



A SIMPLE GUIDE TO HUNGARIAN CONVERSATION
IN LESS THAN 60 HOURS

LEARN HUNGARIAN FAST

BY RYAN O'LEARY-ALLEN

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01. FOREWORD



Almost everyone that had a close encounter with the Hungarian language would agree that it is a fascinating language! Alien to the rest of the world, the Hungarian language branched off from the ancient Uralic languages of Siberia over 1000 years ago. Hungarian has stayed true to form, with translation experts claiming it still uses 68% of its original etymons (compared to English, which uses just 4%).

To quote the late George Bernard Shaw:

“ AFTER STUDYING THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE FOR YEARS, I CAN CONFIDENTLY CONCLUDE THAT HAD HUNGARIAN BEEN MY MOTHER TONGUE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE PRECIOUS. SIMPLY BECAUSE THROUGH THIS EXTRAORDINARY, ANCIENT AND POWERFUL LANGUAGE IT IS POSSIBLE TO PRECISELY DESCRIBE THE TINIEST DIFFERENCES AND THE MOST SECRETIVE TREMORS OF EMOTIONS.”

Why are you inspired to learn Hungarian?

Whether it is for your partner, children, grandparents, your Hungarian heritage or because you plan to go to Hungary in the near future, you have stumbled across the right book!

This is a story of how I (a native English speaker) learned Hungarian, and serves as a guide for anyone else who wants to learn Hungarian in the shortest amount of time possible.



If you read this and implement the techniques, then you will absolutely be able to have a 10-minute conversation in Hungarian without reverting to English.

In fact, if you follow these guidelines exactly, it is impossible to not be able to speak Hungarian at a conversational level. I chose to learn Hungarian as my first-ever attempt at a foreign language. I was an adult when I started to learn and I had almost no belief it was possible when I started. Yet, here I am today, able to sit in a room with my Hungarian in-laws and speak for hours on end with no English.

My name is Ryan and I'm a 30-year-old Australian who learned to confidently speak the notoriously difficult language of Hungarian. Further, I did this without ever actually living IN Hungary. Instead, I achieved most of my conversation practice whilst there visiting on a few holidays.



I gave up on learning Hungarian more times than I care to remember, but eventually found the best way to learn it – a way that makes sense to English-native speakers. I have documented everything and put it in this book for you.

I always wished another English-native speaker who had successfully learned Hungarian would provide me with their method, but since I couldn't find that resource, instead I have documented everything that led me to success and put it in this book for you.

I know what works and what doesn't which will help save you a LOT of time!

What is it with Hungarian? Starting with the strange vocabulary. I mean, who puts dots and dashes on top of vowels? The confusing sentence structures. Does it always have to be the opposite of English structure? Not to mention those grammatical cases! Is everything really an “exception”?

These are all things I once looked at with no belief that I could effectively learn and understand them. Honestly, I don't think I would have ever understood them had I kept trying traditional learning methods. As it turned out, I was better off teaching myself.

Here's the thing, native Hungarian speakers don't understand how difficult it is to learn their language. Why? They didn't learn it the same way and never had a native English-speaker's perspective, or tried to learn as an adult. They never had to make a conscious effort to learn Hungarian, they just absorbed it as we did English.

02. MY STORY



As a young Australian guy, living and working in London, I was carefree about life and never envisioned myself speaking another language, let alone learning Hungarian. I started dating a girl named Enikő, who was, you guessed it, a Hungarian native.

I didn't know a lot about Hungary or the language, so after dating awhile I started researching the Hungarian language out of curiosity. I was quickly put off by the amount of negative comments I found on the internet:

“**Hungarian is the hardest language to learn in the world**”, “**Hindi has more in common with English than Hungarian**”, “**You’ll be wasting your time!**”, “**It is too hard to learn for anyone that hasn’t already learnt a second language**”, “**Don’t even try!**”

were some of the things I read. YIKES!

To add to this, the few London-based Hungarians I knew (aside from Enikő) were immensely proud of their difficult-to-learn language and less than positive about the prospect of a foreigner learning it. I gave up on the idea of learning Hungarian as quickly as I had thought of it.

Months went by and the relationship became more serious; I went to Hungary, met Enikő's family and even went on a separate holiday with Enikő and her parents. They didn't speak much English at all, so it was quite difficult to communicate.



I noticed Enikő was exhausted from all the translating and thought it would be nice if I could speak some Hungarian, at least to a basic conversational level. It pushed me to eventually make the decision to undertake this daunting task.

I told myself Hungarian was the only foreign language I would be able to practice on a regular basis, and took on the challenge. Enikő tried to tutor me for a couple of weeks at first. She tried teaching me sentence structure and verb conjugation, which went straight over my head. I felt like a first grader sitting in on a high school class.

Even the English grammatical terms she was using were hard for me as I hadn't learnt English grammar since I was a child in school. I was having a headache with it all, and with both of us working full-time and still trying to maintain our relationship, it was a bit too much of a strain. At this point, I could only say "I am Ryan" and decided it might be better to learn from a private tutor instead.

I found a tutor at our local library and began to meet with her for £20 per lesson, once-a-week.

Five lessons and one-hundred pounds later, I felt I had made very little progress. My tutor didn't understand the difficulties I was having and this was when I first realised the disconnect with a Hungarian teacher. She tried to make it work, but she had never been a native-English speaker trying to learn Hungarian.

Just because someone can speak Hungarian, that does not necessarily mean they know how to teach it to an English speaker.



My first ever Hungarian lesson from Enikő!

Unsurprisingly, the other tutors I had found were also Hungarian native speakers who had learnt English from a young age. They weren't on the same page as me and it felt like they were selling me false hope when they said I could easily learn their language.

One of the biggest hurdles I had to get over was thinking to myself

"I'm already an adult, I don't speak any other languages and I am trying to learn one of the hardest languages in the world with no proof that it can be done! How can I do it?"

I'm glad I can be that person for you, and offer a perspective like no Hungarian teacher can.

Rather than continue without confidence in the tutoring approach, I decided to teach myself until I came up with a new plan.

I started trying out ways to learn and memorise things, and soon came to realise that I was actually remembering everything the following day, and the day after, and the day after that! It wasn't even taking much effort, yet I was retaining more than 90% of what I had learnt.

Even after learning something for less than 1 minute it was being burnt into my memory. I was getting some serious Belief-Of-Progress (B.O.P)! Because I had B.O.P, I maintained my motivation and I started to accelerate the learning.

It was working!

In no time at all, I was saying words and phrases via skype to Enikő's parents and they understood me. It was such a cool experience to be able to say things they could understand (even if my grammar was like that of a 3-year-old at that stage).

Yes, it was out of my comfort zone, but I knew I was making progress, so I persevered, despite the awkward feeling.

For example, one day, after a gym session, I arrived back to our share house in London and walked straight in on a skype call with Enikő's parents. Boiling hot and with a red face after the jog home, her parents proceeded to ask me how I was? Naturally I said "I'm a bit hot!" in Hungarian. They paused... and then Enikő started to laugh.

What I didn't know is that in Hungarian, "**I am a bit hot**" directly translates to "**I am a bit gay**". In Hungary the correct way to say "**I am hot**" is "**I have warmth**".

I was a little embarrassed, but we all had a laugh and as you can tell I've never forgotten that moment, or how to tell someone that I was a bit hot.

I continued with my learning and when summer arrived, we were back in Hungary for another holiday. We spent a few days with Enikő's family and friends in a small holiday town near Debrecen, called Bogács. At first, I was avoiding conversation, then I had a few palinka's (the national alcoholic drink of Hungary) and soon the liquid gold had me talking to everyone. I made new friends in Hungary that didn't speak English! Just like Neo in The Matrix, I was beginning to believe!

From that point on, it slowly became normal to have these basic conversations and without even realising, they became better and better. My initial goal was to be capable of basic conversation with Enikő's parents and extended family. It was hard to believe, but I had more or less achieved what I had set out to do and let me tell you, it was rewarding.

I felt much more at home in Hungary being able to communicate with people without the need for Enikő to be there translating all the time. I was delighted with my new skills and excited to see what else I could learn.

I enrolled in a two-week Hungarian language course in Debrecen. When I arrived at class, I quickly realised I was speaking much better than everyone else. We all had similar knowledge of grammar, except I had real-life conversational experience with a large vocabulary to go with it, which made a noticeable difference.

I did make a lot more progress during this two-week course, but the progress again, came from Hungarian conversation with the teacher and other students more so than the grammatical lessons we were being taught. There was no magic pill or magic textbook that could replace the learning-through-conversation style I was getting used to.

Speaking the language is the fastest way to advance! Just like driving a car. You can read textbooks about driving but the only way to make good progress is by actually **driving**. Driving is scary for a short while until you get used to it. It is the same for learning to speak Hungarian.

After living abroad for a couple of years, I moved back to Australia with Enikő. I loved being able to say things to her without others knowing what we were talking about. There are many examples, one such being that I could use Hungarian to ask Enikő to hurry up at a shop because I needed to go to the toilet so people nearby couldn't hear!



A photo of us in England long before I spoke Hungarian or believed I could effectively learn it

I asked Enikő to marry me and we went back to Hungary for our wedding a year later. I never imagined I would be capable of making a speech in Hungarian at our wedding or be able to translate for all my Australian family in Hungary.

I consider myself bi-lingual these days because I have no trouble speaking to any Hungarian, at any time, about anything. If I don't understand something, I can quite easily pull apart their sentence to figure it out or simply ask them to please repeat. At the time of writing this, I haven't been studying Hungarian for a couple of years but it is ingrained in my brain. We only speak minimal Hungarian at home because we speak a lot faster and with more detail in English (yes, I'll admit, my wife's English is still much better than my Hungarian).

03. SETTING YOU UP FOR SUCCESS



Let's Clear A Few Things Up

I was someone who thought Hungarian was extremely difficult to learn. The truth is, the Hungarian language is just different, not difficult. For instance, children learn it just as quickly as they would learn English.

I could put forward a solid argument as to why English, is in fact harder to learn. English has almost identical sounding words that have completely different meanings based on context. For example: **where**, **we're** and **wear**, or the fact that the following sentence makes perfect

grammatical sense; **“All the faith he had had had had no effect on the outcome of his life.”**

So, if Hungarian is just as easy as English, then why is it labelled one of the hardest languages to learn? My take on this is that Hungarian is so unique, and not many other languages can compare to it. When learning Spanish for instance, one might say that if you already speak Italian or another Latin-based language you will understand how the Spanish language is structured.



Hungarian has different origins, and the language developed differently. Just keep an open mind and you will find it much less frustrating than I initially did to learn the Hungarian style. There are a multitude of apps and textbooks out there to help you learn Hungarian, but the pure fact is, Hungarian isn't a language that is adopted by many so help and encouragement are limited.

You need two things to learn Hungarian: **belief** you can do it and the **work ethic** to make it happen!

Believe that you absolutely CAN learn to speak this language. So many people I have met who are learning the language tell me they don't believe that they can within the first minute of my speaking to them. The power of positive thinking is half the battle when grappling with an uncommon tongue!

Have faith knowing that I learnt to speak Hungarian effectively and I can provide you with my unorthodox, yet highly effective formula. This should help with your **belief**.

The **work ethic** component requires that you commit to carry out 60 focused hours of Hungarian learning across a 2-4 month period. That's a minimum of just 30 minutes a day for 4 months. Without belief, your work ethic will start to drop. Without the work ethic your belief will start to fade. The two go hand-in-hand.

Believing can be hard but it is necessary. Did you know the only reason you can tie your shoes every morning is because you believe you can do it, and then you go and do it!? You don't question your method, and you don't second-guess your ability to complete the task, you just do it. The only reason you have the belief you can is because you have done it many times before. How did you do it the first time? You had encouragement! Someone teaching you from their own experience. That is how you will learn Hungarian. Keep it simple, use a proven method and put the hours in.

It can be tough to believe if you have no encouragement, but I believe you can do this, just as I did, so it's time now to believe in yourself too. For those of you who struggle with this, from here on it's crucial for you to stop thinking or saying Hungarian is one of the hardest languages in the world.

Don't listen to those who tell you that or kindly tell them that it does not help you to hear about how difficult it is all the time. Instead, think of it as



**ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE
LANGUAGES IN THE WORLD!**

A simple practice of saying out loud, three times per day *"I am learning to speak Hungarian and in just 60 focused-hours, anyone can learn to speak Hungarian!"* will help immensely. Don't be afraid to do this even if you have barely started to learn Hungarian. You might feel silly the first couple of times, but the more you say it the more you will start to feel it is true.

If you really don't believe you can learn to converse easily for a few minutes in Hungarian after you have completed 60 focused hours, then you really need to start doing this kind of self-talk today!

Contrary to popular belief, you don't need thousands or even hundreds of hours to learn to speak Hungarian. Those old projections were based on passing native-level exams. I became conversationally fluent in Hungarian with just 60 focused hours.

Tim Ferriss (famous author, entrepreneur and podcaster) had a 6-minute conversation in Tagalog on national television after just 12 focused hours of learning the Filipino language. He included it in one of his documentaries so everyone could see that it is, in fact, possible.

What exactly is a **focused hour**?

For me, this was an hour where I purely studied, spoke, listened or did a combination of all of these. Focused time did not include when I hopped on YouTube and got side-tracked for fifteen minutes!

To be focused we all know what we need; some people need a strong coffee, others need peace and quiet. Some wake up early to get their most important work done first thing whilst 'night owls' know the evening is when they are the most focused.

When you start to learn Hungarian or re-commit to learning, you need to make sure you are focused while learning. Carving that time out for yourself is super important.

With 60 focused hours, following my formula, you will be conversing in Hungarian.

But first, I recommend drawing up your new routine. Separate the 60 focused hours across 30, 60, 90 or 120 days. I personally found the shorter the challenge, the more chance you have sticking with it. 1 hour every day, 1.5 hours every second day or maybe 4 hours every third day.

Whatever it is, this is your new schedule, and you need to commit to it. It will be a challenge. It will be tough, mostly because you will get in your own way: talk negatively to yourself, stray from your routine, question the method, make all kinds of excuses and complain about the language being way too different to English. I've been there and trust me, I know. That is the "Human Factor" and you will just need to ride any emotions you have and keep on keeping on.

Remember this saying every time it gets a little hard:



THIS IS THE POINT WHEN MOST PEOPLE START GIVING UP, THIS IS THE POINT THAT SEPARATES ME FROM THE QUITTERS".

Take a 5-minute break, walk around the block, go easy on yourself and get back to it once you have cleared your head. 60 focused hours is all it takes!



Why, How, What, When?

Why?

Why are you learning Hungarian? Is it for your family, partner or partner's family? Your heritage, living or working circumstances? Or something else entirely? It helps to have a specific reason for why you are learning. I suggest you write it down on a small piece of paper and carry it with you in your wallet until you have completed the sixty focused hours as a physical reminder to motivate you and spur you on until you achieve your goal. It's a challenge to learn to speak Hungarian but it is completely doable. Make it a top priority for the set time-period or it just won't happen (remember belief and work ethic)!



**THE BIGGER THE WHY,
THE EASIER THE HOW"**

– Jim Rohn

How?

How you are going to learn is just as important as why. This book I have written for you is your 'how'. You have something to go back to, something to guide you. Never forget I was in your shoes - a non-native Hungarian speaker. If you commit to doing things as I have outlined and put in the focused hours, this will work for you 100%.



Once you commit to the method, you must stick to it. Don't try to combine this with different methods, textbooks, and teachers to try to find a quicker or easier way to reach your goal. This will confuse and convolute things and could hinder your progress in the timeframe I have offered.

60 focused hours is all you need and stick to this method until you have completed all (even when it feels like you aren't making progress)!

What & When?

What is your goal and when will you achieve it by? Be clear on this and make it public with as many people as possible (including any Hungarian/s you may know). Draw up a timeline, post it on social media, arrange a small Hungarian speech if you can. Why? To keep yourself accountable to your goal.

Having a six-minute conversation with a native Hungarian speaker who does not speak English is a good idea for an example. Schedule in a face-to-face conversation with this native Hungarian speaker 60 days from today. You can and should personalise this goal and the finish line to best suit you.

This is all still part of the setup phase. Before taking on a challenge you must put effort into the setup. Roger Federer could beat any player outside the top 100, but if he did not do the prep-work and warm up, it is quite possible he would lose to an opponent he knows he could have beaten.

Remember:

- ✓ Believe in yourself
- ✓ Hold yourself accountable
- ✓ Be consistent
- ✓ Stick to your schedule
- ✓ Set yourself up properly
- ✓ Remember your 'saying' for the hard times, know your 'why' and eyeball it every day.
- ✓ Commit to how you are going to learn and be specific with your finish line and end goal. Do all these things and before you know it, you will be able to speak Hungarian!

“**THE ABILITY TO AUTHENTICALLY COMMUNICATE IN A NEW LANGUAGE COMES A LOT EARLIER THAN PEOPLE THINK.”**

– Scott Young



04. MY METHOD - THE WAY YOU WILL LEARN HUNGARIAN TOO



The Hungarian Alphabet

First thing first, the alphabet. The Hungarian alphabet is extremely important to learn before anything else. That is one thing you cannot compromise on in the beginning. Hungarian is a phonetic language, which means everything is pronounced exactly how its written. There is no confusion.

Unlike in English where for example the letter 'u' in umbrella and burn makes two different sounds, in Hungarian it is pronounced the same,

'u' is just 'u' and only makes one sound. That is the beauty of this phonetic language.

It took me about one week of twenty-minutes-per-day to learn all 44 sounds of the alphabet like the back of my hand. Not the most exciting task, but worth the couple of 'focused hours' it took. Once you know how to make the sound of all 44 letters, you can move on to slowly read and speak at will, with comfort knowing you are pronouncing everything correctly.



The Hungarian Alphabet And Its Sounds

Focused hours needed to learn 44 alphabet sounds: 2 – 3 hours

A	sounds like English 'a' in wash
Á	sounds like English 'a' in a fter or la ger (dependant on which English accent you have – think “ahhh”)
B	just like English, 'b' in bu y
C	sounds like English 'ts' in ca ts
CS	sounds like English 'ch' in ch air
D	just like English, 'd' in do ne
DZ	sounds like English 'ds' in ca rd s
DZS	sounds like English 'j' in jo in
E	sounds like English 'e' in ge t
É	sounds like English 'e' in café
F	just like English, 'f' in fo llow
G	sounds like English 'g' in go od
GY	sounds like English 'du' in du ring which is like a d-y sound or in English slang “ D You wanna?!” (some foreigners pronounce it exactly as the English 'j' and although understandable, it is not quite correct)
H	sounds like English 'h' in ho pe
I	sounds like English 'i' in si t
I'	sounds like English 'ee' in pe el
J	sounds like English 'y' in yo-yo
K	sounds like English 'k' in ki te
L	just like English, 'l' in li fe
LY	sounds like English 'y' in yo-yo (pronounced the same as the Hungarian 'j')
M	just like English, 'm' in ma ke
N	just like English, 'n' in no w
NY	sounds like English 'ny' in ca nyon or ne w
O	sounds like English 'o' in fo rc e (note: this is not too different from the first 'a' as both are short sounds)

Ó	sounds like English 'o' in owe or rogue (it is the lengthened version of the previous 'o')
Ö	sounds like English 'er' in butter or 'u' in hurt
Ő	sounds like English 'er' in her (it is the lengthened version of the previous 'ö')
P	just like English, 'p' in put
Q	just like English, 'q' in cheque (this letter is rarely used in Hungarian language)
R	sounds like the Spanish rolled 'r' (quick guide on how to roll your 'r': https://www.wikihow.com/Roll-Your-%22R%22s)
S	sounds like English 'sh' in fish
SZ	sounds like English 's' in supermarket (this letter is the normal English 's')
T	just like English, 't' in today
TY	sounds like English 't-ye' or 'tu' in Tuesday
U	sounds like English 'u' in bull
Ú	sounds like English 'u' in rule (it is the lengthened version of the previous 'u')
Ü	sounds like English 'o' in do or you
Ű	sounds like English 'ew' in curfew (it is the lengthened version of the previous 'ü')
V	sounds like English 'v' in victory
W	sounds like English 'w' in win (this letter is rarely used in Hungarian language)
X	just like English, 'x' in taxi (this letter is rarely used in Hungarian language)
Y	sounds like English 'y' in city (this letter is rarely used in Hungarian language)
Z	just like English, 'z' in zoo
ZS	sounds like English 's' in pleasure

That's all 44 letters! This is learnt a lot easier in hearing rather than reading and I have created a video for further help. To access it, go to [learnhungarianfast.com](https://www.learnhungarianfast.com).

Vocabulary

The Word Wall

After learning the Hungarian alphabet, I dove into studying the language more. I quickly realised that Hungarian sentences are 'mashed up' so much that they are un-recognisable when they are directly translated into English.

I realised I needed to know sentence structure before I could start translating conversations I had with my wife's family. I also found that Hungarian doesn't use gender in language, so where we might say 'he' and 'she' in English, they just say 'it' for everything instead.

Words are also joined together, almost like a game to see how long a word can become. Instead of three words like **'In Your Car'** they will say one word **'Kocsidban'**. **Kocsi** (car) – **d** (your) – **ban** (in).

In addition, the vocabulary can seem alien - the word for painkiller is fájdalomcsillapító! There is also a word that is 44-letters long! I know all of this can sound scary, but let me just tell you regardless of ALL of that, I successfully and simply conquered this beast of a language. Instead of starting with all the above, which would have likely sent me crazy, I decided to go my own way.

I read somewhere that if you learnt 500 to 1,000 of the most common words of any particular language, you would know most of the words you need for basic conversation. So, I decided I would learn a few hundred words and then go and try to talk to people. Once before, I had heard of people learning 10, 20, 50 even 100 words per day so learning a few hundred words might be something I could do quite quickly and if it worked, great! If not, I wouldn't lose much time.

Going ahead with my simple word learning idea, I had to get a little creative as these strange and completely dissimilar words of the Hungarian language were not sticking in my head. Before you learn a Hungarian word, it is merely a new sound. It has no meaning.

To start, I wrote down my first 10 words on an A4 sheet and stuck it to my bedroom wall. I would then say the Hungarian word a couple of times until I could associate that sound with something in English - like a word, name, or phrase.

I started making up stories about the things I thought of when I said the Hungarian word. I learnt 35 words in one afternoon this way. The next day I went over them and managed to get about 32 or 33 of them correct. I did the same again with a new set of 35 words and a new A4 sheet. The day after that I remembered nearly all 70 words.

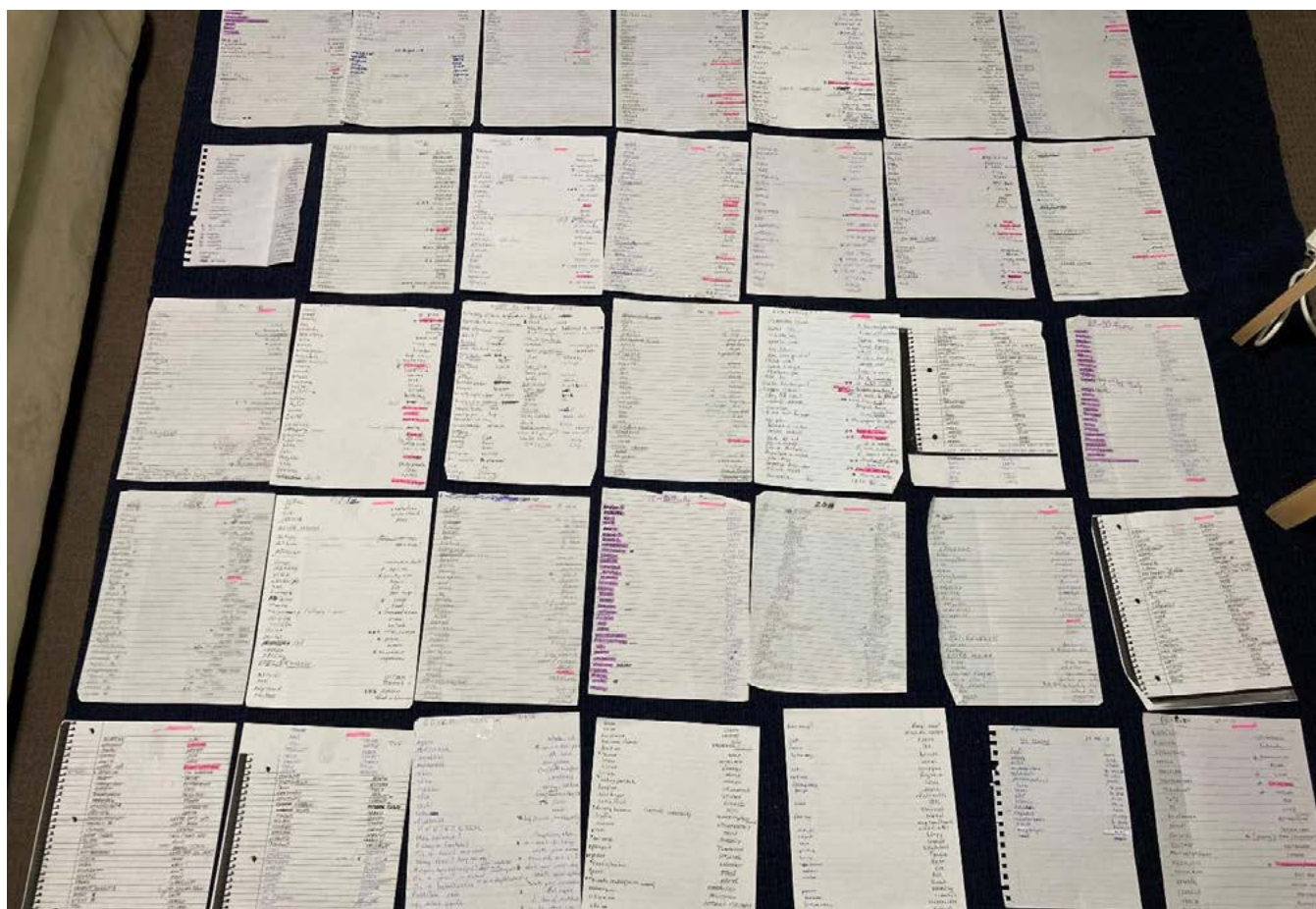


This memory technique was great and I wanted to see how far I could stretch it, so I continued a new set of 35 words every day until my entire bedroom wall was covered in A4 sheets (see below for evidence!). I figured that if I could remember 90% of the words I was learning, then why not just keep learning more and more? I'd place a new sheet up on my wall every day. I called it the **Word Wall**.

I had more than 30 pages on my wall and just over 1,000 words. It made me eager to advance further and start speaking the language more.

The success behind the word wall is that it builds a physical object to look at every day. You can see your progress or 'gains' in a physical form. It works wonders for you. Humans only do well at something if they know they are making progress.

It will make you feel proud seeing hundreds of Hungarian words on your wall every day and you can focus on the gains you have made rather than how far you still need to go. This is a great technique and there is a lot of science backing it.



My original word wall – obviously not on the wall anymore now that I remember them!

Learning Stories

The stories I made up for learning words started out simple, but quickly became more detailed as I realized they would stick better. The more details, the more easily you can remember. The key is making sure the sound you need to remember is very well associated with the English counterpart.

To give you an example, **Tojás** is the Hungarian word for 'egg'. It sounds and is pronounced exactly like 'TOY-ASH'. Here is my learning story for the word egg:

1. The images that came straight to my mind were a buzz-lightyear **toy** from the movie Toy Story and a pile of **ash**. So I had a) Toy and b) Ash.
2. I had to then associate an egg with these objects. I pictured in my imagination that the toy half burnt into a pile of ash.
3. Right near the remaining part of the toy was a large pile of toy ash with a crater dug out where an egg was sitting cooking away.
4. It looked as though the buzz-lightyear **toy** was cooking himself an **egg** in the ash. **A toy-ash egg!**

I became quicker and quicker with this 'learning by storytelling' method, but sometimes I would forget a word because my story-image process was rushed.

I found that the more steps and the more specific my story was, the more vivid my recall of the image in my head was and in turn, the easier it was to remember the next day.



Practice helped and over time I was able to go through this process faster and faster. Eventually, it would take me less than half a minute to make up a story in my head for each word (sometimes less if it was a shorter or more simple word).

It is important to note that the story **must** include the word you are trying to remember, and the parts that make up the word. If I was to remember the EGG in the pile of ASH without remembering the TOY, then I would not recall the word TOY-ASH when I needed it.

I had to make sure the image and story in my head included the three main parts EGG, TOY and ASH. There are some words which are difficult to do this with, but there is **always a way** and a story to make it work.

Let's take a look at another, more challenging, example. **Észrevesz** is the Hungarian word for the English word '**notice**'. I learnt this word early on, and although it was a word I rarely ever used, there is a good lesson here.

Pronounced as 'ACE-REH-VESS', it sounds a little like ACE-REVERSE.

1. I imagined Ace Ventura (the fictional pet detective movie character played by Jim Carey) reversing his car. This unfortunately wasn't sufficient and didn't work; I remembered the story of him reversing vividly, but I hadn't associated it with the word **notice**.
2. I came up with a different story, that included a saying I remembered: "If you notice this notice, you'll notice this notice is not worth noticing".
3. I added that to the story by placing a large wooden sign right behind Ace Ventura's car, which had this saying freshly painted on it.
4. When he jumped in his red Ferrari, **Ace reversed** right over the top of that notice sign because he did not notice it.
5. Using the RED FERRARI and FRESHLY PAINTED WOODEN SIGN gave the story more detail which is key to helping the information stick better in your long-term memory.

Taking a little more time to create more detail in the story so you can better visualise the images really does pay off. Even if it is just an extra 10-15 seconds, it can really help solidify the word in your memory. There is a lot of tested (and proven) science behind this technique.

I know it can be hard in the beginning, because it feels a little silly and it is not a traditional way of learning. It might even feel as if you are going against what you have otherwise been taught, but rest assured, it works!

This method was the first big break-through I had with learning Hungarian and it is also how I learnt my first 1,000 words in just over a month. I went from knowing only the alphabet to knowing how to say almost anything I wanted in the short time span of just 30-35 days.

It makes sense when you think about it; many articles state that 1,000 words make up about 80% of all spoken language. This didn't mean what I said was 100% grammatically correct, but it was completely understandable.

For example, 'I-eating-pasta-yesterday' is not grammatically correct, but it's very understandable and being understood was a great start that helped me with my **belief-of-progress**.

Something especially important to add to this technique, is to give yourself enough time to remember the words. The first 2 or 3 times you try to remember any particular word are the most important. If you give up after just a few seconds of trying to remember, you are not allowing those connections in your brain to develop. The connections you need to recall words better.



Think hard about the particular word and even skip it and come back to it. Do this **before** looking at the answer and ultimately needing to re-learn it. Re-learning is not an efficient use of time, especially when you might have remembered the word if you had tried just a few seconds longer.

When you first do this and take those extra 10 or 15 seconds to remember a word successfully, your brain strengthens. You realise that you can, in fact, recall words you didn't think you were able to.



Building Vocabulary

Ah if I had known back then when I started learning, what I know now...but it's true that hindsight is a great thing. Rather than knowing 1,000 words, I can now identify just 750 words that were better word options.

Basically, I could have worked smarter not harder with a better chance of understanding the spoken language, if I had learnt the most common questions and phrases people ask in Hungarian instead.

Lucky for you, since then, I have compiled a list of the most-common, real life words, phrases, and questions you will likely be using in any conversation with a Hungarian. In an effort to make your journey even easier, learning these 525 words and 75 phrases/questions will build a brilliant foundation.

If you would like to access these resources, please go to learnhungarianfast.com.

When I explain to people how I learnt all these words, their response was that I must have some kind of "super brain". I wish! The truth is I never thought I could do it either, but what most people don't realise is that by using the right methods, anyone can have a great memory (yes, even those who love to say that they have a terrible memory).

The memory is a muscle, and it becomes better and better with practice. There is so much evidence of this ([click here](https://learnhungarianfast.com) if you want to learn more about how your memory can be improved ten-fold).



The beautiful streets of Budapest in December

Many linguistic experts support this 'visual-story technique'. Stories are highly recognisable patterns and humans find meaning in those patterns without even trying.

We make sense of our world using stories and there is no exception to that. All humans share this understanding. Stories have a way of reaching our long-term memory quickly and therefore make learning words this way much more efficient.

The repetition method (in a nutshell, repeating words over and over each day until you remember them) will work just fine for you, visual-stories are much more effective.

My wife was taught English using the repetition method, whereby, she had to say the English word and then the Hungarian word and

repeat them many times, and although it was eventually effective, it was so slow and boring.

Another method is spaced-repetition- this way of learning vocabulary is based on scientific research and requires you to revise the new word right at the point you are about to forget it.

My method of visual-story telling learning incorporates aspects of the spaced repetition method. I would revise my Hungarian-English word wall daily and mark the ones I forgot with an asterisk. When I had marked more than two asterisks next to a single word I knew I needed to work on that word and potentially modify the story I had made for it.

SIMPLE. EFFECTIVE. PROGRESSIVE.

My visual-story method, if taken seriously and done properly, will soon prove it's worth to you and your memory will amaze you. Don't spend another moment crowding your mind trying to find the best method - you know the "Joe Smith did it this way and he said it was good for 'French' so maybe I should try that for Hungarian? "

I have found the most receptive method with universal success. The potency of this kind of story association method can be found if you filter through the multiple competing techniques for vocabulary learning content online.

Many language learners claim the recall ability is five times better than standard flashcard or repetition techniques, and almost all the polyglots have eventually come to use this method in one way or another.

Stories and long-term memory go hand-in-hand. A North American University study conducted in 1944 by professors on their students started by showing the students a short film of moving triangular objects and a circle. After the short film the professors asked each student separately to explain what they saw. Nearly all students came up with some kind of story as to what the moving objects meant or symbolised.

Some students said the triangles were men and the circle was female. Some said, one of the triangles was bad and the other good. Only one out of thirty-four students **stated correctly** that he saw just a couple of moving triangles and a circle.

Rather than spend your time trying out other methods (only to later discover they weren't effective for you), give this a go for the first 500 words.

When you incorporate the spatial-repetition method by going over the words daily, it helps solidify the words. The best part, is that once you have a firm base of vocabulary you don't have to focus as much on learning the (thousands) more. What I mean by this, is that once you are conversing in Hungarian, you pick up vocabulary quickly.

Download and use the Google Translate app on your phone if mid-conversation neither you or your speaking partner can think of the word.

I haven't worked on vocabulary lists for years now and I am able to converse well with between 4000-7000 words (which I have mostly picked up along the way). If you learn 20 new words per day, you can easily learn 500 words in a month. Just commit to spending at least 30 minutes per day learning your new words (with some time allocated to revise the words). After 15-20 hours of total vocabulary learning, it's time to move on to conversations.

Mark the words you're having trouble with and focus more time on them. When I did this, I learnt some words in 10 seconds and others in 60 seconds. The word fut (pronounced "foot") means run which was easy to learn for obvious reasons yet the word *fájdalomcsillapító* which means painkiller was harder to learn (also for obvious reasons)! The key is to be consistent with this daily process until you have completed the 500 words - you can accomplish so much in such a short period of time.





Verbs & Inflections

After building a bit of vocabulary, I started looking into verbs and the grammar needed to formulate sentences. The truth is, I was scared of the complexity of the many grammar lessons I came across and viewed it like exercise. Learning grammar felt like telling yourself you'll go to the gym even when you're tired. You don't want to do it, but you have to eventually if you want to work your muscles and see positive gains.

I decided it was easier to learn the grammar on-the-go rather than committing to learning a whole heap before I had conversations. I learnt a tiny amount of verb conjugation and grammar before speaking, and after that I just exposed myself to mini lessons constantly and only when I needed to understand something.

The two main things I focused on were always vocabulary and conversations –the grammar was always second-hand. This made learning

Hungarian simpler. With progression of vocabulary and speaking one-on-one in Hungarian I became better and better. Then, whenever I was stuck, I would learn some grammar to continue advancing, (those were my 'grammar mini-lessons').

Eventually, you will know a lot of grammar and a lot about verb conjugations. Along the way you will have questions about how to understand certain things, what to learn first, what not to worry about and how to get your head around things. For reference, I have written the following. Below, I have detailed what I learnt in the beginning and how I progressed from there. Plus, how to keep going even though things don't make much sense at the time.

Don't be frightened by the following few pages as it they will naturally go over your head initially, until you have put in the hours of vocabulary learning and had some one-on-one conversations.

Before we jump into learning about verbs, here are the **6 pronouns in Hungarian**.

Én	I
Te	You
Ő	He/She As stated, there is no gender identification in Hungarian so the Ő means "It" To be more appropriate you could assume Ő is "that person" as he, she, him, her, his, hers are all words that can be translated as Ő
Mi	We
Ti	You (plural) Hungarian differentiates between the singular and plural forms of you
Ők	They

Conjugating verbs

Conjugating verbs is something you must learn to be able to 'morph' the verb the right way so that it makes sense. For example, a verb like **run** would 'morph' into a similar but different word – whether it is me, you, him or them running. '*Fut*' means '*He is running*', whereas '*Futok*' means '*I am running*', '*Futunk*' means '*We are running*' and '*Futsz*' means '*You are running*' (and so on).

The first verb you will want to use is **van** in Hungarian. **Van** is like the English word **be** or **is** and these words mean **exist**.
To be = to exist.

In English we learn phrases like 'I am' and 'you are' and 'to be' when we are children on autopilot.

They are all associated with 'to be' or 'to exist', and without confusing yourself too much you will need to learn how to say simple things like who you are etc.

The word **lenni** means '**to be**' so the sentence "I don't want **to be** hungry" would include the word **lenni**. It is a strange word that is always infinitely in the future. To exist in the present you would use **van instead**. **Van**, as mentioned above is used for **it is, there is, is** or **have**, and when conjugated into first person—for example the '**am**' from 'I am' is **vagyok**.

Don't spend too much time pondering this as it can get a little confusing. Just think about trying to explain to someone what the word 'be' means in English and how it relates to the word 'am' and you will make more sense of the word 'van'.

Below are examples of all the present-tense forms of **be**: (**van** and morphed versions of **van**)

Vagyok	(I) am	Example: Ryan vagyok (I am Ryan), Éhes vagyok (I am hungry)
Vagy	(You) are	Example: John vagy (You are John), Éhes vagy ? (Are you hungry?)
Van	it is	Example: Hideg van ! (It is cold!)
Van	Have	Example: Van hamburgered?" (Do you have hamburgers?) The <u>ed</u> at the end of hamburger makes it 'your' hamburger
Van	there is	Example: Van remény!" (There is hope!)
Van	is	Example: John kész van (John is ready)
Vagyunk	(we) are	Example: Éhesek vagyunk (We are hungry), éhes becomes plural 'éhesek'
Vagytok	(you) are	Example: Éhesek vagytok ? (Are you (guys) hungry?)
Vannak	(they) are	Example: Éhesek vannak (They are hungry)

Are you still reading? Have you been scared off? I understand, dear reader! Remember, this is all just reference. Vocabulary and conversation are the two focuses, whereas grammar is second-hand. Keep that in mind as you read on!

Take a typical English verb like 'go' where we say things like "you are going", "I am going", "he/she is going". In Hungarian the word 'going' changes to create the same effect as 'he is', 'you are' or 'I am'.

As I mentioned before, the verb morphs into a similar but different word to match: he, we, I, etc. Learning the six basic forms of a verb was the starting point of grammar for me and also the last grammar I really learnt before I started conversing one-on-one.

This is the quickest and easiest way I was able to grasp how to start speaking sentences that made sense. I learnt **tanulni** which means **to learn** and **beszélni** which means **to speak**.

I learnt a lot of different sentences to cover all the different forms of these two verbs.

See my examples below:

I am learning to speak - (Én) **tanulok beszélni**

The "én" is the pronoun and you will find that a lot of the time Hungarians don't even use it because there isn't always a need for it. As you get further down into the depths of this language you will realise when it is appropriate or better to use, and when it is better to leave it out.

For context, in English we say “I am going” but if we left the “I” out and just said “am going” it could not be confused for anyone else because the word “am” is only associated with “I”, and this is how you can make a little sense out of not using the pronouns. Just know that you can generally always complete the sentences without using the pronoun of I, you, he, she and so on.

You are learning to speak - (Te) tanulsz beszélni

He is learning to speak - (Ő) tanul beszélni

We are learning to speak - (Mi) tanulunk beszélni

You (plural) are learning to speak - (Ti) tanultok beszélni

They are learning to speak - (Ők) tanulnak beszélni

Now, the other way: “I am speaking to learn”. What I mean by that is, I am speaking in the hope that by speaking I will eventually learn. I am speaking to learn the language.

I am speaking to learn - (Én) beszélek tanulni

You are speaking to learn - (Te) beszélsz tanulni

She is speaking to learn - (Ő) beszél tanulni

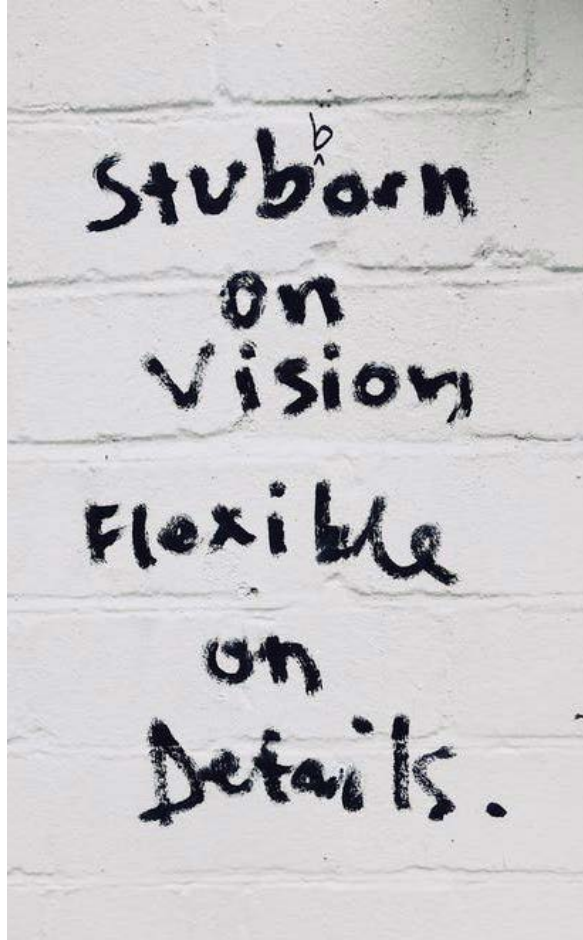
We are speaking to learn - (Mi) beszélünk tanulni

You (plural) are speaking to learn - (Ti) beszéltek tanulni

They are speaking to learn - (Ők) beszélnek tanulni

I learnt these until I was comfortable with that basic sentence structure. I didn't learn anything else until I could translate all twelve of those sentences above within a couple of seconds each.

Once it was firm in my head I had a solid foundation to work from. After that, I learnt how to do the same with some of the most common verbs.



Once you understand the very basic sentence structure of subject + verb, you can just replace the verbs for others and guess how the verbs are conjugated as long as you know the verb in its ‘base infinitive form’ (i.e., tanulni and beszélni). With this, you can also change the subject from ‘I’ to ‘you’ or ‘we’ etc.

Like anything, it takes practice before you feel you know and truly understand, but rest assured if you learn it this way you will start to get the hang of it pretty quickly. Ultimately, knowing the 6 basic forms of a verb will give you a great head start going into a one-on-one conversation.

I was still practicing my word wall every day by going over a couple of hundred words to see which I needed to put an asterisk next to. Then, I would include another ten or fifteen minutes of saying these random sentences out loud:

"I am going to run". "I am going to walk." "I want to build." "I want to learn." "I'd like to eat." "I'd like to drink." "We'd like to go." "We'd like to walk." Then some questions: "Would you like to walk?" "Do you want to run?" "Are you going to eat?" "Are we walking?" "Are we going?"

Every now and then, I'd refer to Google Translate on my phone to check pronunciation. If I said the Hungarian word correctly into the microphone of my iPhone, Google Translate would successfully translate it to English. If I was unsure of pronunciation, I would use the speaker button to hear what it should sound like. I suggest you also use that hack to ensure you are pronouncing correctly!

It's important to note that there are a few irregular verbs among the top twenty 'most used' verbs. They are irregular because they don't conjugate the same way. I figured this out mostly by speaking and having someone correct me. This is a quick way to learn because you get corrected on a specific word a couple of times and BOOM the correct way is cemented in your mind forever. There are only a handful of common verbs that are irregular, and I have included them below so you can learn them in the beginning.



To Be - Lenni
To Go - Menni
To Come - Jönni
To Eat - Enni
To Drink - Inni
To Sleep - Aludni

As already mentioned, learning how to conjugate verbs and learning a very basic sentence structure was the only grammar I learnt before I started having conversations. It helped hugely and didn't take too long. I practiced the above for approximately 30 minutes every second day for a few weeks before going to visit Hungary.

Focused hours spent on basic verb conjugation and very basic sentence structure: 5 – 7 hours



Conversations

Once I had tackled all the above and memorized approximately 1,000 words (which included many verbs), I wanted to try to have conversations. We had planned a longer visit to Hungary and I knew the best thing for me when I arrived was to try to use what I knew to speak Hungarian. Remembering, at that point, I still considered myself an absolute beginner.

Within the first day in Hungary I found myself in a few situations where Enikő was not around and I had to “use my words.” To my surprise, I was being completely understood. The next day, at breakfast with Enikő’s parents I asked for eggs and toast (and found myself apologising a lot for no reason) and suddenly realised I was able to communicate with her parents quite freely. My theory really did work! All the articles I read that tell beginners not to **just learn words** and then go and speak with

natives were incorrect! There I was, a non-native Hungarian beginner, communicating with her parents after learning only some vocabulary and a few hours of grammar.

In fairness, I didn’t understand much of what they were saying back, but I could pick up words here and there and their gestures were universal. As soon as I felt I should say something, I had a selection of words to pick from that worked perfectly well. This interaction gave me confidence in what I was doing and that helped me progress quickly through more and more of these situations.

The hardest thing is knowing you are making mistakes and there isn’t much you can do about it! To make less mistakes, you need to just keep talking and practising more.

I had to let go of any fear of embarrassment and that is also one of the biggest hurdles you need to overcome – just rip it off like a band aid! Once you get started and have that realisation that you CAN communicate without using English, you really start to believe in yourself.

THE BEST WAY TO GO ABOUT IT IS TO FOCUS ON GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS RATHER THAN SAYING THE RIGHT THING.

During this process, I had one or two people laugh at me because I made a mistake that must have sounded funny in Hungarian, and I won't lie, that was tough! In the moment I wanted to stop trying and maybe I did for a few hours or a day, but I was focused on my goal.

I also remembered I had laughed at something that sounded funny in a foreign language when I was younger. As a naïve kid who had no concept of learning a new language, I didn't appreciate when someone spoke broken parts of a language. These days, it is much different. I know they are in fact, smart and courageous, not slow!

It's now common knowledge that learning to speak a foreign language as an adult improves overall intelligence, concentration, memory and lowers risks of dementia and Alzheimer's. Within days of being in Hungary, I started to pick up random words and thought, "I know that word... and that one, and that one too!" Although this didn't mean I could follow the conversations, I immediately felt more comfortable in a foreign land.



I kept talking to native Hungarian people and they understood me. From the 1,000 words I had practiced, I realised I only needed around 500. This is why it is important to save time and learn the best selection of vocabulary. I had learnt the best way to pick up as much Hungarian as possible and commit it to memory as a beginner was to continue forward with more one-on-one conversations, even if they were just five minutes here and five minutes there.

The bonus was that the person in the conversation with me would correct me so it was like having a mini-lesson multiple times a day. With Enikő's parents they had patience and couldn't speak English so we had no option but to make our conversations work in Hungarian.

I did not know how to talk about the past, such as, "I went" or "I did" OR how to talk about the future, such as "I will go" "I will do". I couldn't even use any **prepositions** like "from" "in" "at" "to" at this stage, but was still managing conversations. How? People communicate via tone of voice and body language in addition to words.

You'd be surprised at how far you can get without hearing much of what people are saying, especially when you can use a few hundred words yourself.

I still remember having a basic starter conversation with Enikő's uncle:

"How are you?"

"Good!"

"Are you enjoying yourself?"

"Yes!"

This short exchange was enough for him to think I could speak fluent Hungarian and he quickly shifted the conversation into strange weather patterns in Hungary over the years and I nodded along for a few minutes. I told Enikő, "I just had a 5-minute conversation with your uncle about weather patterns. I don't know exactly what he said, but it was about the weather – I heard the word weather so many times. I heard hot. I heard cold. I heard storm. I heard rain."

Listening is harder than talking in my opinion because when you listen, the speaker doesn't always use the words you know. If you really

try to listen though you will eventually develop your ear. All too often I would feel myself start to zone out or daydream, thinking I don't understand what they are saying. I wish I realised earlier on as you need to be present in as many conversations as you can. Catching a few words and trying to understand what the other person is talking about is exactly the situation where you make the most progress and your brain adapts to the language.

Committing to speaking is a step you need to take but one that can feel like a huge leap, but the sooner you start to speak the better! The more time you put into speaking, the quicker you progress (which also means the faster you and others will forget how slow or awkwardly you were speaking in the beginning).

Once you start to speak in Hungarian on a regular basis the progress is unimaginable! Let this be another great motivator to help you reach your goals as quickly as possible. Take this as a 2 or 3 month challenge rather than something that takes you years.

It's strange for me now to think once upon a time I could listen to Hungarian and not understand what was being said. Now, I can hear my wife on the phone in the next room and pick up the conversation topic without even trying. It is such an enormous contrast now with how easy it has become, compared to the seemingly impossible task when you start out.

Focused hours of 100% one-on-one Hungarian conversation needed: 20 hours





Prepositions

To give you some idea, here are a few examples of how I quickly progressed in a couple of short weeks in Hungary. I would say something like “Yesterday, I eat the pasta” instead of “Yesterday, I ate the pasta” and people would correct me, but I was still understood.

I easily learnt through my conversations that all the verbs use a **‘tam’** or a **‘tem’** sound at the end of the word to express the past. For example, **tanulok**, which means ‘I am learning’ would become **‘tanultam’** which means I learnt.

I gave myself a brief lesson on prepositions while I was in Hungary. After researching a little and then speaking with Enikő, I figured out there are only a few common prepositions to learn. I memorised them in the same way I memorised my word wall. Once confident I knew

a few of them, I just started using them in my conversations.

Something I learnt quickly, was that in Hungarian instead of saying “In the Bag” they say “The Bag In”. I had to get used to putting the “in” which is the preposition (more like a postposition), at the end.

This is a general rule across all Hungarian prepositions. For, to, with, in, onto, into, from, at, after, next to, in front of, behind... and the list goes on. If you were saying “For David” or “For Dad”, it would become “David-for” and “Dad-for.”

Before I tell you that these Hungarian prepositions really aren’t that bad, I do remember learning them for the first time and wanting to hit my head on a brick wall.

The main point I focused on was my “Belief of Progress”, because after all, I was already having conversations. The sooner I stopped thinking, saying, or complaining about how hard learning this language was, the sooner I got out of my own way and realised it was completely doable.

The other thing to note about Hungarian prepositions is that the English equivalent does not necessarily translate to the Hungarian. You might want to say, “I put the book on the shelf” but in Hungarian the translation is “I put the book onto the shelf” and “on the shelf” isn’t grammatically correct. How would you know that “**onto** the shelf” is what you should say instead of “**on** the shelf”?! You learn these small grammatical things by speaking the language. Avoid hours and hours memorising all of them – rather, learn a handful and use them for everything until you get more familiar through conversation.

The most common prepositions are:

in – ban/ben
 to – ba/be
 from –ból/ből
 on – n
 onto – ra/re
 with – val/vel
 for – nak/nek

There is a couple of versions of each because the vowel you use depends on which word it goes behind. Again, speaking helps you with vowel selection as it is based on vowel harmony and how the words flow.

There are two types of vowels in general: front vowels and back vowels:

Front vowels are: e, é, i, í, ö, ő, ü, ű

Back vowels are: a, á, o, ó, u, ú

The front vowels are said to be spoken with the front of your mouth and the back vowels are more of a throat or back-of-the-mouth sound. If you say, ‘in the bag’ you would say ‘A táská-ban’. You use ‘ban’ instead of ‘ben’ because it matches the back vowels which exist already in the word táska – bag. Similarly, if you were to say ‘in the garden’ you would say ‘a kert-ben’ using ‘ben’ to match the front vowel in kert.

If you have a mixture of front and back vowels in a word like bowl - mélytányér, the general default is to use a back vowel which would be ‘a’ – ban.

The above is especially important if you want to speak like a professional from day one, but in real-life that doesn’t happen. You can’t avoid speaking like an amateur when you first start out. As previously mentioned, learning prepositions, tenses and more in-depth grammar should be done after you have started to converse so you can have native speakers guiding you through Hungarian conversation.

HUGE HACK ALERT! I found this out through the magic of awkward, beginner-style conversations. This hack helped me learn a new verb on-the-go and immediately use it multiple times. Using it straight away in conversation helps to cement it in your long-term memory.



Here's the hack:

I would only learn the 'infinite version' of any verb. For example, I would learn only *tanulni* which means *to learn* instead of practicing *tanulok* (I am learning), *tanulsz* (You are learning), *tanul* (He/she is learning) etc.

By just learning the infinite version I could use a select few **starter verbs** like *I want, I would like, I am going* or *I am trying* with the new verb. This allowed me to use the new verb *tanulni* instantaneously in sentences like the following: I want *to learn* or I would like *to learn* or I am going *to learn* or I am trying *to learn*.

Do you want *to learn*? or Would you like *to learn*?
Are you going *to learn*? Are you trying *to learn*?

He wants *to learn* or She would like *to learn* or He is going *to learn* or She is trying *to learn*.
We want *to learn* or We would like *to learn* or
We're going *to learn* or We're trying *to learn*.
They want *to learn* or They would like *to learn* or
They're going *to learn* or They're trying *to learn*.

This tactic helped me learn many useful verbs quickly and lock them straight into my long-term memory.

Further to this, learning the phrase "*Hogy hivják?*" which means "*How do you say?*" helped me immensely. When in conversation with someone who spoke Hungarian and also understood at least some English, I would say, "*Hogy hivják... to walk?*" – asking them "*How do you say...to walk?*". In this example they would say "*Sétálni*".

As soon as I learnt the infinite form of the verb mid-conversation (e.g. *sétálni* (to walk)), I could use it throughout the rest of that same conversation **with** the person who just told it to me.

Before even doing that, it was great to know the phrase *Hogy hivják?* Which means *How do you say?*...

Plus, it allowed me to then combine this new verb with *I want to walk, I would like to walk, or I am going to walk*.

As luck would have it, there was a two-week Hungarian language course scheduled for late July and so I decided to sign up. I was already at my target goal of being able to have basic conversations with Enikő's family but a bigger goal quickly replaced this. I wanted to be more natural and grammatically correct when I spoke.

I went to the language course and completed a written entry exam. Due to my poor written exam, I was pencilled down for level **one** classes. I then went to the enrolment interview and they were shocked that I was speaking to them in Hungarian.

After talking amongst themselves, they put me into level **five** classes. That means I could speak at least five times better than I could write!

I was easily the best speaker in the level five class and felt I should have been in a higher-level class.



I knew so many words and had already practiced many hours of real-life conversation. That was it – just **words** and **conversation**.

The grammar I knew was very minimal and that was evident when I was writing Hungarian, but I never wanted to learn the language to learn how to write an essay, I just wanted to be able to talk to Enikő's family and friends.

During the classes, I was eager to advance my conversation skills through speaking and even though I wanted a personal teacher to rapidly advance my ability to speak, I completed the modules and scored above eighty percent in the written exam at the end. For me, the entire two-week course reinforced one thing: to become a better conversationalist, you need to have as many conversations as possible.

It is crucial to find yourself one or two conversation partners to start conversing one-on-one with. You need to start putting the hours in.

I recommend using the online language learning platform 'Italki'. Italki is a game-changer that has so many Hungarian native speakers waiting and wanting to speak with you for a small fee (generally, between \$5-15USD per hour).

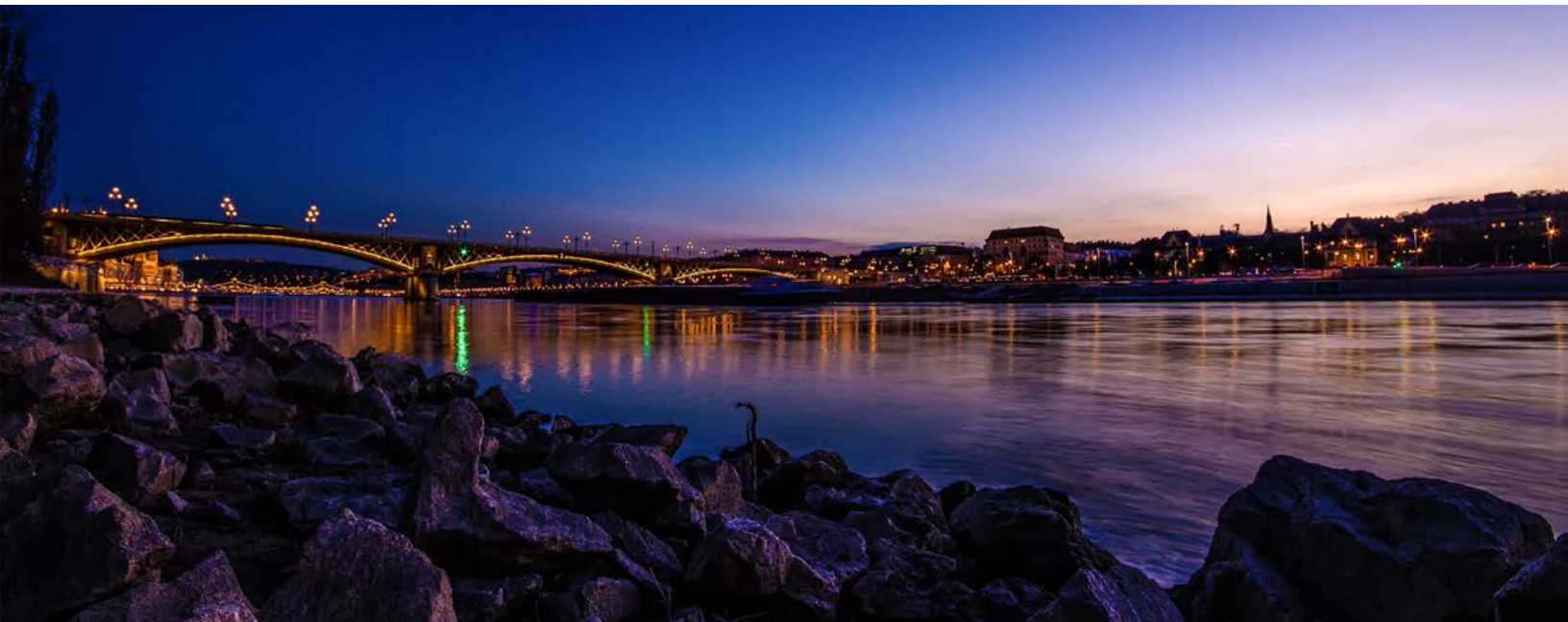
It will make your experience much easier than mine as you don't have to have all your awkward conversations with known family rather with

someone online. Choose your Hungarian speaking partner wisely.

Your new language partner/s should not interrupt the flow of conversation to over-explain. Rather, they should correct you quickly and keep the conversation going. A great speaking partner will be able to gauge where you are at, speak slightly faster than your speed and make sure you are progressing well. It might help for you to explain that you already have a teacher (me!) and that you want to try speaking only Hungarian as a challenge for 10 sessions.



05. CONCLUSION



Thanks for taking this journey with me! Although it is no small feat, learning Hungarian following the methods I outlined is not just possible, but truly efficient and much easier than many other techniques for acquiring a new language.

It's remarkable once you achieve it (and I know you can).

The strategy I used and I recommend for everyone in a similar position is **Vocabulary** then **Conversation**. Make sure you make that commitment to yourself of 60 focused hours.

Schedule the 60 hours over 2, 3 or 4 months so it is achievable and to avoid stopping or pausing and restarting where you may lose your gains.

Yes, grammar is important, but only once you have begun to speak. Learn most of

your grammar through conversation (avoid the lengthy and dare I say, boring, textbook sessions) and once you have your base of approximately 500 words, learn more words only through conversation and as and when you require them.

Only listen to others who are also English native speakers who learnt Hungarian as adults (otherwise it's just baseless advice from those who mean well). Develop a strong belief in your capabilities and put in the focused hours. Oh, and don't give up!





Our wedding in Hungary, 2016. I said my vows and a speech in Hungarian with minimal mistakes

After our holiday in Hungary, we moved back to Australia. From that point, I did one more year of active learning. I listened to audios for a couple hours per week. I watched videos that had subtitles or script that I could follow along. This helped in tuning my ear and I was picking up more and more vocabulary.

I was completely comfortable in having one-on-one conversations with anyone, but had some trouble following fast-paced conversations going on around me. These audios with dialogue helped especially with that.

I probably learnt another one-two thousand words and felt more and more comfortable with the Hungarian conversation style and pace – but ultimately (I know I'm going to say it again...)

nothing beats one-on-one conversation. This is something I realise now more than ever after having been through all the different learning styles.

To keep up my level of Hungarian, the only thing I do is have a one or two hour skype call with my in-laws every Sunday. It's become a ritual or tradition we have now been doing for years. We also have an annual visit to Hungary and that's all I need to maintain my current level of fluency (sometimes my in-laws also visit us here in Oz).

I don't stop for a minute to think of how or what to say when I arrive in Hungary, as the language has become a part of me. I am a little slower to start, but it comes back to me quite quickly and the confidence sets in.

06. You Will Learn Hungarian – You Can Do It!



I have written this book so you have a guide and to help you **believe** you can achieve a conversational level ten times faster than you originally thought.

My success in learning Hungarian as an adult without prior language learning experience is thanks to this method. Yes, I made mistakes and tried a few traditional learning methods in the beginning (which didn't work) and I learnt so many words I did not use (because I have and now forgotten them, so I know they weren't important!). For you, with this guide, it will be **FASTER** and **EASIER** than it was for me.

Here is the question – can you create a challenge for yourself and stick to it? Can you learn Hungarian in the next 2-3 months and put this seemingly impossible task behind you

forever (and also be amazed about how quickly you were able to learn it)?

Or, will you get off to a flying start, then hit a few hurdles and pause or complain, then give up, maybe start again 1 year later and feel like you're putting the training wheels back on the bike?

Studies and statistics show most people can stick to a challenge for ten to twelve days before they slip up. They have the best intentions, a plan to learn vocabulary lists every day for a month, and even go on to speak one-on-one for 20 hours.



Then, unfortunately human nature sets in. When things get a bit tough and motivation has faded, you need to rely on your **discipline** to stay **consistent**. Read this book over and over again if you must. Whatever emotions you feel, I have been there, and I decided to keep going. I was no different to you, I had never spoken a second language, I wasn't sure how to learn, but I was determined and that's why I know you can do it too!

What happens when you do miss a day in your schedule? That's life! You might be having a bad day or lack the lust for learning (it'll happen), but be kind to yourself and know that it happens to EVERYONE.

What matters is being quick to get over the slump and back into the routine. Do whatever you have to do to clear your head and re-schedule your missing hours. Hold yourself accountable and know you are the only person who can get yourself to the finish line.

At the end is a mental banner that reads

“ **I COMPLETED 60 FOCUSED HOURS OF HUNGARIAN LEARNING & I CAN COMFORTABLY CONVERSE IN HUNGARIAN!**”

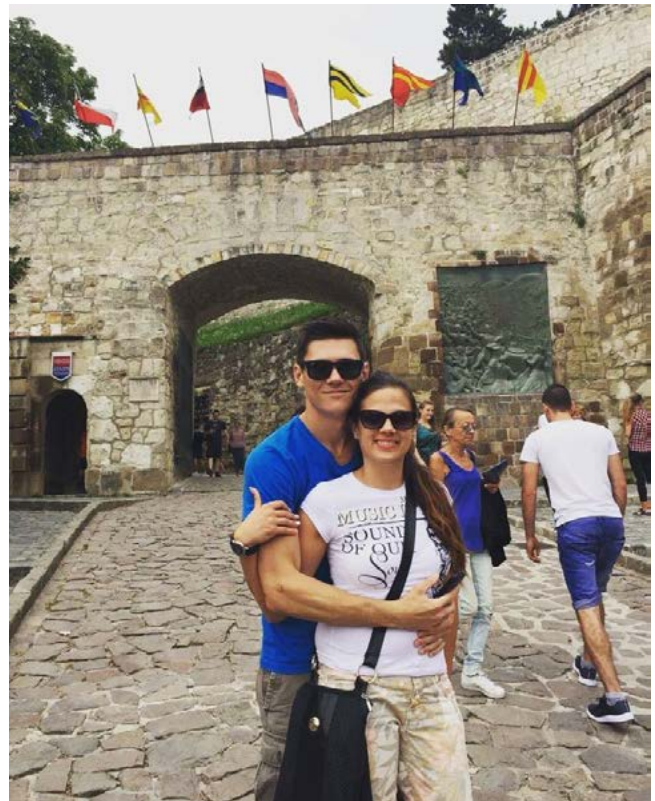
Whatever you choose, 30, 60, 90 OR 120 days, they are all short challenges in the grand scheme of things.

Just remember one thing. **DON'T QUIT!**

Complete every hour and you will achieve your goal. If Tim Ferriss can learn a language for 12 hours and then go on national television and speak for six entire minutes, 60 focused hours of learning, speaking and listening to Hungarian will have you covered! I wish you all the best and hope to speak in Hungarian with you one day soon.

Just remember one thing.

DON'T QUIT!





IF YOU NEED MORE HELP YOU CAN REACH THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE [HERE](#)

