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HUNGARIAN LESSON

Basic Conversation 1 • Chapter 5 • Talking About Your Family

Hungarian Basic Conversation 1

Chapter 5 · Talking About Your Family



Talking About Your Family — A család

Talking about family is one of the most natural topics for a beginner, and it introduces two big Hungarian ideas: **possessive endings** (there is no word for "my": the ending on the noun does the job) and the **Hungarian way to say "I have"**. Every line has a respelling beneath it.

① How Many in Your Family? — Hányan vagytok?

A:

Hányan vagytok a családban?

HAH-nyawn VAWDY-tok aw CHAW-lahd-bawn?

How many of you are there in the family?

B:

Négyen vagyunk: anya, apa, a húgom és én.

NAY-dyehn VAW-dyunk: AW-nyaw, AW-paw, aw HOO-gom AYSH AYN.

There are four of us: mum, dad, my younger sister and me.

② Do You Have Siblings? — Van testvéred?

A:

Van testvéred?

VAWN TEHSHT-vay-rehd?

Do you have a brother or sister?

B:

Igen, van egy bátyám.

IH-gehn, VAWN EHDY BAH-tyahm.

Yes, I have an older brother.

A:

Hány éves?

HAHNY AY-vehsh?

How old is he?

B:

Harminc éves.

HAWR-mints AY-vehsh.

He's thirty.

③ An Only Child — Egyke vagyok

A:

Neked van testvéred?

NEH-kehd VAWN TEHSHT-vay-rehd?

Do you have a sibling?

④ Asking After the Family (formal) — A családja

A:

Hogy van a családja?

HODY VAWN aw CHAW-lahd-yaw?

How is your family?

B:

Nincs, egyke vagyok.

NINCH, EDY-keh VAW-dyok.

No, I'm an only child.

A:

Értem.

AYR-tehm.

I see.

B:

Köszönöm, mindenki jól van.

KEU-seu-neum, MIN-dehn-kih YOHL VAWN.

Thank you, everyone is well.

A:

Örülök.

EU-reu-leuk.

I'm glad.

⑤ A Family Photo — A családom

A:

Ez a családom.

EHZ aw CHAW-lah-dom.

This is my family.

B:

Szép család!

SAYP CHAW-lahd!

A lovely family!

A:

Ő az apám, ő az anyám.

EUU AWZ AW-pahm, EUU AWZ AW-nyahm.

That's my father, that's my mother.

⑥ Children and Pets — Gyerek, kutya

A:

Van gyereked?

VAWN DYEh-reh-keh-d?

Do you have children?

B:

Igen, van egy lányom. Hat éves.

IH-gehn, VAWN EHDY LAH-nyom. HAWT AY-vehsh.

Yes, I have a daughter. She's six.

A:

És macskád is van?

AYSH MAWCH-kahd IHSH VAWN?

And do you have a cat too?

B:

Nem, egy kutyánk van.

NEHM, EHDY KU-tyahnk VAWN.

No, we have a dog.



Family Words — Családtagok

Hungarian has separate words for **older** and **younger** brothers and sisters (*báty, öcs, nővér, húg*), and a general word for either, *testvér*.

MEANING	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	NOTES
family	család	CHAW-lahd	
mother	anya	AW-nyaw	also <i>anyu</i> , <i>mama</i>
father	apa	AW-paw	also <i>apu</i> , <i>papa</i>
parents	szülők	SUE-leuuk	
brother or sister	testvér	TEHSHT-vayr	no word for sibling gender: just <i>testvér</i>
older brother	báty	BAHTY	
younger brother	öcs	EUCH	
older sister	nővér	NEUU-vayr	<i>nővér</i> also means nurse
younger sister	húg	HOOG	
grandmother	nagymama	NAWDY-maw-maw	informal: <i>nagyi</i> (NAW-dyih)
grandfather	nagypapa	NAWDY-paw-paw	informal: <i>papa</i>
child (son / daughter)	gyerek / fiú / lány	DYEH-rehk / FIH-oo / LAHNY	<i>fiú</i> = boy; son, <i>lány</i> = girl; daughter
husband / wife	férj / feleség	FAYRY / FEH-leh-shayg	

🔑 My, Your, His/Her: The Possessive Endings — Birtokos személyjelek

*Hungarian does not use a separate word for "my" or "your": it adds an **ending to the noun**. The ending changes with the person and, as usual, with vowel harmony.*

WORD	MY	YOUR (INFORMAL)	HIS / HER
anya (mother) <i>AW-nyaw</i>	anyám <i>AW-nyahm</i>	anyád <i>AW-nyahd</i>	anyja <i>AWNY-yaw</i>
apa (father) <i>AW-paw</i>	apám <i>AW-pahm</i>	apád <i>AW-pahd</i>	apja <i>AWP-yaw</i>
testvér (sibling) <i>TEHSHT-vayr</i>	testvérem <i>TEHSHT-vay-rehm</i>	testvéred <i>TEHSHT-vay-rehd</i>	testvére <i>TEHSHT-vay-reh</i>
báty (older brother) <i>BAHTY</i>	bátyám <i>BAH-tyahm</i>	bátyád <i>BAH-tyahd</i>	bátyja <i>BAHTY-yaw</i>
húg (younger sister) <i>HOOG</i>	húgom <i>HOO-gom</i>	húgod <i>HOO-god</i>	húga <i>HOO-gaw</i>
család (family) <i>CHAW-lahd</i>	családom <i>CHAW-lah-dom</i>	családod <i>CHAW-lah-dod</i>	családja <i>CHAW-lahd-yaw</i>

The Rules of Thumb

my = **-m** (after a vowel) or **-om** / **-em** / **-öm** (after a consonant): *anyám, testvérem, húgom*. **your (informal)** = **-d** or **-od** / **-ed** / **-öd**: *anyád, testvéred*. **his / her** = **-a** / **-e** / **-ja** / **-je**: *testvére, anyja*. Notice that a final *-a* or *-e* of the noun **lengthens** before *-m* and *-d*: *anya* → *anyám*, *apa* → *apám*. A few words are irregular (such as *öcs* → *öcsém, öccse*): learn them as you meet them.

"I Have" — Van ...

Hungarian has no verb "to have". It says "**there is my sibling**" instead: *Van egy bátyám* means "I have an older brother" (literally "there is a brother-of-mine"). The possessive ending on the noun tells you whose it is, and **van** says it exists.

SAY THIS	HUNGARIAN	MEANING
Do you have ...?	Van testvéred? <i>VAWN TEHSHT-vay-rehd</i>	Do you have a sibling?

SAY THIS	HUNGARIAN	MEANING
I have ...	Van egy bátyám. <i>VAWN EH DY BAH-tyahm</i>	I have an older brother.
I don't have ...	Nincs testvérem. <i>NINCH TEHSHT-vay-rehm</i>	I don't have a sibling.
I have two ...	Két testvérem van. <i>KAYT TEHSHT-vay-rehm VAWN</i>	I have two siblings.
I'm an only child	Egyke vagyok. <i>EDY-keh VAW-dyok</i>	
There are four of us	Négyen vagyunk. <i>NAY-dyehn VAW-dyunk</i>	



"The Two of Us" — Ketten, hárman, négyen

To say how many people there are, Hungarian uses special forms of the numbers with **-en** / **-an**:

NUMBER OF PEOPLE	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT
two of us / them	ketten	KEHT-tehn
three	hárman	HAHR-mawn
four	négyen	NAY-dyehn
five	öten	EU-tehn
six	hatan	HAW-tawn
how many people?	hányan	HAH-nyawn



Three More Verbs — Igék

	SZERETNI (TO LOVE; TO LIKE)	ÉLNI (TO LIVE)	ISMERNI (TO KNOW A PERSON)
én (I) <i>AYN</i>	szeretek <i>SEH-reh-tehk</i>	élek <i>AY-lehk</i>	ismerek <i>IHSH-meh-rehk</i>
te (you) <i>TEH</i>	szeretsz <i>SEH-rehts</i>	élsz <i>AYLS</i>	ismersz <i>IHSH-mehrs</i>
ő, Ön <i>EUU, EUN</i>	szeret <i>SEH-reht</i>	él <i>AYL</i>	ismer <i>IHSH-mehr</i>
mi (we) <i>MIH</i>	szeretünk <i>SEH-reh-tuenk</i>	élünk <i>AY-luenk</i>	ismerünk <i>IHSH-meh-ruenk</i>
ti (you, pl.) <i>TIH</i>	szerettek <i>SEH-reht-tehk</i>	éltek <i>AYL-tehk</i>	ismertek <i>IHSH-mehr-tehk</i>
ők (they) <i>EUUK</i>	szeretnek <i>SEH-reht-nehk</i>	élnék <i>AYL-nehk</i>	ismernek <i>IHSH-mehr-nehk</i>



Vocabulary — Szókincs

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

#	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
1	család	CHAW-lahd	family	noun
2	anya	AW-nyaw	mother	noun
3	apa	AW-paw	father	noun
4	szülők	SUE-leuuk	parents	noun
5	testvér	TEHSHT-vayr	brother or sister; sibling	noun
6	báty	BAHTY	older brother	noun

#	HUNGARIAN	SAY IT	ENGLISH	TYPE
7	öcs	<i>EUCH</i>	younger brother	noun
8	nővér	<i>NEUU-vayr</i>	older sister	noun
9	húg	<i>HOOG</i>	younger sister	noun
10	nagymama	<i>NAWDY-maw-maw</i>	grandmother	noun
11	nagypapa	<i>NAWDY-paw-paw</i>	grandfather	noun
12	gyerek	<i>DYEH-rehk</i>	child	noun
13	férj	<i>FAYRY</i>	husband	noun
14	feleség	<i>FEH-leh-shayg</i>	wife	noun
15	fiú	<i>FIH-oo</i>	boy; son	noun
16	lány	<i>LAHNY</i>	girl; daughter	noun
17	kutya	<i>KU-tyaw</i>	dog	noun
18	macska	<i>MAWCH-kaw</i>	cat	noun
19	egyke	<i>EDY-keh</i>	only child	noun
20	mindenki	<i>MIN-dehn-kih</i>	everyone	noun

Real Hungarian Tip — Older and Younger Matter

Like Japanese, Hungarian marks whether a brother or sister is **older** or **younger**. *Báty* and *nővér* are older; *öcs* and *húg* are younger. Hungarians also use *testvér* when they don't need to say which.

Család Is Also Your Surname

Család means "family", and **családnev** ("family name") is the other common word for surname, alongside *vezetéknév* from Chapter 2. On a form you may see either one.

Mama, Papa, Nagyi

Hungarian children say **mama** and **papa** (or **anyu** and **apu**) for their parents, and **nagyi** (NAW-dyih) for a grandmother. The adult words *anya* and *apa* are what you say when you talk about your parents to other people.

The Ending Does the Work

Because the possessive is an ending, there is no word for "my" in *anyám* or *a családom*: the *-m* and *-om* are the "my". It feels strange at first, but you will soon hear it as a natural pattern: *apám*, *bátyám*, *húgom*, *testvérem*.

Try It Yourself — Gyakorlatok

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

1. Say "I have an older brother" and "I have a younger sister".

▼ Show answer

Van egy bátyám. · Van egy húgom.

2. Say "I don't have a sibling. I'm an only child."

▼ Show answer

Nincs testvérem. Egyke vagyok.

3. Ask a friend whether they have a sibling.

▼ Show answer

Van testvéred?

4. Say "We are four: mum, dad, my sister and me."

▼ Show answer

Négyen vagyunk: anya, apa, a húgom és én.

5. What is the formal way to ask how someone's family is?

▼ Show answer

Hogy van a családja?

6. How do you say "my mother" and "my father"? What happens to the final vowel?

▼ Show answer

anyám · apám: the final -a lengthens to -á before -m.

Coming Up in Chapter 6

Talking about your job: **Mi a foglalkozásod?** ("What's your job?"), **Mérnök vagyok** ("I'm an engineer"), and the endings **-nál / -nél** ("at") and **-ban / -ben** ("in") for saying where you work.