	NOTES
Morning	Jó reggelt! <i>YOH REHG-gehl't</i>	until about mid-morning
Daytime	Jó napot! <i>YOH NAW-pot</i>	the all-purpose formal hello until evening
Evening	Jó estét! <i>YOH ESHH-tayt</i>	from about the early evening
Going to bed	Jó éjszakát! <i>YOH AY-saw-kaht</i>	said as you say goodbye for the night



Titles — Megszólítás

In Hungarian the **family name comes first**, and the title follows it: *Kovács úr* ("Mr Kovács"), *Nagy asszony* ("Mrs Nagy").

TITLE	USED AFTER A SURNAME	EXAMPLE
úr <i>oor</i>	Mr (formal)	Kovács úr <i>KO-vahch oor</i>
asszony <i>AWS-sony</i>	Mrs (formal; for a married woman)	Nagy asszony <i>NAWDY AWS-sony</i>
(none)	friends and peers: first name only	Anna, Péter <i>AWN-naw, PAY-tehr</i>



Three Verbs for Greetings — Igék

Hungarian verbs change their ending for each person. Here is the regular present tense of three useful verbs. You already know the harmony rules: -ok / -ek / -ök follow the vowels of the verb. Notice that *látni* is the heart of *Viszontlátásra* ("until seeing again").

	KÍVÁNNI (TO WISH)	KÖSZÖNNI (TO GREET; TO THANK)	LÁTNI (TO SEE)
én (I) <i>AYN</i>	kívánok <i>KEE-vah-nok</i>	köszönök <i>KEU-seu-neuk</i>	látok <i>LAH-tok</i>
te (you, informal) <i>TEH</i>	kívánsz <i>KEE-vahns</i>	köszönsz <i>KEU-seuns</i>	látsz <i>LAHTS</i>
ő, Ön (he/she; you, formal) <i>EUU, EUN</i>	kíván <i>KEE-vahn</i>	köszön <i>KEU-seun</i>	lát <i>LAHT</i>
mi (we) <i>MIH</i>	kívánunk <i>KEE-vah-nunk</i>	köszönünk <i>KEU-seu-nuenk</i>	látunk <i>LAH-tunk</i>
ti (you, plural informal) <i>TIH</i>	kívántok <i>KEE-vahn-tok</i>	köszöntök <i>KEU-seun-teuk</i>	láttok <i>LAHT-tok</i>
ők, Önök (they; you, plural formal) <i>EUUK, EU-neuk</i>	kívánnak <i>KEE-vahn-nawk</i>	köszönnek <i>KEU-seun-nehk</i>	látnak <i>LAHT-nawk</i>

kívánok: Why "I Wish"?

Jó napot kívánok! literally means "I wish (you) a good day". Adding *kívánok* makes the greeting a little more polite and more traditional: *Jó napot!* alone is perfectly fine too, and very common.



Vocabulary — Szókinsz

20 key words. Read the Hungarian first, then check the respelling (CAPITALS = the stressed first syllable).

#	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	jó	YOH	good	adj
2	jól	YOHL	well	adj
3	reggel	REHG-gehl	morning	noun
4	nap	NAWP	day; sun	noun
5	este	EHSB-teh	evening	noun
6	éjszaka	AY-saw-kaw	night	noun
7	szia	SIH-aw	hi; bye (informal)	phrase
8	viszontlátásra	VIH-sont-lah-tah-shraw	goodbye (formal)	phrase
9	viszlát	VIHS-laht	bye; see you	phrase
10	köszönöm	KEU-seu-neum	thank you	phrase
11	köszi	KEU-sih	thanks (informal)	phrase
12	kérem	KAY-rehm	please (formal)	phrase
13	szívesen	SEE-veh-shehn	you're welcome; gladly	phrase
14	elnézést	EHL-nay-zaysht	excuse me	phrase
15	bocsánat	BO-chah-nawt	sorry	phrase
16	hogy van?	HODY VAWN	how are you? (formal)	phrase
17	igen	IH-gehn	yes	phrase
18	nem	NEHM	no; not	phrase
19	úr	OOR	Mr; gentleman	noun
20	asszony	AWS-sony	Mrs; woman	noun

Real Hungarian Tip — Szia Means Hello AND Goodbye

Szia! works both as "hi" and "bye", so you can use it all day with friends. To a group, say **Sziasztok!** (*SIH-aws-tok*). A very similar casual word is **Szervusz!** (*SEHR-vus*), and **Helló!** (*HEHL-loh*) is also common.

Csókolom — A Child's Greeting

Hungarian children greet older adults with **Csókolom!** (*CHOH-ko-lom*), literally "I kiss it (your hand)". It is a traditional, very polite greeting from a child to an adult, and you will hear it said all the time. As an adult learner you do not need it: *Jó napot kívánok!* is the right choice for you.

Tessék! — A Handy Little Word

You met **tessék** in the alphabet course (*TEHSH-shayk*). It means "here you are", "go ahead" or "yes? can I help?", depending on the situation. A shop assistant may say *Tessék!* to invite you to speak, and you say it when you hand something over.

Stress Is Always on the First Syllable

Remember what you learned in the alphabet course: Hungarian words are always stressed on the **first** syllable, so *köszönöm* is *KEU-seu-neum*, never *keu-SEU-neum*. That makes the stress easy and the long vowels the thing to listen for.

Try It Yourself — Gyakorlatok

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

1. It is morning and you meet an older neighbour, Mr Kovács. What do you say?

▼ Show answer

Jó reggelt kívánok, Kovács úr! (*YOH REHG-gehl't KEE-vah-nok, KO-vahch OOR*)

2. A friend your age asks how you are. Reply, and ask back.

▼ Show answer

Köszí, jól. És te? (KEU-sih, YOHL. AYSH TEH?)

3. What is the formal way to say "How are you?", and the informal way?

▼ Show answer

Formal: **Hogy van?** · informal: **Hogy vagy?**

4. You step on someone's foot on the tram. What do you say?

▼ Show answer

Elnézést! or **Bocsánat!**

5. Say goodbye formally to a shop assistant, then informally to a friend.

▼ Show answer

Viszontlátásra! · **Szia!** / **Viszlát!**

6. What do you say to someone who says Köszönöm szépen?

▼ Show answer

Szívesen! (SEE-veh-shehn)

Coming Up in Chapter 2

Introducing yourself: **A nevem ...** ("my name is"), **... vagyok** ("I am"), **Hogy hívják?** ("what is your name?") and the verb **lenni** ("to be"), including the surprising fact that Hungarian leaves out *is* in the third person.