

LESSON NOTES

All About S1 #1

Top 5 Reasons to Study Hungarian

CONTENTS

Grammar

#1

GRAMMAR

The Focus of this Lesson is the Top 5 Reasons to Study Hungarian

Background of the Hungarian Language

Hungarian is an independent language within the Uralic language family. Even though this language family has very few members in Europe, the most populous groups live here, namely Hungarian, Finnish and Estonian. The Uralic language family has other members in Russia and Siberia, by today usually with very few speakers. The relationship between Hungarian and these languages is often debated, but currently the most widely accepted theory is that there exists a clear relationship between Hungarian and all the others. Since the sub-branching complicates this picture even more and distances Hungarian from the others, it means that even with fluent Hungarian, you won't be able to understand Finnish or Estonian at all.

The Hungarian people used the Hungarian script before 1000 A.D., but not many examples remained of that. In the tenth century Hungary adopted the Latin alphabet. The oldest surviving Hungarian text (and the oldest of the language family) is the Funeral Sermon and Prayer from the 1190s.

Throughout the centuries, Hungarian had been influenced by Turkish, Latin, Slavic languages, German and English, and through these countless others.

When trying to master the Hungarian language, some of the difficulties students face are the extended case system and corresponding changes in nouns (e.g.: from the inside of the house: *ház**b**ól*; into the house: *ház**ba***; onto the house: *ház**ra*** etc.) and the so-called vowel harmony, which means that the vowel of the suffix must be consistent with the vowel of the main word the suffix is attached to (e.g.: "into the house": *ház**ba*** but "into the bottle": *üveg**be***).

On the other hand, reading the Hungarian script is quite straightforward, you'll never get lost in the tenses (of which there are two), you don't have to worry about gender, tones and the politeness system is also not too complicated.

Where is it spoken?

The Hungarian language came to the Carpathian Basin over twelve centuries ago and is now spoken mainly in Hungary as well as neighboring countries such as Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, Ukraine, Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria. Approximately fourteen million people speak Hungarian natively, of them, ten million live in Hungary. But it is also spoken in several different places in the world due to emigration, including countries such as Israel and the United States.

Why is it important?

The top five reasons to learn this language are...

1. It's fun!
2. By learning Hungarian, one can get a deeper understanding of European history and culture. Throughout the centuries, the Kingdom of Hungary had an often ignored pivotal role in the

shaping of Europe, being on the border of Roman and Greek Catholicism and the Turkish expansion. When not an empire itself, it's been on the border of empires, cultures and civilizations for a millennium and stood in the sea of Slavic, German and Turkish languages, without losing his identity.

3. Hungarians are extremely grateful when they see other people try to speak Hungarian. Make sure you pick up a few words, even if you only have a short visit in the country.
4. To know Hungarian is to be a member of a very unique club.
5. If you want an inexpensive vacation, go to Hungary!