

Basic Croatian

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This is an incomplete work. Please mail me all suggestions and errors you find. The original URL is <http://basic-croatian.blogspot.com>

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This is a static version of a selection of chapters of my Croatian language blog, as of 5th April 2014. Some chapters are not included.

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Introduction

I begun writing my Croatian language blog because I thought there's not enough information on the Internet about the Croatian language basics.

I will concentrate mostly on spoken, everyday language. If you take a look at an average Croatian language book, or read about Croatian grammar on Wikipedia, there are actually many things that almost nobody uses nowadays. Some features are used only on TV and in some books. My aim is to give *important* things first, and such fine points will be "for those who want to learn more".

I will also consider various dialects: most people actually everyday speak a somewhat different (some would say — quite different) language from the Standard Croatian!

A good thing about blogs is that I'm able to edit them easily, people are able to post questions and comments, etc.

This version has all videos and similar content removed, but you can access the video by clicking on the hyperlinks in the text or by searching for songs by name on YouTube™.

Warning. I'm not a language professional. Most of what I wrote is from my knowledge of my mother tongue, from the books I read, and from common sense. Take everything *cum grano salis*.

Some explanations and descriptions I will use are different from what found in the textbooks. I had two goals:

- simplify things wherever possible
- attempt to create a more logical, and hence memorizable, description whenever possible

I have no responsibility for contents of this document and I don't claim it's accurate or useful in any way.

Please send comments using my blog or by e-mail to dan131.n@gmail.com

History

0.24 Another update, now in sync with the CHM edition.

0.20 A bigger update: I have split the chapter on the genitive case and decided to slowly remove all "summary" chapters. A chapter on foreign words and names was added.

0.17 I have decided to further clarify noun types, I am afraid that it's still too complicated. I decided to remove the Baška Tablet to decrease the file size. Besides, it's used just as an illustration.

1 Basic Features

Croatian is a [Slavic](#) language. It's almost the same as Serbian or Bosnian, and similar to Czech and Russian. Its grammar resembles Old Greek and Latin, so it's quite complex (but don't get afraid!). Here's a map of Slavic languages:



Basically, you can say that you almost learn *4 languages with one effort*: Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin. Yes, there are some differences, but they are mostly in vocabulary. And you can get by with Croatian in Slovenia and Macedonia as well, so that's all together 6 countries!

It's incredible that some web sites offering (costly) language courses say:

Not surprisingly, Croatian vocabulary has much in common with Serbian and Bosnian. In many cases, speakers of these languages can even communicate between one another.

(Transparent.com)

On Croatian TV and in cinemas, Serbian or Bosnian films are shown always *without any subtitles or dubbing*. Statements by people from Serbia (politicians, etc.) are shown on TV also without any dubbing or subtitles! "Much in common" is a terrible understatement. "Even communicate" is laughable. I have read many books in Serbian without any difficulties...

Let's take a dive and look at some basic features of Croatian. Maybe it's best to see how some simple sentences in English translate to Croatian.

English: *John has a big house. John's son came to visit him. John's house has three bedrooms.*

Croatian: *John ima veliku kuću. Johnov sin je došao posjetiti ga. Johnova kuća ima tri spavaće sobe.*

This is almost a word-to-word translation, except:

- Croatian has no articles like English *a, the* (now you see *why I miss articles sometimes* - my native language has no articles!)
- English form *to visit* corresponds to one Croatian word *posjetiti*
- English verb *came* translates to two-word Croatian form *je došao*
- English *bedroom* translates to Croatian phrase *spavaća soba* (literally, "sleeping room")

John	has	a	big	house.
John	ima		veliku	<u>kuću</u> .
John's	son	came	to visit	him.
<u>Johnov</u>	sin	je došao	posjetiti	ga.
John's	house	has	three	bedrooms.
<u>Johnova</u>	<u>kuća</u>	ima	tri	spavaće sobe.

Have you noted that some words look somewhat similar (*sin* "son", and *tri* "three")? You can read something about reasons for such similarities [here](#).

Now, if we take a closer look, we see that *kuća* "house" (we don't worry about pronunciation for now) has a different form when it's in the sentence where it's possessed (*kuću*). We say that it's in a *different case*.

So, Croatian has *cases*.

Next, we see that "John's" translates to *Johnov* and *Johnova*. This is so-called possessive adjective. And it has a different form (as every adjective has) depending whether it describes a male noun (*sin* "son"), female (*kuća* "house" is female in Croatian), or neuter! Even more, it can also change case.

So, the bulk of Croatian grammar will be just cases of nouns and adjectives.

Note that English has a very limited case system, for pronouns only. So *him* is "object case" of pronoun "he". Likewise, Croatian *ga* is "object case" (more commonly known as "accusative") of pronoun *on* "he".

Note: if you are familiar with a Romance language, especially Italian, Spanish or Portuguese, you will notice a lot of similarities to Croatian that will help you.

Tired already? OK.

2 Spelling

Usually, basic language courses give pronunciation rules. I find that somewhat strange — after all, a language is primarily spoken, writing can vary. In fact, over centuries, Croatian writing system did vary, but nowadays it settled to a quite simple one. Roughly, there is a rule: **one sound = one letter**. However, some "letters" are actually "double". But they are really considered as true letters, and have own entries in dictionaries and like.

Croatian has 6 vowels. They can be either long (like English *fee!*) or short (like *sit*) but difference is not really big and not much important. They are pronounced as in Spanish or Italian (except for one). Here are vowels with *approximate* English sounds (for completeness, there are [IPA symbols](#) in square brackets as well). Courtesy of [Brandon Bertelsen](#) (thanks again!), you can hear these sounds as well.

letter	IPA		English correlate
a	[a]	[listen]	<i>father</i>
e	[ɛ]	[listen]	<i>bed</i>
i	[i]	[listen]	<i>sit</i>
o	[ɔ]	[listen]	<i>port</i>
u	[u]	[listen]	<i>look</i>
r	[r]	[listen]	somewhat like <i>her</i> , but clearly pronounced

Consonants are more complex. Since you are not probably aiming for a speaker job at the Croatian Radio, it's OK if you don't distinguish *č* from *ć*, and *đ* from *dž*. Many people in Croatia don't distinguish them either!

letter	IPA		English correlate, and some others
b	[b]	[listen]	<i>bag</i>
c	[ts]	[listen]	somewhat similar to <i>cats</i> ; also in Russian tzar , German Zimmer , etc.
č	[tʃ]	[listen]	<i>church</i>
ć	[tɕ]	[listen]	softer than <i>č</i> (don't worry too much)
d	[d]	[listen]	<i>did</i>
đ	[dʒ]	[listen]	softer than <i>dž</i> (don't worry too much)
dž	[dʒ]	[listen]	<i>jump</i>
f	[f]	[listen]	<i>fun</i>
g	[g]	[listen]	<i>give</i>
h	[x]	[listen]	similar to Scottish <i>loch</i> , rougher than English <i>hat</i>
j	[j]	[listen]	<i>yes</i>
k	[k]	[listen]	<i>sky</i>
l	[l]	[listen]	<i>live</i>
lj	[ʎ]	[listen]	somewhat like <i>million</i> ; also in Portuguese <i>olho</i> , Italian <i>figlio</i>
m	[m]	[listen]	<i>meet</i>

letter	IPA		English correlate, and some others
n	[n]	[listen]	<i>neat</i>
nj	[ɲ]	[listen]	somewhat like <i>onion</i> ; also in Spanish <i>señora</i> , Italian <i>bagno</i>
p	[p]	[listen]	<i>spy</i>
r	[r]	[listen]	it's hard to match; it's somewhat "clearer" than English <i>rough</i>
s	[s]	[listen]	<i>sea</i>
š	[ʃ]	[listen]	<i>shoe</i>
t	[t]	[listen]	<i>stop</i>
v	[v]	[listen]	between <i>very</i> and <i>wave</i> (don't worry too much about this one)
z	[z]	[listen]	<i>zero</i>
ž	[ʒ]	[listen]	<i>vision</i> ; Portuguese <i>jogo</i> ; Turkish <i>jale</i>

Croatian spelling does not use letters *q*, *x*, *y*, and *w*, except in foreign names and like.

How to know when an *r* is used as a vowel, and when as an consonant? Well, if it's in an "impossible" position, then it's surely a vowel, e.g.:

prst "finger"
trg "square" (in a city)
smrt "death"
svrha "purpose"

I took some liberty to introduce "[matres lectionis](#)" — symbols I have personally invented, that are *never used in the real life, or by anyone else* — but indicate important letters that are not distinguished in ordinary writing at all.

First, on some *e*'s I have placed two dots (ë) to indicate that it's somewhat special. It's because the sequence *ijë* is by most people *not* pronounced as /ijë/, but much closer to /je/ (that is, not as two syllables), except when it's at the end of the word, then it's pronounced just like /ije/. But when an *e* is not marked, it means that everybody pronounces it as /ije/:

prijë "before" — pronounce just as written, because it's at the end
nijedan "no one" — pronounce just as written, because the *e* is not marked
uvijëk "always" — pronounce actually much closer to /uvjek/ (one syllable), since the *e* is marked

If an *i* is not pronounced, why I did mark the *e* following it!? One reason is that it can change in plural of some words — *i* is just dropped:

cvijët "flower" — most people pronounce it much closer to /cvjet/
cvjëtovi "flowers" — (mind the spelling!)

I must confess that spelling of *ije* (and its mutation to *je*) was responsible for 90% of my spelling errors in primary school. It's a nightmare for many people. It's impossible to learn for many, since it's pronounced as if spelled as *je*, so many people are guessing all the time where to spell *ije* and where *je*. It's frequently called "the infamous *ije*".

Second, on some *a*'s I have placed the dots (ä) to indicate "inconstant *a*". It's that in some words an *a* is "automatically" inserted in consonant clusters at the end of the word. Now, nobody makes mistakes with this, but you will — because you'll like learn the forms *with an inserted a*, and will be unsure where it disappears! For instance, let's see the word "dog":

psi "dogs" — you'll see later, plural of some nouns is made by adding an *-i*
päs "dog" — the singular cannot be *ps*, an *a* is automatically inserted

That's how it looks from the standpoint of the plural, but from the standpoint of singular, the *a* was dropped. Now, there are words ending on *-as* (e.g. *pojas* "belt") where nothing is dropped (pl. *pojasi* "belts") — how are you going to know which *a*'s are dropped? Hence the notation. Of course, the *ä* is pronounced just like another *a*.

If an *ä* is found in the middle of the word, then it's not dropped at all, it means something completely different, e.g. *mägla* "fog". Just pronounce it as any *a* until it gets important!

Finally, I have added two dots on some *i*'s (*i*) — just disregard them and treat it as any other *i* until it gets important.

Special notation

There's a special notation invented for this course. It consists of two dots (¨).

Most people actually pronounce sequence *ijë* when not at the end of the word as /je/

Otherwise, pronounce an *ä*, *ĩ*, or *ě* just if there were no dots.

The notation *ä* signifies an *a* that likely disappears in some forms of the word, but only if it's the last vowel. If it's not, it never disappears.

3 Basic Phrases

I will here list some basic phrases, and some basic patterns of simple sentences. First, most basic words and politeness:

<i>da</i>	"yes"	<i>molim</i>	"please" [listen]
<i>ne</i>	"no"	<i>hvala</i>	"thank you" [listen]
<i>možda</i>	"maybe"	<i>oprostite</i>	"excuse me", "sorry"

How to ask does someone know a language:

<i>Govorite li...</i>	"Do you speak..."		
... <i>engleski</i>	"English"	... <i>francuski</i>	"French"
... <i>hrvatski</i>	"Croatian"	... <i>talijanski</i>	"Italian"
... <i>njemački</i>	"German"	... <i>španjolski</i>	"Spanish"
... <i>japanski</i>	"Japanese" (slim chance for this one!)		

Some other useful phrases:

<i>Možete li mi pomoći?</i>	"Can you help me?"		
<i>Gdje je...?</i>	"Where is...?"		
... <i>toalet?</i>	"... the toilet?"	... <i>policija?</i>	"... the police?"
... <i>izlaz?</i>	"... the exit?"	... <i>bolnica?</i>	"... hospital?"

Yes, we are rude; please don't ask for a bathroom, you want a toilet really! Ask for a bathroom if you want to take a shower...

You will often hear people saying to you *izvolite*. That means two things: "can I serve you", and "here it is". For instance, you come to a post office:

- a clerk says *izvolite*
- you ask for postcards, and give him/her the money
- the clerk gives you postcards and says again *izvolite*.

That's just a polite word.

Also, when someone says *hvala* "thank you" other side will usually respond with *molim*, a word that usually means "please".

Finally, some greetings:

<i>Dobär dan!</i>	"Good day", "Good afternoon" (the basic formal greeting when meeting someone) [listen]
<i>Dobro jutro!</i>	"Good morning" [listen]
<i>Dobra večer!</i>	"Good evening" [listen] (she says <i>dobär</i> actually; some people do it)
<i>Laku noć!</i>	"Good night" [listen]
<i>Do viđenja!</i>	"Good bye" (this is formal) [listen]
<i>Bok!</i>	"Hi" (this is informal, both meeting and leaving)

You can find other useful words using a [free online dictionary](#); it's comprehensive, but it translates some sentences slightly incorrectly. You can also use Google™ Translate (<http://translate.google.com>).

4 Types of Words

For some reasons, English grammars divide words into various "parts of speech". I would rather use a phrase "types of words". In scientific use people prefer "word classes". I would rather use *class* to sub-divide various types.

I hope you know at least about *nouns* (e.g. "Sun") and *verbs* (e.g. "shine"). Another important type of words are *adjectives* (e.g. "yellow"); there some minor types in addition. Croatian has all these types, similar to English.

However, there comes a twist. One can divide words by various criteria. In Croatian, there are basically three ways to divide words:

- by meaning: whether they describe a being, action, some property, quantity, etc.
- by syntax: how the word behaves grammatically, what forms it has, etc.
- finally, one can divide among "full words" and "short words" ("short" are usually called *clitics*, but they are... short).

This mixture can be also seen in English: there are nouns with verbal meaning, like in the sentence "Leaving was not easy". "Leaving" is called *verbal noun* (that is, word that behaves like a noun, and has a meaning of an action), or sometimes *gerund*.

In Croatian, there are a lot of words that behave like adjectives and represent something else — actions and quantities, for instance.

Let's take a look at some types of words in Croatian, not by meaning, but by their grammatical properties:

Nouns stand for persons (John), beings (*pas* "dog"), various objects (*soba* "room"), feelings (*bol* "pain"), or abstractions (*odlazak* "departure").

- more or less all nouns have different forms in various *cases*, for both singular and plural,
- each has pre-determined *gender* which may be anything for non-living things: e.g. *odlazak* is masculine;
- from most nouns, a possessive adjective can be created (*Ivan* - *Ivanov* "Ivan's")

Pronouns stand for nouns and describe some already known thing, sides of conversation (*ja* "I", *mi* "we"). Words standing for some undetermined beings (*netko* "someone") are also usually classified as pronouns.

- more or less all pronouns also have different forms in various *cases*, for both singular and plural,
- there are pronouns for the first and second persons in conversation;
- some pronouns have different forms for various genders (the same is in English - check "he", "she", "it");
- from most pronouns, a possessive adjective can be created (*on* "he" - *njegov* "his")
- some pronouns have special "short forms" that are placed in pre-determined place in a sentence;

Adjectives describe nouns somehow (*žuti* "yellow") or are derived from nouns to describe possession (*Ivanov* "Ivan's") or pronouns (*njegov* "his") or from verbs (more about it later).

- more or less all adjectives also have different forms in various *cases*, for both singular and plural, and they adapt to gender of a noun, so adjectives have quite a lot of forms;
- many adjectives have comparison (*velik* "big", *veći* "bigger", etc.);

Verbs describe actions or states.

- they have various forms that describe tenses (past, present, future) and persons in a conversation;
- some nouns and adjectives can be formed from verbs; such adjectives are further used to create compound forms for various tenses;
- there are some auxiliary verbs used to create compound tenses;
- there are some forms describing orders (like "go there") or possibilities (like "you could").

Besides that, there are prepositions (*u* "in", *iz* "from"), adverbs (*lako* "easy"; they have relations with adjectives), and conjunctions and particles (*i* "and").

However, there's another way of looking at it. Words can be divided what meaning they carry. For instance, some words point to some real person (like personal names, *Ivan*, for instance), and on the other extreme other words have only pure grammatical use (like English "in", "of", "and"), called "function words".

More or less completely independent of this, there's another division regarding that some words describe things and persons ("nouns"), possessions ("possessives"), properties ("adjectives"), actions ("verbs"). But there can be generic possessions ("his") and very individual ones ("John's"). It could be described in a neat table:

	individual	common	generic
people and things	personal names: <i>Ivan, Ana</i> fixed gender, change case	objects and concepts: <i>soba</i> "room", <i>bol</i> "pain" fixed gender, change case	personal pronouns: <i>ja</i> "I", <i>mi</i> "we" change gender and case
possession and dependance	possessives: <i>Ivanov</i> "Ivan's", <i>Anin</i> "Ana's" change gender and case	quasi-possessives: <i>sobni</i> "room", <i>bolni</i> "painful" change gender and case	pronominal possessives: <i>moj</i> "my", <i>naš</i> "our" change gender and case
attributes and properties		adjectives: <i>velik</i> "big", <i>hladan</i> "cold" change gender, case and degree	demonstratives: <i>taj</i> "that", <i>ovo</i> "this" change gender and case
modes and means		<i>brzo</i> "quickly", <i>malo</i> "little" change degree	<i>kako</i> "how", <i>ovako</i> "like this" have only one form
time and place		<i>jučer</i> "yesterday", <i>noćas</i> "this night" have only one form	<i>kada</i> "when", <i>ovdje</i> "here" have only one form
actions and states		verbs: <i>pišem</i> "I'm writing", <i>spavam</i> "I'm sleeping" change tense and person	

The yellow-shaded cells are adjective-like words, the major part of Croatian. You see that verbs are a separate part of the scheme; but fully apart from all described above are fully functional words, like *u* "in", *i* "and" — prepositions, conjunctions, particles and so on.

There's a major system linking most of "generalizations", similar to English words "where"/"anywhere"/"nowhere"/"there"....

5 Basic Sentences

In this post I'll describe the structure of simple sentences. I have a serious problem - English is, in a sense, a very peculiar language. Regarding the sentence structure, most languages of the world are not so rigid as English is. In fact, even Mandarin Chinese is (in this aspect) more similar to Croatian. Germanic languages (English included) and French are somewhat different from the bulk!

Let's take a look at a simple sentence:

English: I am eating an apple.

Croatian: *Ja jedem jabuku.*

However, in Croatian, the subject pronoun *ja* is almost always omitted:

Jedem jabuku.

One says *ja...* only in very special circumstances!

Some words: *jedem* "am eating"; *jede* "is eating"; *jabuka* "apple".

There are some verbs that are called "0-argument" - they really don't have a subject, because it's how they are. In English, such verbs have a "dummy pronoun" it:

English: It rains.

Croatian: *Kiši.*

In Croatian, you *cannot use any subject with such verbs* - there are no dummy pronouns!

There are some "2-argument" (or "transitive") verbs than have a subject and (mostly optional) object:

English: Iva is drinking water.

Croatian: *Iva pije vodu.* (*pije* "is drinking"; *voda* "water")

In English, this is the only word order. This is the normal order for Croatian, but sometimes people use other word orders:

Croatian: *Iva vodu pije.*

Croatian: *Vodu Iva pije.*

Croatian: *Vodu pije Iva.*

Croatian: *Pije Iva vodu.*

Croatian: *Pije vodu Iva.*

These variants are used when someone wants to emphasize some words.

If we use a pronoun as the subject, we get:

English: She is drinking water.

Croatian: *Ona pije vodu.*

Croatian: *Pije vodu.* (this is the most common)

Croatian: *Vodu pije.*

There are some verbs that have a subject and *two* objects (they are called "ditransitive" or "3-

argument"). One such verb is *dajem* "give". One can shuffle words in such English sentences a bit, but must insert a word *to*. In Croatian, there are so many possibilities that I'm not going to list all:

English: Iva is giving Ana an apple.

English: Iva is giving an apple to Ana.

Croatian: *Iva daje Ani jabuku.* (*daje* "is giving")

Croatian: *Iva daje jabuku Ani.*

Croatian: *Ani Iva daje jabuku.*

Croatian: *Jabuku Ani daje Iva.*

etc.

Again, first possibilities are most common in Croatian. If you use a pronoun (e.g. she) for the subject, you usually drop it in Croatian.

There's no possibility for confusion when shuffling words in Croatian sentences, since subject, direct and indirect object are in different cases. So when one finds a noun in the "subject case" wherever in a sentence, that's the subject. The same goes for object(s).

6 Cases Survival Guide

Introducing Cases

This post will introduce you to cases. English has 2 cases (the subject and object case), however they differ for pronouns only ("we" vs. "us").

Cases are forms of words when used in various places in a sentence (subject, object, indirect object, etc.)

If the sentence "Ivan is writing a letter to Ana." is translated into Croatian, all three nouns (Ivan, letter, Ana) must be put in cases corresponding to their roles. In English one uses just word order and preposition "to".

Case changes apply to nouns, adjectives and pronouns. For instance, the phrase *moja sestra* "my sister" (adjective + noun) and the pronoun *ona* "she" change like this:

Moja sestra je ovdje. " My sister is here"	<i>Vidiš moju sestru.</i> "You (can) see my sister "
Ona je ovdje. " She is here."	<i>Vidiš je.</i> "You (can) see her. "

We see that the adjective *moja* and the noun *sestra* change only a bit (only the ending), but the pronoun changes completely. This example illustrates only two cases, but that's the principle!

So, a noun has different forms in various cases, an adjective has them too, but generally they don't follow the same pattern (although they are similar). Even worse, the pattern for an adjective depends on the gender of the noun! (That's actually the *definition of gender* I'm using here: it tells you which form of adjective to use).

As we've seen from the example, pronouns have yet another pattern... This is a hard thing to learn, and there's no other way but to memorize it. Therefore, it's worth learning the often used cases first. This chapter will introduce you to the cases, and the next two chapters will introduce forms for adjectives and nouns for the two most often used cases, and we will leave pronouns out for now.

Cases are roles of words in sentences.

Nouns ("cat"), including names ("Ivan"), adjectives ("big", "my") and pronouns ("I", "you") have different forms in various cases according to specific patterns.

I don't want to oversimplify things. Cases are a **hard-to-learn** concept, and which case is used where even harder. So I want to introduce basic cases as soon as possible. Don't be impatient and jump into conclusions, you must learn gradually where each case is needed and how to put a word into that case!

Some languages have more than 10 cases, like Hungarian.

Georgian, Latin, Old Greek, Sanskrit, Old English, and most Slavic languages have 5-8 cases. Most textbooks say that Croatian has 7 cases.

Cases are woven together with singular/plural, so every Croatian noun has 7 forms for cases in singular, and additional 7 for plural = 14 all together. Adjectives have even more forms — one for each gender and case combination! Hopeless? Not completely.

A Quick Survey

First, one case (the **nominative**, or "subject case") is the "default" case — you have to know the dictionary form of a noun if nothing else, and there are rules how to make a plural. So, 6x2 left.

Second, two of remaining 6 cases are always exactly same in both singular and plural (except for a small difference in accent; also they are not equal in some dialects); they are called **locative** and **dative** — we'll keep only one, the *dative*. We are down to 5x2.

Next, there is a case (the **vocative**) used only when calling someone, or yelling at someone (like in "John, come down!" or "You, idiot!"); we can live without it, and yell in nominative. Besides, a vocative plural is always same to the nominative plural. Did you know that in fact, many languages have special forms for yelling and giving orders? This leaves us with 4x2.

We can postpone learning of two more cases — the before mentioned **genitive** (which is in many aspects the most difficult case!) and **instrumental** — because they are not used in simplest sentences; they are however used in some constructions, and we will have to learn them a bit later (otherwise we would not be able to say "two apples" in Croatian).

This leaves us with just 2x2 cases — precisely one for objects (the **accusative**), and another for indirect objects ("to-case", before mentioned **dative**). And, of course, there's the default case found in every language — the **nominative**. Sorry, I cannot make it simpler than that!

And you don't need to remember all 6 forms for every noun — there are rules how to make all of them.

Cases are usually abbreviated to three letters (e.g. acc. = accusative), and singular and plural to sg. and pl.

How They Work

Let's take a look how the noun Ana (a personal name) looks in various cases:

Ana jede. (nom.sg.) "Ana is eating."
Hranim Anu. (acc.sg.) "I am feeding Ana."
Pišem Ani. (dat.sg.) "I am writing to Ana."

This doesn't look too complex! Now, some fun: *every noun must be squeezed into such scheme!* So, if one is writing to somebody else, let's say, to George Bush, it will be:

Pišem Georgeu Bushu. (dat. sg.) "I am writing to George Bush."
George Bush piše Ani. (nom. sg.) "George Bush is writing to Ana."

You may also note two things: first, we changed every word in his name (that's normal); second, we added *-u* and not *-i* as we did to Ana (that's because *Ana* ends on *-a*, and we really *changed* that *-a* to *-i*).

There's another use for acc. and dat. They are used with prepositions (words that correspond to English "in", "on", etc.). Croatian has a system of prepositions that is not too different from English (there are languages without prepositions!), and quite similar to German. The main point is that after a preposition a noun must be put in appropriate case. However, *for some prepositions we can use more than one case, and that affects the meaning.* Specifically:

<i>u</i> + dat. = "in something"	<i>u</i> + acc. = "to something"
<i>na</i> + dat. = "on something"	<i>na</i> + acc. = "onto something"

In short, the accusative is used with *directions* (*u grad* "to the city"), and dative with *static locations* (*u gradu* "in the city"). German speakers will recognize a lot of similarities.

Warning: most verbs use accusative, and some can use dative (like "write", "give"). But not all. That's not important for now, but just remember that use of cases ultimately depends on the verb.

As a curiosity, there's a [study](#) how frequently cases are used. Nom. is at average 38%, acc. at 26%, and dat. at 17%. Other cases are less frequent; the least used is vocative, with minuscule 3%. So

you are going learn the most used cases first...

Remember

Nominative is the default, "dictionary" case, and is used as a subject of sentence ("she is writing").

Accusative case is used as an object ("feed her"), and with prepositions *u, na* meaning motion to somewhere ("to, onto").

Dative case is used as an indirect object ("write to her"), and with prepositions *u, na* meaning static location ("in, on, at").

Please, bear in mind these are only *some* uses of those cases. There are of course more. Much more :)

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7 Gender

Suppose Ana is a woman, and Igor is a man. In English, the only effect will be that one has to use "she" for Ana, and "he" for Igor; "her" vs. "his". Words have to "agree" on gender. In Croatian, gender is much more comprehensive.

Here I have underlined words affected by "gender agreement" in English sentences, and the same sentences translated to Croatian. I kept the word order of English sentences.

Ana arrived yesterday.

Ana je stigla jučer.

She is very tired.

Ona je jako umorna.

Igor arrived yesterday.

Igor je stigao jučer.

He is very tired.

On je jako umoran.

It's "self-evident" that there should be three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. But it's not so simple, there could be less (for instance, only two) or more genders. Some African languages have many genders: for example, [Zulu](#) has nine. If there is more than 3 genders, then other concepts than just male/female/neuter are involved. In fact, even in English, gender is a bit abstract: "ship" and "car" are often considered feminine nouns and demand the pronoun "she".

I will use *gender* in meaning "what form of other words you must use with a noun". For English, it's just whether one uses "he", "she" or "it", and for Croatian it's much more comprehensive (actually, there are many languages where gender is much more comprehensive than in English).

How many genders Croatian has? Common knowledge: three. I will rather describe Croatian as a language with approximate 3.2 genders! Textbooks usually describe Croatian as having three genders, but then note that some nouns behave specially. In my view, that "special behavior" makes, more or less, another two genders. It's much simpler in that way, less exceptions and more system. So, let's take a look at the genders:

Masculine animate gender (symbol **m^a**) comprises nouns that describe living beings that are masculine in the real life, including people and animals. This includes generic names for some species of animals, e.g. *lav* "lion", *slon* "elephant". Plants and other non-animals are excluded. Examples are *čovjek* "man", *pās* "dog", *vozač* "driver", *predsjednik* "president", *kit* "whale", *losos* "salmon", etc.

Masculine inanimate gender (symbol **mⁱ**) comprises nouns that describe non-living beings and plants that are "grammatically masculine". Examples are *stol* "table", *mjesec* "moon, month", *kamen* "stone", *početak* "beginning", *prst* "finger", *hrast* "oak", *posao* "job", etc.

In many occasions, both masculine genders behave similarly and then we can disregard differences and speak just about "masculine genders" (symbol **m**).

Neuter gender (symbol **n**) comprises nouns that describe things, some of them alive, that are "grammatically neuter". Examples are *dijete* "child", *selo* "village", *oko* "eye", *more* "sea", *jezero* "lake", *polje* "field", *tijelo* "body", *uže* "rope", *pleme* "tribe", etc.

Feminine gender (symbol **f**) comprises nouns that describe living beings that are female, and some non-living things that are "grammatically female", including some generic animal names. Examples

are *žena* "woman", *lavica* "she-lion", *ptica* "bird", *beba* "baby", *riba* "fish", *vrana* "crow", *ruža* "rose", *noga* "leg", *godina* "year", *voda* "water", *jesen* "autumn", *sol* "salt", etc.

To demonstrate how nouns in different genders demand different forms or other words related to them, I'll show how the sentence "I see a big X" translates to Croatian for nouns of different genders; you'll see that adjective "big" translates to a different word each time:

Vidim velikog lava. (*lav* m^a) *vidim* means "I see"

Vidim veliki kamen. (*kamen* mⁱ; or *velik*, not that important)

Vidim veliko selo. (*selo* n)

Vidim veliku ženu. (*žena* f)

There's still one gender left — the "mixed collective" gender. Some nouns behave strangely — they demand form of verbs as if they are in plural, but adjectives attached to them are in singular feminine! Such nouns have forms as if in singular, but they actually mean plural. There are not too many of them; examples are *braća* "brethren", *djeca* "children".

Some nouns (like *auto* mⁱ "car") have a different gender in some dialects of Croatian (*auto* n in most Dalmatian dialects).

How to tell what nouns are in which gender? For people it's obvious, but for other things there are rules that will be explained later (in [9 Basic Cases for Nouns](#)).

Let me re-emphasize the importance of agreement in Croatian. Because of that rule, every adjective must have a form for every combination of gender/number/case in Croatian. Theoretically, there could be over 100 different forms of every adjective, but there are actually much, much less.

Agreement Rule

All adjectives describing a noun must be put in the same case, number (singular/plural), and gender as the noun they describe. This holds across parts of sentence and across sentences!

Remember, the gender in Croatian is not simple. It's a bit similar to gender in Italian and Spanish, but it has its own twists.

8 First Steps with Adjectives

Let's take a look how can one make all necessary forms of adjectives in all genders, and three basic cases in the both singular and plural. I'm going to show all those forms for one adjective, for instance *velik* "big". Now, all these forms differ only in endings added to *velik* - and some forms don't add any ending at all. So, I'll list only the endings. Just a '-' means *no ending added*:

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	-, -i	-, -i	-o	-a
acc.sg.	-og, -oga			-u
dat.sg.	-om, -ome, -omu			-oj
nom.pl.	-i		-a	-e
acc.pl.	-e			
dat.pl.	-im			

There are more than one endings in some cases - one can use whatever he or she likes (there are some twists regarding - vs. -i, but you will pick them up gradually). Usually the shorter endings are used. So, *velikom x* is equivalent to *velikome x*, or *velikomu x*, all meaning "to big x" (we assume x is masculine, and in dative).

You see couple of things:

- nominative and accusative are the same for adjectives in the neuter gender in both singular and plural;
- there's only a small difference between the masculine genders;
- dat.sg. is common for both masculine genders and the neuter;
- acc.pl. is the same as nom. pl. for the feminine gender;
- the feminine gender is quite different from the rest.

All these things hold for nouns too! (No, not *the endings*, unfortunately! Just these relations...)

We also note that this are not so complicated as they could be. Look at the dative — it's same for all genders except f in the singular, and actually same for all genders in the plural.

There are some adjectives, mostly ending on *-an* or *-ar* (but not all of them!) that drop *-a-* when endings are added. I will list one of them, *dobär* "good" (recall the greeting *dobär dan*):

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	<i>dobär, dobri</i>	<i>dobär, dobri</i>	<i>dobro</i>	<i>dobra</i>
acc.sg.	<i>dobrog</i>			<i>dobru</i>
dat.sg.	<i>dobrom</i>			<i>dobroj</i>
nom.pl.	<i>dobri</i>		<i>dobra</i>	<i>dobre</i>
acc.pl.	<i>dobre</i>			
dat.pl.	<i>dobrim</i>			

For clarity, I have omitted forms *dobroga*, *dobromu*, and *dobrome*; they are used sometimes. You see that *-ä-* is dropped whenever anything is added to the adjective. The marks on the *ä-* use

exactly for that purpose: to remind you that the letter (and the sound) is dropped.

Not every last *a* is dropped: in *mekan* "soft", the last *a* is never dropped. So I didn't mark them...

Some adjectives are never "bare" — they have always an ending attached. One example is *mali* "small". It has all usual forms as *velik* does, but there's no form *mal* — you must attach *-i*. acc.sg.m is usual *malog* (or *maloga*, etc.)

Is this scheme, using these endings, used for all adjectives? For most it is; however, some adjectives have slightly modified endings. Instead of *o* they have *e* in the endings (except for the *f* gender, you'll see). They are mainly *comparatives* (e.g. *veći* "bigger"), and possessive adjectives created from personal pronouns, but some ordinary adjectives have these endings as well: one is *loš* "bad":

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	<i>loš, loši</i>	<i>loš, loši</i>	<i>loše (!)</i>	<i>loša</i>
acc.sg.	<i>lošeg (!)</i>			<i>lošu</i>
dat.sg.	<i>lošem (!)</i>			<i>lošoj</i>
nom.pl.	<i>loši</i>		<i>loša</i>	<i>loše</i>
acc.pl.	<i>loše</i>			
dat.pl.	<i>lošim</i>			

We'll see later that this is a consequence of a very common rule in Croatian, the *o/e* rule, where in many endings you find *o* or *e*, depending on the preceding sound.

As I already explained, Croatian treats words like "my" exactly the same as "blue" — both are adjectives. Compare these sentences:

My apple is big.

Moja jabuka je velika.

The big apple is mine.

Velika jabuka je moja.

Where English permits or does not permit articles, and uses different forms ("my", "mine"), Croatian makes no difference between *moja* and *velika* when used in a sentence.

I will explain possessive adjectives in due time, but it would be useful if I explain one important example — "my". Let's check all its forms in the basic cases (it uses modified *e*-endings):

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	<i>moj</i>	<i>moj</i>	<i>moje</i>	<i>moja</i>
acc.sg.	<i>mojeg, mog</i>			<i>moju</i>
dat.sg.	<i>mojem, mom</i>			<i>mojoj</i>
nom.pl.	<i>moji</i>		<i>moja</i>	<i>moje</i>
acc.pl.	<i>moje</i>			
dat.pl.	<i>mojim</i>			

Again, there is more than one form in some cases. People use both. Also, sometimes people say *mome, moga, mojega*, etc.

Let's put that to use; I'll show how the sentence "I am writing a long letter to a good friend" translates to Croatian:

Pišem dugo pismo dobrom prijatelju.

Since *pismo* "letter" is a noun with neuter gender, we use acc.sg.n form of *dug* - *dugo* (we have put *pismo* in acc. as well, but it's the same as nominative!).

Noun *prijatelj* "(male) friend" is m^a, we use dat.sg.m^a form of *dobar* - *dobrom* (we could have used *dobrome* as well!).

Now we try "I am writing a long letter to my friend":

Pišem dugo pismo mojem prijatelju.

Or:

Pišem dugo pismo mom prijatelju.

The other way round:

Moj prijatelj piše dugo pismo. "My friend is writing a long letter."

Do you get the system?

Important

The endings listed above are for adjectives ("big"), but not for nouns ("water"). Nouns have different endings.

Adverbs

There are words similar to adjectives, called *adverbs*. Adjectives describe a noun, while adverbs tell more about verbs (hence the name) or adjectives. In English, adverbs often have suffix -ly: "great" (adjective) vs. "greatly" (adverb), but some do not, e.g. "very".

In Croatian, most adjectives can be used as adverbs, one simply uses the neuter singular form of an adverb, and the form never changes. For example:

Ona je brza. "She is quick." *brza* is nom. sg. f, an adjective

Ona odlazi brzo. "She's leaving quickly." *brzo* is nom. sg. n, here used as an adverb

We will see later that the nom. sg. n is "neutralized" form used in Croatian is many occasions. What one needs to remember is: if an adjective is in the same gender as a noun, it describes a noun; if it's neuter singular nominative, it describes a verb ("in what way is she leaving? quickly" = a question about "leaving", not "her")

Also, some adjectives used as adverbs have a meaning that's somewhat removed from meaning of the adjective.

Vocabulary

Some useful adjectives (nom.sg. are listed for m, f, n, from the form for neuter you see if it uses e instead of o; from the ending for m you see if it is "bare", and if it drops a):

velik, velika, veliko "big"

mali, mala, malo "small"

hladän, hladna, hladno "cold"
vruć, vruća, vruće "hot"
dobar, dobra, dobro "good"
loš, loša, loše "bad"
brz, brza, brzo "fast"
spor, spora, sporo "slow"
visok, visoka, visoko "tall"
nizäk, niska, nisko "low"
umorän, umorna, umorno "tired"
bolestän, bolesna, bolesno "sick"
gladän, gladna, gladno "hungry"
žedän, žedna, žedno "thirsty"
mokär, mokra, mokro "moist", "wet"
suh, suha, suho "dry"
pun, puna, puno "full"
prazan, prazna, prazno "empty"
jak, jaka, jako "strong"
slab, slab, slabo "weak"
bijeli, bijela, bijelo "white"
crn, crna, crno "black"
crven, crvena, crveno "red"
plavi, plava, plavo "blue"
žut, žuta, žuto "yellow"
zelen, zelena, zeleno "green"

Why we have *nizak* vs. *nisko* will be obvious later. Just use *s* in all forms except *nizak*. The same holds for *bolestan* vs. *bolesno*.

Some often used adverbs derived from adjectives, with more or less unexpected meaning:

malo "a bit"
puno "greatly, a lot"
jako "very"

9 Basic Cases for Nouns

Types of Nouns

The following is slightly complicated, so I will try to explain it slowly.

Previously, we have examined how adjectives change in gender, case, and number. Adjectives don't have *their own* gender, case, or number — instead, you can (and must) create any combination of these for any adjective when needed.

Now, there's another issue: you must also change nouns, first to make plural ("boy"->"boys") but then also to make various case forms that correspond to roles in a sentence (sorry, no English equivalent). Unfortunately, there are various schemes to do that, called "**declension types**", or just "types". *In principle*, they don't need to be connected in any way to the gender of a noun. In the modern Croatian, there is however a close connection between noun types and noun gender, but they are *not really* identical.

If you would like something in English you can compare this with, consider gender and patterns of noun plural:

	m	f	n
strong	man-men	woman-women	tooth-teeth
weak	boy-boys	ship-ships	ball-balls

It's not really the same, but it's similar in a way: there are two "declension types" (ways to make plural) in English and three genders. They are completely independent in English, but in Croatian they are not. There's a similar situation in German: there are *five* ways to make plural and three genders, and they are not independent: nouns that have *-(e)n* in plural are mostly feminine, those that have *-er* are never feminine.

What I call e. g. "a-noun" means how the noun changes. The basic types are:

a-nouns all belong to the f gender, except for a very small number that belongs to m^a gender (e.g. *tata* "Dad"); one recognizes them easily, since they end on *-a* in nom. sg. (hence their name).

m-nouns are divided further to m^a and mⁱ subclasses; they host only nouns with genders m^a and mⁱ (but not all of them, a few are in the a-class); they *mostly* end on a consonant in nom.sg.

n-nouns include all nouns of n gender, and only them; they end on *-o* or *-e* in nom. sg.

i-nouns include a not so small number of nouns (around 250 and more, you'll see my point later), all having f gender; they end on a consonant in nom. sg. (except a few). You need to learn their list by heart. You can postpone learning them and return to them later, of course. Some examples are *noć* "night", *jesen* "autumn, fall" etc.

Furthermore, there are some **adjectives "serving" as nouns**. They have a case change pattern exactly as an adjective, but behave otherwise completely as nouns do - their gender is also fixed. They are mainly place names. The chief example is name of the country itself — *Hrvatska* "Croatia".

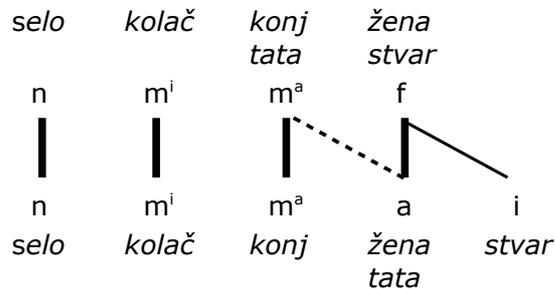
Both i-nouns and adjectives-as-nouns are listed later in this blog.

Warning!! For many nouns it's straightforward to know their type and gender. But there are some exceptions, for instance, *auto* is an mⁱ-noun, *misao* "thought" an i-noun, and *orao* "eagle" an m^a-noun. Beware, there are some additional types, I will explain them later.

Irregular nouns are oddballs and don't fit in the 5 previous classes. You learn them the hard way, all forms by heart. To summarize relations between gender and noun types:

Each noun belongs to a gender and to a noun type.

Gender tells you what form of adjectives or pronouns to use with a noun; how adjectives and pronouns adapt ("agree") to the noun.



Noun type tells you how to make plural of a noun, how to create other cases etc., that is, how the noun itself changes when in various roles.

Noun types are also called "declension types".

(Declension = how a noun changes, what endings it gets)

In Croatian, gender and noun types largely overlap.

For now, you could consider all the i-nouns and a-nouns that are not of the f gender (e.g. *tata* "Dad") as **exceptions**. There is only a limited number of such nouns, after all.

Let's take a look at the case forms for the following nouns:

- m^a-noun *konj* "horse"
- mⁱ-noun *kolač* "cake"
- n-nouns *selo* "village" and *more* "sea"
- a-noun *žena* "woman, wife"
- i-noun *stvar* "thing" (remember, all i-nouns are feminine!)

There's no need to list forms of adjectives serving as nouns - they have forms exactly as adjectives have.

case	m ^a -nouns	m ⁱ -nouns	n-nouns	a-nouns	i-nouns
nom.sg.	<i>konj</i>	<i>kolač</i>	<i>selo, more</i>	<i>žena</i>	<i>stvar</i>
acc.sg.	<i>konja</i>			<i>ženu</i>	
dat.sg.	<i>konju</i>	<i>kolaču</i>	<i>selu, moru</i>	<i>ženi</i>	<i>stvari</i>
nom.pl.	<i>konji</i>	<i>kolači</i>	<i>sela, mora</i>	<i>žene</i>	<i>stvari</i>
acc.pl.	<i>konje</i>	<i>kolače</i>			
dat.pl.	<i>konjima</i>	<i>kolačima</i>			

The Pattern

Since only endings change, we can list endings only, and take into account that a lot of these endings are the same. It's quite similar to declension (forms of cases) of adjectives, but *the endings are not the same*, except for some cases.

Some a-nouns ending on *-ka* change that *k* in dat.sg. to *c*. However, that does not happen for all a-nouns with *-ka*. The same happens in plural of m-nouns, where *-k, -g, -h* changes to *-c, -z, -s*; it *does* happen for all m-nouns ending on these sounds. I'll indicate that with a + in the scheme.

Here's the scheme of endings only:

case	m ^a -nouns	m ⁱ -nouns	n-nouns	a-nouns	i-nouns
nom.sg.	-	-	-o, -e	-a	-
acc.sg.	-a			-u	
dat.sg.	-u			(+)i	-i
nom.pl.	+i		-a	-e	-i
acc.pl.	-e				
dat.pl.	+ima			-ama	-ima

I know it's not easy at all to remember endings, especially in singular. Maybe it would be best to remember whole "template phrases" — nouns and adjectives — so you learn what forms go together. Here I will list only "typical" words, forgetting for a moment there are a-nouns that are not of f gender, etc. I shaded all cases where adjectives and nouns have different endings.

number	nouns	nom.	acc.	dat.
sg.	m ^a -	velik(i) konj	velik og (a) konja	velik om (u,e) konju
	m ⁱ -	velik(i) kolač		velik om (u,e) kolaču
	n-	velik o selo velik o more		velik om (u,e) selu velik om (u,e) moru
	a-	velik a kuća	velik u kuću	velik oj kući
	i-	velik a stvar	velik u stvar	velik oj stvari
pl.	m-	velik i konji velik i kolači	velik e konje velik e kolače	velik im konjima velik im kolačima
	n-	velik a sela velik a mora		velik im selima velik im morima
	a-	velik e kuće		velik im kućama
	i-	velik e stvari		velik im stvarima

This is maybe too much to learn at once; you could try the following approach:

1. Try to learn a-nouns and adjectives in feminine first.
2. Then check masculine and neuter genders and nouns. They are quite similar.
3. Once you learn them, move to the i-nouns — you don't need to learn more adjective forms, you have already learned adjectives in feminine gender.

Normally, it's not needed to remember the noun type and gender for 95% of nouns or more. For instance, when you see *voda* "water", you will assume that it's an a-noun (since it ends on *-a*), and feminine (as almost all a-nouns are), and you'll be completely right! So you see, actually it's simpler than it looks at the first sight!

Nominative vs. Accusative

One curiosity: there's much *less* difference between nom. and acc. (check n-, i- and mⁱ-nouns, a-nouns in plural) that one would expect from Croatian. For instance, since both *žena* "woman" and *knjiga* "book" are ordinary a-nouns, the sentence "women are reading books" is somewhat ambiguous! There's no difference between nom.pl. and acc.pl.; so, when it's translated to Croatian, it might actually mean "books are reading women":

Žene čitaju knjige.
Knjige čitaju žene. (who is reading?)

Common sense and the word order save the day.

However, the *dative* is always different from *accusative* — otherwise, one could not distinguish between "in x" and "to x", since *the only difference in Croatian* is that x is in acc. or gen. (Croatian, I repeat, uses the same preposition *u*).

Vocabulary & Exercise (in a "tourist context")

I have oversimplified the situation with m-nouns, there's a twist in the plural, so I'll postpone a list of some m-nouns until I explain a bit more about them. Here are some common nouns:

a-nouns (all having f gender):

baka "grandmother" (or "old woman") dat.sg. *baki*
banka "bank"
cijēna "price"
cipela "shoe"
crkva "church"
čaša "glass (to drink from)"
glava "head"
jabuka "apple" dat.sg. *jabuci*
juha "soup"
haljina "dress" (what women wear)
hrana "food"
kava "coffee"
knjiga "book"
kosa "hair" (on a head)
košulja "shirt"
kuća "house"
lubenica "watermelon"
luka "harbor"
mačka "cat" dat.sg. *mački*
majica "T-shirt"
majka "mother" dat.sg. *majci*
mama "mom" (affectionate)
marka "postal stamp"
naranča "orange"
noga "foot" dat.sg. *nozi*
obala "shore"
pjësma "song"
pošta "post office, mail"
plaža "beach"
ptica "bird"
razglednica "picture postcard"
riba "fish"
riža "rice"
ruka "arm" dat.sg. *ruci*
sestra "sister"
soba "room"
škola "school"
trava "grass"
večera "supper"
voda "water"
zemlja "ground, earth"
zgrada "building"
žena "woman, wife"
žlica "spoon"

n-nouns:

drvo "tree, wood"
jaje "egg"
jelo "dish, meal"
jutro "morning"
lice "face"
mjesto "place"
meso "meat"
more "sea"
piće "drink"
pismo "letter"
pivo "beer"
povrće "vegetable" (sg. is used for pl. as well)
selo "village"
smeće "trash"
staklo "glass (of a window)"
sunce "sun"
tijelo "body (of a person)"
vino "wine"
voće "fruit" (sg. is used for pl. as well)

i-nouns:

bol "pain"
bolest "disease"
kost "bone"
mast "fat, ointment"
noć "night"
obitelj "family"
ponoć "midnight"
riječ "word"
sol "salt"
večer "evening"

Of course, all above words are in the "dictionary form" — nom.sg. Try putting these words in various cases, and making sentences as:

Imam _____. "I have (a)..." (insert a noun in acc.)
Trebamo _____. "We need (a)..." (insert a noun in acc.)
Jedem _____. "I'm eating..." (insert a noun in acc.)
Molim _____. "I would like (a)..." (insert a noun in acc.)
Idem u _____. "I'm going to (a/the)..." (insert a noun in acc.)
Ja sam u _____. "I'm in (a/the)..." (insert a noun in dat.)

Be careful with a-nouns ending on *-ka*...

For instance (I used *soba* and *juha*):

Imam sobu. "I have a room."
Trebamo sobu. "We need a room."
Jedem juhu. "I'm eating soup."
Molim juhu. "I would like a soup."
Idem u sobu. "I'm going to the room."
Ja sam u sobi. "I'm in the room."

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10 Plural of m-Nouns, The o/e Rule

The last lesson omitted one important fact: all m-nouns add *-i* to form nom.pl. However, a great number of masculine nouns also insert *-ov-* or *-ev-* before that *-i* and all other endings in plural:

prozor, prozori nom.pl. "window, windows"
telefon, telefoni nom.pl. "telephone, telephones"
krevet, kreveti nom.pl. "bed, beds"
most, mostovi nom.pl. "bridge, bridges"
zid, zidovi nom.pl. "wall, walls"
kraj, krajevi nom.pl. "end, ends"
nož, noževi nom.pl. "knife, knives"

Most short, one-syllable words, and many two-syllable ones insert *-ov-* or *-ev-*, making a "long plural". All longer masculine nouns do not insert anything.

The o/e rule

What is inserted is determined in the following way. You may noticed that there is a number of places in Croatian where there can be an *o* or an *e*: in adjectives, in neuter nouns, in what we are talking about now. There is always the same rule, we can call it the o/e rule:

The o/e rule

In some endings, *o* or *e* is used according to the preceding sound or sounds:

1. If it is **c, č, ć, đ, š, ž, j, št, or žd**, then *e* is always used.
2. If it is an **r**, then *e* is used in some words that must be learned by heart, in others *o* is used.
3. Otherwise, *o* is used.

Special notation: in grammar tables, a special symbol *œ* (it looks like glued *o* with an *e*) will mean either *o* or *e*, according to this rule.

This o/e rule applies to all o/e alternations in Croatian, like visok–visokom (nom.sg.m.–dat.sg.m.), but loš–lošem, since there's a š just before the ending.

Not all *o*'s in endings behave like this — for instance, compare *visoka–visokoj* and *loša–lošoj*. Not all *o*'s in endings are mutable, but the *o*'s that are mutable, always use the above rule. To simplify tables, I have decided to use symbol *œ* for mutable *o*'s, meaning "o or e, according to the o/e rule". So, it's just a shorthand: it indicates *o*'s that turn to *e*'s.

It's just a fact that some endings have a mutable *o*! Therefore I had to mark such *o*'s.

Back to the masculine nouns. One important things is that there are some one-syllable masculine nouns that don't insert anything as well:

zub, zubi nom.pl. "tooth, teeth"
dan, dani nom.pl. "day, days"
konj, konji nom.pl. "horse, horses"
pās, psi nom.pl. "dog, dogs"

There's no other way but to memorize them. Luckily they are mostly some very often used words.

Disappearing a

Similar to the situation in adjectives, many m-nouns have an *a* as the last vowel which is dropped whenever anything is added to the noun. So forms equal to the nom.sg. have the *a*, and others don't. This issue is completely unrelated to the *-æv* in the plural or gender. I have decided to mark such *a*'s with 2 dots over it (*ä*) to show that this is an "disappearing a". Of course, it's just a reminder, it is pronounced exactly as any other *a*. For instance (*noväc* mⁱ "money", *vjätär* mⁱ "wind", *magarac* m^a "donkey"):

nom.sg.	<i>vjätär</i>	<i>noväc</i>	<i>magaräc</i>
acc.sg.	<i>vjätär</i>	<i>noväc</i>	<i>magarc-a</i>
dat.sg.	<i>vjëtr-u</i>	<i>novc-u</i>	<i>magarc-u</i>
nom.pl.	<i>vjëtr-ov-i</i>	<i>novc-i</i>	<i>magarc-i</i>
acc.pl.	<i>vjëtr-ov-e</i>	<i>novc-e</i>	<i>magarc-e</i>
dat.pl.	<i>vjëtr-ov-ima</i>	<i>novc-ima</i>	<i>magarc-ima</i>

The endings follow the normal rules, *magaräc* being m^a and others mⁱ. The *ä* disappears if anything is added, and what is added and when is determined by the common table of case endings.

Assimilations before -i

Certain sounds are changed before *-i* in the plural of m-nouns. It's a regular thing in Croatian, but, again, it does not happen whenever an *-i-* is added to any word (e.g. an adjective), just in some cases, one of them is the plural of m-nouns! But in such cases there's always a change:

Special notation:

+ indicates that a *k, g, h* before it change respectively to *c, z, s*

It happens of course only if *-æv-* is not inserted, because if it is, *i* not "in contact" with the sound anymore, now it's in contact with the inserted *v*. Some examples (*putnik* m^a "traveler", *uspjëh* mⁱ "success", *odlazäk* mⁱ "departure", *bubreg* mⁱ "kidney"; and *vlak* mⁱ "train" as an counter-example):

nom.sg.	<i>putnik</i>	<i>odlazäk</i>	<i>uspjëh</i>	<i>bubreg</i>	<i>vlak</i>
acc.sg.	<i>putnik-a</i>	<i>odlazäk</i>	<i>uspjëh</i>	<i>bubreg</i>	<i>vlak</i>
dat.sg.	<i>putnik-u</i>	<i>odlask-u</i>	<i>uspjëh-u</i>	<i>bubreg-u</i>	<i>vlak-u</i>
nom.pl.	<i>putnic-i</i>	<i>odlasc-i</i>	<i>uspjës-i</i>	<i>bubrez-i</i>	<i>vlak-ov-i</i>
acc.pl.	<i>putnik-e</i>	<i>odlask-e</i>	<i>uspjëh-e</i>	<i>bubreg-e</i>	<i>vlak-ov-e</i>
dat.pl.	<i>putnic-ima</i>	<i>odlasc-ima</i>	<i>uspjës-ima</i>	<i>bubrez-ima</i>	<i>vlak-ov-ima</i>

With *odlazäk*, there's an additional assimilation because *zc* changed to *sc*. We'll discuss such things later.

An important noun *čovjek* m^a "man" has quite unrelated form *ljudi* as its plural:

nom.sg.	<i>čovjek</i>
acc.sg.	<i>čovjek-a</i>
dat.sg.	<i>čovjek-u</i>
nom.pl.	<i>ljud-i</i>
acc.pl.	<i>ljud-e</i>
dat.pl.	<i>ljud-ima</i>

Vocabulary and Exercise

Common m^a-nouns (short plural):

čovjek "man" pl. *ljudi*
gost "guest"
konj "horse"
magarac "donkey"
päs "dog"
putnik "traveler"
škamp "shrimp"
turist "tourist"
vlasnik "owner"

Common m^a-nouns (long plural):

djed "grandfather"
jež "hedgehog", "sea urchin"
muž "husband"
puž "snail"
rak "crab"
sin "son"
slon "elephant"

Common mⁱ-nouns (short plural):

dan "day"
dolazäk "arrival"
doručäk "breakfast"
dvorac "castle"
hotel "hotel"
jezik "tongue", "language"
kolač "cake"
krevet "bed"
novac "money"
nokät "fingernail, toenail"
odlazäk "departure"
papär "peper"
prozor "window"
prst "finger, toe"
račun "bill"
ručäk "lunch"
ručnik "towel"
šečer "sugar"
sladoled "ice-cream"
tanjur "plate"
telefon "telephone"
ured "office"
zahod "toilet"
zub "tooth"

Common mⁱ-nouns (long plural):

bor "pine tree" pl. *borovi*
brod "ship"
grad "city"
hrast "oak"
kat "floor", "story" (of a building)
ključ "key"
kralj "king"
kruh "bread"
list "leaf", "sheet" (of paper)
led "ice"
med "honey"
most "bridge"
nos "nose" pl. *nosevi*
nož "knife"
prsten "ring"
snijäg "snow"
stan "apartment"
stol "table, desk"
vjätär "wind" pl. *vjetrovi*
vlak "train"
zid "wall"

Of course, all above words are in the "dictionary form" — nom.sg. Try putting these words in various cases, and making sentences. Beware the "long plural", observe the o/e rule, and +i changes in the plural! Recall, acc.sg. for m^a-nouns is different than for mⁱ-nouns.

Imam _____. "I have (a)..." (insert a noun in acc.)
Trebamo _____. "We need (a)..." (insert a noun in acc.)
Jedem _____. "I'm eating ..." (insert a noun in acc.pl.)

_____ *su dobri*. "... are good." (insert a noun in nom.pl.)
Molim _____. "I would like (a)..." (insert a noun in acc.)
Idem u _____. "I'm going to (a/the)..." (insert a noun in acc.)
Ja sam u _____. "I'm in (a/the)..." (insert a noun in dat.)
_____ *su čisti*. "... are clean." (insert a noun in nom.pl.)
_____ *ne radi*. "... is not working." (insert a noun in nom.sg.)

Be careful with the *ä* and sound changes in the "short" plural. For instance (I used *krevet*, *kolač*, etc.):

Imam krevet. "I have a bed."
Trebamo krevet. "We need a bed."
Jedem kolače. "I'm eating cakes."
Kolači su dobri. "The cakes are good."
Molim kolač. "I would like a cake."
Idem u restoran. "I'm going to the restaurant."
Ja sam u restoranu. "I'm in the restaurant."
Ručnici su čisti. "The towels are clean."
Restoran ne radi. "The restaurant is not working."

11 Basic Pronouns, Verb "To Be"

For some reasons I really don't understand, basic pronouns ("I", "he") are always explained together with forms of verb "to be" — "I am", "he is", etc., and that's usually the first thing one learns. I explaining postponed such things... until now. So, there is a recipe how to use pronouns + "to be" in Croatian.

As I have already explained, pronouns are almost always omitted in Croatian. However, they are frequently used with the present tense of "to be" (reasons will become obvious later), so it is convenient to describe them together.

This will enable you to produce sentences of type "X is Y", like "the apple is yellow", "Ana is a girl", "keys are in the drawer", etc.

Croatian has three *persons* (same as English) — 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. First two persons are about sides of conversation, the third one about everything else. Here are forms of verb "to be" together with personal pronouns in nominative:

person	m	n	f
1 st sg.	<i>ja sam</i> "I am"		
2 nd sg.	<i>ti si</i> "you are"		
3 rd sg.	<i>on je</i> "he is"	<i>ono je</i> "it is"	<i>ona je</i> "she is"
1 st pl.	<i>mi smo</i> "we are"		
2 nd pl.	<i>vi ste</i> "you are"		
3 rd pl.	<i>oni su</i> "they are"	<i>ona su</i> "they are"	<i>one su</i> "they are"

The verb does not distinguish gender — only 3rd person pronouns do. Their forms should remind you of adjectives or nouns, since the endings are the same.

Again, English is a peculiar language, it does not distinguish singular and plural in the 2nd person — both are "you are". Croatian and other most languages does distinguish. *ti* is used when talking to one person, *vi* to more than one person. Likewise, Croatian has one "your" for singular, another for plural, all verbs have different forms for singular and plural in the 2nd person, etc.

Pronouns also have forms for other cases — the above forms are for nominative only. We'll learn other cases later.

Ti vs. Vi

However, there's additional twist. Croatian has a [T-V distinction](#). It basically means that you cannot say *ti* to anyone, just to people you're friend with, your family, etc. To everyone else you should (*should*, not *must*: this is a social convention) use plural — *vi*. But it means that all other words, like verbs etc. must be in the plural as well! So, you talk to "people you respect" in exactly the same way as addressing a group of people! Even more, such a "honorific" *vi* is always written capitalized (*Vi*). For instance:

Ti si došao ujutro. "You came in the morning" (talking to a friend)

Vi ste došli ujutro. "You (guys) came in the morning" (talking to a group of people)

Vi ste došli ujutro. "You (sir) came in the morning" (talking to a person you respect)

Children use *ti* always among themselves, but gradually learn to say *Vi* to older non-relatives.

People in a shop, a bank, workplace address each other with a *Vi*. One addresses only people he/she works with a longer time with a *ti*. The name comes from French, where similar personal pronouns *tu* and *vous*; Russian has *ty/vy*, Turkish *sen/siz*, etc. — in all cases singular/plural of the 2nd person. German has a different system: *du/Sie*.

Basic Sentences

What basic sentences can we make with personal pronouns and this verb?

There are several types of sentences that fit into "x is y" model. First, let's take a look at sentences where at both sides is a noun (on a noun phrase):

NP (*sam, si, je...*) NP.

In such sentences, both nouns (or phrases) are in nominative. They don't need to agree on gender, but it's preferred; it depends if there is a suitable noun at all. For example:

Zagreb je veliki grad. "Zagreb is a big city."
Ja sam student. "I am a (university) student (male)."
Ja sam studentica. "I am a (university) student (female)." (female speaker)
Ti si malo dijete. "You are a small child."
On je novi poštar. "He is the new postman."

In such sentences, pronouns are rarely omitted.

You maybe noted that adjectives in nom.sg.m form in these sentences has always *-i*. That's one of subtleties. One can just talk about properties of something, the sentences having a structure NP (*sam, si, je...*) AP.

Zagreb je velik. "Zagreb is big."
Ja sam žedan. "I am thirsty."
Ja sam gladna. "I am hungry." (female speaker, *ja* refers to f gender)
Mi smo umorni. "We are tired."
Ti si vrlo brz. "You are very fast."
Noći su duge i hladne. "Nights are long and cold."

Now adjectives never have an *-i*.

Usually, in such sentences, one omits the personal pronouns, but must place *sam, si, je...* after the adjective (or adjective phrase):

Žedan sam.
Gladna sam.
Umorni smo.

Furthermore, there are impersonal sentences, talking about the "current situation", of structure 0 is AP [PP]; English uses a dummy pronoun "it", but Croatian *never uses any pronouns in such sentences*.

Hladno je. "It is cold." (lit. "is cold."
Hladno je u sobi. "It is cold in the room."
U sobi je hladno. (the same meaning, word order is not important)
Kasno je. "It is late."
Vruće je. "It is hot".

The last type is x is PP sentences, meaning usually some position. The simplest are:

NP (*sam, si, je...*) u NP.dat.
 NP (*sam, si, je...*) na NP.dat.

For example:

Iva je u Zagrebu. "Iva is in Zagreb."

Nož je u ladici. "The knife is in the/a drawer."

[will be updated]

12 Present Tense

I have shown one verb ("to be") in the present tense, and you have seen occasionally glimpses of some other verbs. Now, I will show how verbs are used in the present tense.

English has 2 present tenses:

"I eat."

"I am eating."

The first one is used for things that happen sometimes, everyday, and the second one for things going on right now.

Croatian (and most languages, including German) does not distinguish these two forms, and has only one present tense. Its meaning is close to the second English form.

Roots and Endings

When discussing verbs forms, it useful to distinguish three parts of each form: the *base*, the *extension*, and the *ending*. For example, let's take the verb *imam* "have" — it's a pristine regular verb in Croatian, contrary to the English counterpart:

form	base	ext.	ending		base	ext.	ending
present 1 st sg.	<i>im</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>m</i>		<i>misl</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>m</i>
present 2 nd sg.	<i>im</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>š</i>		<i>misl</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>š</i>
present 3 rd pl.	<i>im</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ju</i>		<i>misl</i>	<i>e</i>	
past part. m	<i>im</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>o</i>		<i>misl</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>
infinitive	<i>im</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ti</i>		<i>misl</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>ti</i>

There are forms other than present in this table, to illustrate the principle. Sometimes extension is changed in some forms, but not as often as an ending; base is touched even more seldom. However, verbs have several classes (patterns to make endings) and it depends on the extension, as shown in the table with the other verb *mislím* "think".

Like *sam*, *si*,... forms of "to be", Croatian verbs have distinct forms for each person in singular and plural. I have divided the verbs are divided to several classes, according to the extension. I'll show it on examples of several verbs: *pijem* "drink", *tresem* "shake", *pečem* "bake", *tonem* "sink", *imam* "have", *mislím* "think", *smijem* "may, am allowed to", *kupujem* "buy". All verbs are shown as base-extension-ending:

person	e		n	a	i	*v
1 st sg.	<i>pi-je-m</i>	<i>tres-e-m</i>	<i>to-ne-m</i>	<i>im-a-m</i>	<i>misl-i-m</i>	<i>kup-uje-m</i>
2 nd sg.	<i>pi-je-š</i>	<i>tres-e-š</i>	<i>to-ne-š</i>	<i>im-a-š</i>	<i>misl-i-š</i>	<i>kup-uje-š</i>
2 nd sg.	<i>pi-je</i>	<i>tres-e</i>	<i>to-ne</i>	<i>im-a</i>	<i>misl-i</i>	<i>kup-uje</i>
1 st pl.	<i>pi-je-mo</i>	<i>tres-e-mo</i>	<i>to-ne-mo</i>	<i>im-a-mo</i>	<i>misl-i-mo</i>	<i>kup-uje-mo</i>
2 nd pl.	<i>pi-je-te</i>	<i>tres-e-te</i>	<i>to-ne-te</i>	<i>im-a-te</i>	<i>misl-i-te</i>	<i>kup-uje-te</i>
3 rd pl.	<i>pi-ju</i>	<i>tres-u</i>	<i>to-nu</i>	<i>im-a-ju</i>	<i>misl-e</i>	<i>kup-uju</i>

This table leaves out a group of e-verbs that have consonant changes in root (e.g. *peč-em*, *peč-eš...* but 3rd pers. pl. *pek-u*). I will discuss them a bit later with the other strange e-verbs and some other verbs I intentionally forgot to include here.

You can notice that all classes have more or less the same the endings. Actually, I could compress it to just 4 classes. So, what's the difference, then? It has to do with formation of other tenses. For instance, the extension *ne* in the present changes to a *nu* in the past.

The simplified pattern of endings is just:

1st sg.	<i>-e-m</i>	<i>-a-m</i>	<i>-i-m</i>
2nd sg.	<i>-e-š</i>	<i>-a-š</i>	<i>-i-š</i>
2nd sg.	<i>-e</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-i</i>
1st pl.	<i>-e-mo</i>	<i>-a-mo</i>	<i>-i-mo</i>
2nd pl.	<i>-e-te</i>	<i>-a-te</i>	<i>-i-te</i>
3rd pl.	<i>-u</i>	<i>-a-ju</i>	<i>-e</i>

A Few Special Verbs

Verbs *hoću* "will" and *mogu* "can" have a special 1st pers. sg., and other forms according to the #e pattern:

1st sg.	<i>hoć-u (!)</i>	<i>ć-u (!)</i>	<i>mog-u (!)</i>
2nd sg.	<i>hoć-eš</i>	<i>ć-eš</i>	<i>mož-eš</i>
3rd sg.	<i>hoć-e</i>	<i>ć-e</i>	<i>mož-e</i>
1st pl.	<i>hoć-emo</i>	<i>će-mo</i>	<i>mož-emo</i>
2nd pl.	<i>hoć-ete</i>	<i>će-ete</i>	<i>mož-ete</i>
3rd pl.	<i>hoć-e (!)</i>	<i>će-e (!)</i>	<i>mog-u (!)</i>

Forms *ću*, *ćeš*,... are auxiliary, clitic forms, similar to *sam*, *si*,... More about them later.

Adverbs of Indefinite Frequency

These useful words are used when you express how often you do something; with the present tense, such sentences will refer to what you do both in the past and still do. Such adverbs are (sorted by frequency):

adverb	meaning	adverb	meaning
<i>uvijek</i>	"always"	<i>često</i>	"often"
<i>skoro uvijek</i>	"almost always"	<i>ponekad</i>	"sometimes"
<i>stalno</i>	"constantly"	<i>rijetko</i>	"rarely, seldom"
<i>uglavnom</i>	"mostly"	<i>skoro nikad</i>	"almost never" (!)
<i>obično</i>	"usually"	<i>nikad</i>	"never" (!)

For instance:

Često jědem pizzu. "I often eat pizza."
Uvijěk pijem pivo. "I always drink beer."
Ponekad čitam knjige. "I read books sometimes."

Important: if you use *nikad* or *skoro nikad*, you have to put the word *ne* directly in front of the verb:

Nikad ne jědem pizzu. "I never eat pizza."
Skoro nikad ne pijem pivo. "I almost never drink beer."

The reason will be explained later. Order of words is quite free, but such adverbs are almost never found at the end of the sentence, although it's not a forbidden place to put an adverb:

Često jědem pizzu. (OK)
Jedem često pizzu. (OK)
Jědem pizzu često. (seldom heard)

Notes on Use and Useful Verbs

As is stated before, personal pronouns are usually omitted:

Jědem. "I'm eating."
Jědem pizzu. "I'm eating pizza."
Učim hrvatski. "I'm learning Croatian."
Imam malog psa. "I have a small dog."

One must be careful to use the right form of the verb:

Ana i Ivan jědu pizzu. "Ana i Ivan are eating (a) pizza."
Ana jěde pizzu. "Ana is eating (a) pizza."
Jědeš pizzu. "You're eating (a) pizza." (talking to a single person)
Jědete pizzu. "You (guys) are eating pizza."

In dictionaries, verbs are usually listed in their "infinitive" form which is not used too often, much less than the present form. Therefore, similar to practice in Latin, I decided to list verbs by their first person present form. Some other important verbs are listed here:

<i>brojim</i> "count"	<i>moram</i> "must, have to"	<i>stojim</i> "stand"
<i>čekam</i> "wait"	<i>němam</i> "don't have"	<i>trčim</i> "run"
<i>čistim</i> "clean", "tidy"	<i>perem</i> "wash"	<i>trěbam</i> "need"
<i>čitam</i> "read"	<i>pripremam</i> "prepare"	<i>tražim</i> "search, look for"
<i>dajem</i> "give"	<i>plaćam</i> "pay"	<i>učim</i> "learn"
<i>dišem (dišu)</i> "breathe"	<i>plivam</i> "swim"	<i>uzimam</i> "take"
<i>idem</i> "go"	<i>pišem (pišu)</i> "write"	<i>vučem (vuku)</i> "pull"
<i>gledam</i> "watch"	<i>pitam</i> "ask"	<i>vičem (viču)</i> "yell"
<i>govorim</i> "speak"	<i>radim</i> "work"	<i>vidim</i> "see"
<i>guram</i> "push"	<i>razgovaram</i> "talk"	<i>vježbam</i> "exercise"
<i>hodam</i> "walk"	<i>ronim</i> "dive"	<i>vodim</i> "lead, guide"
<i>kažem</i> "say"	<i>sjedim</i> "sit"	<i>vozim</i> "drive"
<i>koristim</i> "use"	<i>skačem</i> "jump"	<i>znam</i> "know"
<i>kuham</i> "cook"	<i>slušam</i> "listen"	<i>zovem</i> "call"
<i>ležim</i> "lay"	<i>spavam</i> "sleep"	<i>želim</i> "wish"

If you heard somewhere about so-called *perfective* verbs that cannot be used in the present tense, well, none of the listed verbs is perfective, they are normally used in the present tense.

13 Genitive Case

The Genitive Case Introduced

Now we are hitting some hard stuff. It's finally time to introduce one more case: the *genitive* (abbreviation: gen.). What is it used for? Well, for many things. Most important, in phrases "x of y", and for counting and measuring. Let's take a look at genitive endings for nouns:

case	m ^a -nouns	m ⁱ -nouns	n-nouns	a-nouns	i-nouns
nom.sg.	-	-	-œ	-a	-
acc.sg.	-a			-u	
dat.sg.	-u			(+)i	-i
gen.sg.	-a			-e	-i
nom.pl.	-[œv]+i		-a	-e	-i
acc.pl.	-[œv]e				
dat.pl.	-[œv]+ima		-ima	-ama	-ima
gen.pl.	-[œv]a		-a	-a (-i)	-i

Here I have used the "o/e notation" (symbol œ) for "o that depends on the preceding sound". Note how neuter nouns *in nominative* actually can have either -o or -e and that is precisely that kind of o.

Endings of Genitive Plural

However, now it gets, well, complicated. First, there are few nouns that have *-iju* or *u* in gen.pl.:

gost m^a "guest" gen.pl. *gostiju*,
kost f "bone" gen.pl. *kostiju*,
uši f pl. "ears" gen.pl. *ušiju*,
noga f "leg" gen.pl. *nogu*, and some others.

Second, some nouns have a "lengthened" gen.pl., usually inserting some additional *-a-* "from nowhere". If nom.sg. has an *ä* that is "lost" in other cases, in gen.pl. it reappears. For instance:

noun (nom.sg.)	nom.pl.	gen.pl.
<i>magaräc</i> m ^a "donkey"	<i>magarci</i>	<i>magaräca</i>
<i>muškaräc</i> m ^a "man, male"	<i>muškarci</i>	<i>muškaräca</i>
<i>pismo</i> n "letter"	<i>pisma</i>	<i>pisäma</i>

Third, there are a-nouns that end on *-i* in gen.pl. Usually, such nouns end on *-ka* in nom.sg.; some of them can have the "lengthened" form as well. All of them have a "consonant cluster" before the final *-a*:

breskva f "peach"; gen.pl. *breskvi* or *bresäka* (!)
daska f "plank, board"; gen.pl. *daski* or *dasäka*
guska f "goose"; gen.pl. *guski* or *gusäka*
mačka f "cat"; gen.pl. *mački* or *mačäka*
sekunda f "second"; gen.pl. *sekundi*
palma f "palm"; gen.pl. *palmi*

kaplja f "drop (or liquid)"; gen.pl. *kaplji*

Fourth, some m-nouns have gen.pl. on *-i*:

sat mⁱ "hour"; gen.pl. *sati*

mjesec mⁱ "month, moon"; gen.pl. *mjeseci*

ljudi m^a pl. "men, people" (used as plural of *čovjek*); gen.pl. *ljudi*

I will always, in vocabulary lists, write gen.pl. for every word that has something else from the default *-a*.

The lengthened forms are considered archaic and provincial by some people, and people tend to use forms on *-i* if words have both options. The lengthening by inserting *ä* can appear only if a word would have two consecutive consonants different from *st*, *št*, *zd*, *žd* (like *pismo* gen.pl. *pisäma*, but not *mjesto*)

Adjectives

Forms for adjectives:

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	<i>-</i> , <i>-i</i>	<i>-</i> , <i>-i</i>	<i>-æ</i>	<i>-a</i>
acc.sg.	<i>-æg(a)</i>			<i>-u</i>
dat.sg.	<i>-æm(u)</i> , <i>-ome</i>			<i>-oj</i>
gen.sg.	<i>-æg(a)</i>			<i>-e</i>
nom.pl.	<i>-i</i>	<i>-a</i>		<i>-e</i>
acc.pl.	<i>-e</i>			
dat.pl.	<i>-im</i>			
gen.pl.	<i>-ih</i>			

As you can see, it's much simpler than endings for nouns. However, the endings for adjectives are unlike ones for nouns!

Use: Belonging

Genitive is (among other uses) used to make noun phrases of type "X of Y". For instance, phrase "return of the king" translates as:

<i>povratak</i>	<i>kralja</i>
nom.sg.	gen.sg.
return	king

We could rephrase it as "king's return":

kraljev povratak

However, in Croatian, you can make possessive adjectives of single words only! In English, you can say "my sister's car", but in Croatian you *must* effectively rephrase it as "the car of my sister". Another example, phrase "owner of the yellow house" cannot be rephrased. It must be translated to Croatian by placing the subphrase *žuta kuća* "yellow house" in genitive — both the adjective and noun must be put in that case:

<i>vlasnik</i>	<i>žute</i>	<i>kuće</i>
nom.sg.	gen.sg.f	gen.sg.
owner	yellow	house

Structure of such phrases is like this: N NP.gen.

Noun at the front (*vlasnik* in our example, also called the "head noun") remains "unlocked", and should be put in appropriate case according to the role in a sentence, while the rest is "permanently locked" in the genitive. To illustrate this, let's use *vlasnik žute kuće* in various roles in sentence:

Vlasnik žute kuće je došao. "The owner of the yellow house came." (*vlasnik* is nom.sg.)
Pitam vlasnika žute kuće. "I am asking the owner of the yellow house." (*vlasnika* is acc.sg.)
Dajem ključeve vlasniku žute kuće. "I am giving the keys to the owner of the yellow house."
(*vlasniku* is dat.sg.)

Etc. You see that *žute kuće* is simply "attached" to the noun and never changes its case or anything else. The phrase in plural is:

Vlasnici žute kuće "owners of the yellow house"

We can put an adjective phrase before the head noun, for instance:

Novi vlasnik žute kuće "new owner of the yellow house"

One use of genitive is that something belongs to someone. It's used to say that a street or square is named after someone. So, in Croatian, we say "Street of X", or "Square of Y" which translates to *ulica X-gen* and *trg Y-gen*. For instance, consider these three plates:



The square (*trg*) is named after Franklin Roosevelt (literally, it's "his" square, it "belongs to him"), and streets after two local guys, Andrija Medulić and Ignjat Đorđić. There's another way to express that something belongs to someone (e.g. "king's return", see above), and hence the street names — about it a bit later.

Another Way to Remember Endings

Here's another way to look at the endings, you can remember both adjectives and nouns for each gender:

number	nouns	nom.	gen.
sg.	m-	<i>velik(i) konj</i> <i>velik(i) magarāc</i> <i>velik(i) kolač</i>	<i>velikog(a) konja</i> <i>velikog(a) magarca</i> <i>velikog(a) kolača</i>
	n-	<i>veliko selo</i> <i>veliko pismo</i> <i>veliko more</i>	<i>velikog(a) sela</i> <i>velikog(a) pisma</i> <i>velikog(a) mora</i>
	a-	<i>velika kuća</i>	<i>velike kuće</i>
	i-	<i>velika stvar</i>	<i>velike stvari</i>
pl.	m-	<i>veliki konji</i> <i>veliki magarci</i>	<i>velikih konja</i> <i>velikih magarāca</i>

number	nouns	nom.	gen.
		<i>veliki kolači</i>	<i>velikih kolača</i>
	n-	<i>velika sela</i> <i>velika pisma</i> <i>velika mora</i>	<i>velikih sela</i> <i>velikih pisāma</i> <i>velikih mora</i>
	a-	<i>velike kuće</i>	<i>velikih kuća</i>
	i-	<i>velike stvari</i>	<i>velikih stvari</i>

Further Uses

Genitive is used with some verbs, with many prepositions (words like "without", "from", in some other instances, etc. — in fact, genitive is almost the "default" case when noun is neither a subject or object of action but is used in another construct. One of the main uses is to measure and count things, as you will see soon.

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14 Past Tense

• • • Review: 12 [Present Tense](#)

Croatian forms the past tense using present of verb "to be" (*sām, si, je...*) and something similar to an adjective (called "past participle"; shortened to "past part." or "p. p."). Such sentences are actually very similar to "X is Y". Because adjectives have to agree with subjects of such sentences, form of the adjective changes according to gender:

Ja sām rekāo. "I said." (a male speaker)
Ja sām rekla. "I said." (a female speaker)

This poses a small problem when translating to and from Croatian. As with other such sentences, personal pronouns are normally omitted:

Rekāo sām. Rekla sām.

Now, how those "past participles" are formed? First, their scheme of endings is as follows:

	m	n	f
nom.sg.	-o	-lo	-la
dual	-la		-le
nom.pl.	-li	-la	-le

Other cases (if used) conform to the normal pattern. Actually, all forms conform to the normal adjective pattern except the nom. m.

Verbs with Easy Past

What about the base these endings are attached to? Let's review present classes and see how past participles are formed for those verbs:

pres. class	e		n	a	i	*v
1st sg.	<i>pi-je-m</i>	<i>tres-e-m</i>	<i>bri-ne-m</i>	<i>im-a-m</i>	<i>misl-i-m</i>	<i>kup-uje-m</i>
3rd pl.	<i>pi-ju</i>	<i>tres-u</i>	<i>bri-nu</i>	<i>im-a-ju</i>	<i>misl-e</i>	<i>kup-uju</i>
past class	0		n	a	i	*v
past part. m	<i>pi--o</i>	<i>tres--äo</i>	<i>bri-n<u>u</u>-o</i>	<i>im-a-o</i>	<i>misl-i-o</i>	<i>kup-ova-o</i>
past part. f	<i>pi--la</i>	<i>tres--la</i>	<i>bri-n<u>u</u>-la</i>	<i>im-a-la</i>	<i>misl-i-la</i>	<i>kup-ova-la</i>

What do we see? Basically, *-em* or *-m* from the present is discarded, and *-la* is added for f, *-o* for m, in some cases *-äo* (the symbol *ä* indicates an *a* that is lost in other forms).

However, the extension is sometimes changed, sometimes there isn't anything, so I added names for the **past classes** (0, n...) to emphasize it. The names of past classes are just what is inserted before nom. sg. f *-la*.

Now, the e/0 class is the most complicated one and has three variations:

- roots ending on a consonant (e.g. *pi-*) which get a *-j-* in the present tense
- ones that end on a consonant that does not change (*tres-*); they don't get anything inserted in present, but an *a ä* is inserted in sg. m only.

- ones that end on a consonant that changes in present (*peč-em, pek-u* 3rd pers. pl.) — they will be described a bit later.

So far, not that complicated.

Verbs Switching from i to a

There's a group of verbs that have an *-i-* in present, but *-a-* in past (and some other forms that are based on past). They behave as *i*-verbs in present, but like *a*-verbs in past! I gave them a simple name: *i/a*-verbs.

There are not many such verbs and there's no other option but to memorize them. Otherwise, they are simple to learn, so I'm introducing them as soon as possible. Some of them are:

bjěž-i-m, past *bjěž-ao*, *bjěž-a-la* "run away"
broj-i-m, past *broj-ao*, *broj-a-la* "count"
drž-i-m, past *drž-ao*, *drž-a-la* "hold"
lež-i-m, past *lež-a-o*, *lež-a-la* "lay"
trč-i-m, past *trč-a-o*, *trč-a-la* "run"
vrišt-i-m, past *vrišt-a-o*, *vrišt-a-la* "scream"
zvižd-i-m, past *zvižd-a-o*, *zvižd-a-la* "whistle"

In verb lists, I will just list the past part. m form if it's unexpected, for simplicity reasons; therefore:

učim "learn" = other forms are with *-i-*, as expected
trčim, *trčao* "run" = other past forms are with *-a-*, but otherwise as expected

Verbs with Difficult Past

There's a class of verbs does not fit to easy patterns described above. It a number of important verbs, and there's no other option but to memorize them. The class uses a peculiar pattern: in present, they have an *-e-*, but in the past there's always an *-a-* that never disappears, I'll name it **'je/a** for reasons that will become obvious a bit later. I will take verbs *derem* "tear", *skačem* "jump", *mičem* "move", *pušem* "blow", *lažem* "lie", *vežem* "tie", *pišem* "write", *šečem* "stroll, walk", *drščem* "shiver" from this class of verbs, and compare their forms with *tresem* from the plain *e/0*.

form	'je/a				
1st sg.	<i>der-e-m</i>	<i>skač-e-m</i>	<i>mič-e-m</i>	<i>laž-e-m</i>	<i>vež-e-m</i>
3rd pl.	<i>der-u</i>	<i>skač-u</i>	<i>mič-u</i>	<i>laž-u</i>	<i>vež-u</i>
past m	<i>der-a-o</i>	<i>skak-a-o</i>	<i>mic-a-o</i>	<i>lag-a-o</i>	<i>vez-a-o</i>
past f	<i>der-a-la</i>	<i>skak-a-la</i>	<i>mic-a-la</i>	<i>lag-a-la</i>	<i>vez-a-la</i>

form	'je/a				e/0
1st sg.	<i>puš-e-m</i>	<i>piš-e-m</i>	<i>šeć-e-m</i>	<i>dršč-e-m</i>	<i>tres-e-m</i>
3rd pl.	<i>puš-u</i>	<i>piš-u</i>	<i>šeć-u</i>	<i>dršč-u</i>	<i>tres-u</i>
past m	<i>puh-a-o</i>	<i>pis-a-o</i>	<i>šet-a-o</i>	<i>drht-a-o</i>	<i>tres--äo</i>
past f	<i>puh-a-la</i>	<i>pis-a-la</i>	<i>šet-a-la</i>	<i>drht-a-la</i>	<i>tres--la</i>

The major feature is that in the present of the **'je/a** class, there's a complex change *k/c, g/z, h/s, t*, etc. to *č, ž, and š, ć*, etc. in all persons. It's important to remember it since there are *lot* of verbs in this class!

The best way is just to remember the present and the past in this "strange" verb class (and other

classes), since there are rules, but they are quite complicated. Therefore, you can regard them "irregular" if it makes life easier for you, but really they are not.

There are other verb classes that are a bit harder to put into past participle form; one instance is *jedem* "eat", having past participles *jeo m*, *jela f*. About them, a bit later.

In verb lists, I will list the past part. m form for all such verbs, e.g.:

pušem, puhao "learn"
šećem, šetao "stroll, walk"
pušim "smoke" = regular i-verb

Irregular Past Participles

Several verbs have irregular past bases.

- The verb *sām* "be" has an irregular past base: *bi-o*, *bi-la*.
- The verb *idem* "go" is a very often used verb and has a completely irregular past base: *iš-āo*, *iš-la*. Forms derived from it are also irregular.
- The verb *hoću* "want" also has an irregular past base: *ht-i-o*, *ht-jě-la*.

In verb lists, I will list all forms that are unexpected for such verbs, e.g.:

idem, išāo, išla "go"

The wisest thing would be: for all non-plain verbs (e.g. im-a-m/im-a-o) *just remember* both the 1st person of present and the past participles.

Some Notes on Use

I stated that forms *-o*, *-la*, *-lo*, etc. are actually adjectives. Are they used just as ordinary adjectives, before nouns? Yes, but only a few, from some intransitive (having no objects) verbs. For instance:

Drvo je palo. "(A) tree fell."
Palo drvo leži u šumi. "(A) fallen tree is lying in the forest."

However, a great majority of past participles is not used freely as adjectives, but only to form past tense.

Finally, when used to form the past tense, the resulting construct is really not same as "X is A"; to illustrate this, let's compare *spavala* (from *spavam* "sleep") and *gladna*:

Ja sām spavala. "I was sleeping."
Ja sām gladna. "I am hungry."
Ja sām gladna i žedna. "I am hungry and thirsty."

However, this is impossible:

~~*Ja sam spavala i žedna.*~~ (don't try to construct this!)

15 Expressing Quantities and Existence

• • • Review: 13 [Genitive Case](#)

This chapter continues exploring *some* uses of the genitive case (there are many more uses!). Uses in this chapter are related to measured or approximate quantities (counts are covered in the next chapter). It's important to distinguish two types of nouns:

- countable (e.g. *jabuka* "apple", *krava* "cow"...)
- uncountable (e.g. *šećer* "sugar", *voda* "water", *vino* "wine"...)

Basically, uncountable nouns have singular only. Some nouns can be both, depending on the context: *čokolada* can be just uncountable "chocolate", but can mean "chocolate bar" and then it can be counted.

Measures use genitive plural (yes, it's the hardest-to-make case), but since uncountable nouns don't have plural, they use gen. sg. in measures!

Existential Constructs ("there is...")

The existential construct is a way of expressing that something exists somewhere. In English, it's chiefly expressed as "there is/are", e.g. "there are apples on the table". It's so-called "dummy" or "existential there". In French, its *il y a*, in German *es ist/gibt*, etc.

In Croatian, it's completely different to English and more similar to German. There are several ways to express existence:

Croatian	English	use
<i>ima jabuka na stolu</i> (gen. pl.)	"there are apples on the table"	unknown quantity, not exact
<i>nema jabuka na stolu</i> (gen. pl.)	"there are no apples on the table"	non-existence
<i>jabuke su na stolu</i>	"apples are on the table"	specific, known "apples"
<i>postoje zelene jabuke</i>	"green apples exist"	fact, truth

Forms *ima* + gen. and *nema* literally mean "it has" / "it has not", therefore they are impersonal -- and the impersonal "it" is never expressed in Croatian, so such sentences always lack any subject. Note that *imam* is otherwise used as a normal verb "have"; this use is distinguished by being in the 3rd person sg. with omitted subject and an object in genitive:

Imam jabuku. (acc. sg.) "I have an apple."
Imam jabuke. (acc. pl.) "I have apples."
Imam jabuka. (gen. pl.) "I have some apples."
Ana ima jabuku. (acc. sg.) "Ana has an apple."
Ana ima jabuke. (acc. pl.) "Ana has apples."
Ana ima jabuka. (gen. pl.) "Ana has some apples."

Ima jabuka. (no subject, 3rd pers. sg., **gen. pl.**) "There are some apples."

This is quite similar to Spanish *hay* and Portuguese *tem* or *há*, however it's a bit more restricted. Forms *ima/nema* are mainly used to express temporary states, availability of things, especially uncountable ones, and similar:

Ima vode. (gen. sg.) "There's water.", "Water is available."
Nema plina. (gen. sg.) "There's no gas.", "Gas is not available."
Ima kave. (gen. sg.) "There's coffee.", "Coffee is available."
Nema problema. (gen. pl., as problems can be counted!) "There are no problems.",

"Everything is OK."

The last phrase, *nema problema*, is very frequently heard.

Important: the "non-existing" phrase *nema...* can be used with individuals, but *ima...* cannot!

Nema Ivana. "Ivan is not here." (OK)

Ima Ivana. (**wrong!**)

Ivan je ovdje. "Ivan is here." (use this instead!)

It also applies to all known, defined persons, not just named individuals:

Nema mog brata. "My brother is not here." (OK)

Ima mog brata. (**wrong!**)

Moj brat je ovdje. "My brother is here." (use this instead!)

The past tense of existential *ima/nema* is **not** formed from *imam* or *nemam*, but from the verb *sām*, in the 3rd person sg. and neuter gender (we will see that all impersonal forms use neuter).

Therefore, the past form of the existential construct is *bilo* + *je/nije*:

present	past
<i>Ima jabuka.</i> "There are (some) apples."	<i>Bilo je jabuka.</i> "There were some apples."
<i>Nema plina.</i> "There's no gas."	<i>Nije bilo plina.</i> "There was no gas."
<i>Nema problema.</i> "There are no problems." "Everything is fine."	<i>Nije bilo problema.</i> "There were no problems." "Everything was fine."
<i>Ana ima jabuku.</i> "Ana has an apple."	<i>Ana je imala jabuku.</i> "Ana had an apple."

The last sentence is not existential, it's about possession, and therefore it's past is formed as usual.

Expressing "Some"

Sometimes genitive is used instead of accusative of uncountable nouns to express "some" quantity (sometimes implying "enough"):

Trëbam vode. "I need some water." (*vode* = gen.sg.)

Imamo kruha. "We have some/enough bread." (*kruha* = gen.sg.)

Imamo riže. "We have (some/enough) rice." (*riže* = gen.sg.)

Nemamo šećera. "We don't have (any) sugar." (*šećera* = gen.sg.)

This is optional, as there are words for "some" and "enough" in Croatian. This is just a shorter version which one can use.

Measuring

Another frequent use of genitives is to make phrases like "cup of tea", "bag of sand", "glass of water", "kilogram of rice", etc. So, it is kind of measuring. Croatian uses the genitive for counting as well, but that's another topic.

Imam vreću pijeska.
 verb acc. sg. gen. sg.
 have bag sand
 "I have a bag of sand."

Vidim stado krava.
 verb acc. sg. gen. pl.
 see herd cows
 "I see a herd of cows."

In the same way, one can ask for a *kilogram* (usually shortened to *kila*) of sugar, or half or it.

Molim kilu šećera.
 verb acc. sg. gen. sg.
 please kilogram sugar
 "I would like a kilogram of sugar."

Molim pola kile šećera.
 verb meas. gen. sg. gen. sg.
 please half kilogram sugar
 "I would like a half kilogram of sugar."

Instead of *vrěća* and similar nouns for quantity, people frequently use abstract quantity-adverbs, such as:

adverb	meaning
<i>ništa</i>	"none" (for uncountables)
<i>nimalo</i>	"not any"
<i>nešto</i>	"some" (for uncountables)
<i>malo</i>	"little, a bit"
<i>nekoliko</i>	"several" (for countables)
<i>par (!)</i>	"couple" (for countables)
<i>puno</i>	"lot"
<i>mnogo</i>	"lot" (for countables)
<i>pola</i>	"half" (sg. or pl.)
<i>čtvrt</i>	"quarter" (sg. or pl.)

adverb	meaning
<i>manje</i>	"less"
<i>više</i>	"more"

adverb	meaning
<i>premallo</i>	"too little"
<i>nedovoljno</i>	"not enough"
<i>dovoljno</i>	"enough"
<i>dosta</i>	"enough, quite lot"
<i>previše</i>	"too much"

Remember that these words are *adverbs*, not nouns or adjectives. Verbs agree with them in neuter singular:

Nekoliko ljudi je bilo u sobi. "Several people were in the room."
Puno knjiga je bilo u smeću. "A lot of books were in the trash."
Par jabuka je bilo na tanjuru. "Couple of apples were on the plate."

Important: observe that English verbs are in plural, but Croatian verbs are in (neuter) singular in such sentences!

Verbs can "see" only the adverbs, which to verbs appear as "impersonal" words, in neuter singular; nouns come after the adverbs, always in genitive sg. (uncountable) or pl. (countable), but verbs don't "see" them. I know this is confusing, because *malo, puno...* are similar to adjectives, but they behave differently. Everything that's measured, after a quantity adverb (or quantity noun, really) must be in genitive (plural for countables):

Quantity adverb or noun	What is measured noun, possibly with adjectives, in gen.	
<i>puno</i> "a lot" <i>malo</i> "few" <i>hrpa</i> "heap" <i>vrēća</i> "bag" <i>dosta</i> "quite a lot" <i>gomila</i> "bunch"	<i>velikih</i> "big" <i>crvenih</i> "red" <i>zrelih</i> "ripe" <i>mojih</i> "my"	<i>jabuka</i> "apples" <i>krava</i> "cows" <i>pāsa</i> "dogs" <i>pisāma</i> "letters"
	<i>finog</i> "fine" <i>bijēlog</i> "white"	<i>brašna</i> "flour" <i>pijēska</i> "sand"

It helps that ending for adjectives in gen.pl. is the same (-*ih*) for all genders, since the general rule is that any adjectives must adapt to the gender of the noun they describe. However, endings are different in singular:

Imam puno crnog papra. (gen. sg.) "I have a lot of black pepper." (*papār* m')

Imam puno crne kave. (gen. sg.) "I have a lot of black coffee." (*kava* f)

Imam gomilu crne kave. (gen. sg.) "I have a bunch of black coffee." (*gomila* changes case to acc., it's a noun)

You see, it's impossible to be fluent in Croatian without mastering endings of adjectives in various cases and genders! That's why I have introduced them quite early.

The word *par* "pair" can be a noun and then it means exactly "a pair" as well as an adverb when it means "couple, several"; unlike other measure-adverbs, it does not end on a consonant.

The adverbs *pola* and *četvrt* (also sometimes *nešto*) can be used with nouns in gen.sg. to mean "half of a..." and gen.pl. to mean "half of...", that is, half of one thing, or half of count of things:

Pojeo sām pola jabuke. (gen. sg.) "I ate half of an apple."

Pojeo sām pola jabuka. (gen. pl.) "I ate half of apples."

Noun *dio* m "part" has the same role. Unfortunately, it has very weird forms in other cases, that will be explained later...

his box summarizes measuring with nouns and adverbs:

Important: Expressing quantities

Quantities can be expressed in several ways:

Using **nouns**: e.g. *hrpa* "heap", *gomila* "bunch", *vrēća* "bag", *kila* "kilogram", etc. The measured noun goes after the measure and must be put to gen. pl. (if countable) or gen. sg. (if not) and always stays in that case. The measure normally changes according to its role: *vrēća bombona* → *imam vrēću bombona*; *bombon* "candy" is always in gen. pl.

The whole phrase behaves as the measure-noun:

Vrēća bombona je bila na stolu.

Using **adverbs**: e.g. *malo* "a bit", *puno* "a lot", *nekoliko* several, etc. Similar to measuring with nouns, but the adverb never changes. It means that the whole phrase never changes: *puno mačaka* → *imam puno mačaka*; *mačka* "cat" is always in gen. pl.

Some adverbs express parts (*pola* "half", *čtvrť* "quarter"), and the nouns after them are in gen. sg. if it means "part of one thing": *pola torte* → *imam pola torte*.

Adjectives (possesives) that are before the adverb must come in the same case as the measured noun. The whole phrase however behaves as if in neuter singular:

Puno mačaka je **bilo** u kući. (!)

Croatian uses the genitive for counting as well, but that's another topic.

Expressing Quantity using Adjectives

There are some adjectives that can be used to express quantity, e.g. *cijeli* "whole". The behavior is completely different — the measured noun behaves as a normal noun, it can be in any case, the adjective adapts to the noun, etc. There's no difference in behavior to other adjectives, e.g. *velik* "big":

Imam cijelu čokoladu. "I have a whole chocolate (bar)."

Cijela čokolada je bila na stolu. "The whole chocolate (bar) was on the table."

Vocabulary and Exercise

Using these words, construct "I need (some) [stuff]", "I need a [measure] of [stuff] (e.g. *trebam žlicu brašna*), and "I have a lot of [stuff]:

brašno "flour"

čaj "tea"

čaša "(drinking) glass"

kava "coffee"

litra "liter"

mlijeko "milk"

pijesak "sand"

riža "rice"

ocät "vinegar"

senf "mustard"

sol **f** "salt"

šalica "cup"

šećer "sugar"

ulje "oil"

žlica "spoon"

Observe that *sol* is an i-noun.

Updated 2013-04-03

16 Numbers and Time

Now we tackle an important issue — numbers. Croatian cardinal numbers (there are also ordinal numbers: "first, second"; they will be discussed later) are a diverse assembly of words: some behave as adjectives, some as nouns, and some others even differently.

Numbers 1-10

Here is a list of numbers from one to ten. Each number is listed with an example on use — with words *konj* "horse" m^a, *selo* "village" n, and *krava* "cow" f, and adjective *velik* "big" in a phrase meaning, of course, "my N big horse(s)" (or "village(s)", "cow(s)"):

#	m	n	f
1	<i>moj jedän veliki konj</i>	<i>moje jedno veliko selo</i>	<i>moja jedna velika krava</i>
2	<i>moja dva velika konja</i>	<i>moja dva velika sela</i>	<i>moje dvijë velike krave</i>
1+1	<i>moja oba velika konja</i>	<i>moja oba velika sela</i>	<i>moje objë velike krave</i>
3	<i>moja tri velika konja</i>	<i>moja tri velika sela</i>	<i>moje tri velike krave</i>
4	<i>moja četiri velika konja</i>	<i>moja četiri velika sela</i>	<i>moje četiri velike krave</i>
5	<i>mojih pet velikih konja</i>	<i>mojih pet velikih sela</i>	<i>mojih pet velikih krava</i>
6	<i>mojih šest velikih konja</i>	<i>mojih šest velikih sela</i>	<i>mojih šest velikih krava</i>
7	<i>mojih sedäm velikih konja</i>	<i>mojih sedam velikih sela</i>	<i>mojih sedam velikih krava</i>
8	<i>mojih osäm velikih konja</i>	<i>mojih osam velikih sela</i>	<i>mojih osam velikih krava</i>
9	<i>mojih devet velikih konja</i>	<i>mojih devet velikih sela</i>	<i>mojih devet velikih krava</i>
10	<i>mojih deset velikih konja</i>	<i>mojih deset velikih sela</i>	<i>mojih deset velikih krava</i>

Let's explain this a little.

The word for number 1, *jedan*, behaves exactly as an adjective — in Croatian, "one big cow" behaves grammatically same as "my big cow". All three words remain free and must change case as any other noun with adjectives attached does:

Imam jednu veliku kravu. "I have one big cow"
 acc.sg.f acc.sg.f acc.sg.

Jedna velika krava jede. "One big cow is eating."
 nom.sg.f nom.sg.f nom.sg. sg.

The whole phrase, if used as a subject, works as in singular noun — well, after all, it is only one thing!

With words for 2-4, phrase after number is put in a special form: nouns are in genitive singular, and adjectives for m and n genders get special endings, and for feminine regular genitive singular forms are used. These forms are sometimes called "dual". The phrase after the number is always in the same form:

Imam dvijë velike krave. "I have two big cows."
acc.f dual f dual = gen.sg.

Dvijë velike krave jedu. "Two big cows are eating."
nom.f dual f dual = gen.sg. pl.

Words for numbers 2-4 are sometimes declined but in everyday use most people keep their form in all cases. We'll cover their forms later.

Words *oba* m/n, *objë* f mean "both" and in many aspects they are very similar to "two", so I have included them with numbers as a special number "1+1". They also demand nouns and adjectives in the "dual".

I never heard *anyone* using other case forms of *tri* or *četiri*! There's one more word which is sometimes used: *obadva* lit. "both two" = "both", it's just emphasized more; its forms follow the same system as *dva*.

The whole phrase, if used as subject, behaves as a "dual" of the same gender, as expected, so one must use "dual" forms of past participles and adjectives as well, and verbs in plural:

Dvijë krave su jele. "Two cows were eating." (*jele* = dual f = pl.f)
Objë krave su jele. "Both cows were eating."
Tri krave su jele.
Četiri krave su jele.

Dva konja su jela. "Two horses were eating." (*jela* = dual m)
Tri konja su jela. "Three horses were eating."

Dvijë krave su moje. "Two cows are mine."
Dva konja su moja. "Two horses are mine."
Oba sela su velika. "Both villages are big." (*velika* = dual n = dual m)

"Dual" for past participles just means a *-la* in m and n genders. Sometimes people use plural of adjectives in such circumstances, but it's really rare.

We can include "dual" forms in the scheme for cases of adjectives:

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	- , -i	- , -i	-æ	-a
acc.sg.	-æg , -æga			-u
dat.sg.	-æm , -ome , -æmu			-oj
gen.sg.	-æg , -æga			-e
dual (2-4)	-a			-e
nom.pl.	-i		-a	-e
acc.pl.	-e			
dat.pl.	-im			
gen.pl.	-ih			

Nouns have *no special forms for the "dual"*, only adjectives do: nouns use gen.sg. for numbers 2-4.

With words 5-20, the word for the number always has the same form, and the rest is "locked" in genitive plural:

Imam pet velikih krava. "I have five big cows."
acc. gen.pl.f gen.pl.

Pet velikih krava jede. "Five big cows are eating."
nom. gen.pl.f gen.pl. sg. (!)

The whole phrase now behaves as if "gramatically dead" — it is neuter singular, the default gender/number combination (recall impersonal sentences):

Osam krava je jelo. "Eight cows were eating." (*jelo* = sg.n)
Deset konja je jelo. "Ten horses were eating."
Deset konja je moje. "Ten horses are mine." (*moje* = nom.sg.n)

What adjectives agree with here are the *number-words*, not nouns themselves. And numbers 5-10 really don't have a gender, so it "defaults" to neuter singular (the same as adverbs!). Think of it as "a bunch of cows was eating"; "bunch" being neuter singular. But you will sometimes hear people forcing agreement with counted nouns:

Osam krava su jele. "Ten cows were eating." (*jele* = pl.f)
Deset konja su jeli. "Ten horses were eating."
Deset konja su moji. "Ten horses are mine." (*moje* = nom.pl.m^a)

I personally prefer the first option, this second way is really an exception and sounds awkward to me.

I must repeat again: numbers 5-10 use gen.pl. of nouns. Some nouns have irregular plural, the best example is *čovjek* "man, human" and its plural *ljudi*:

Jedan čovjek piše knjigu. "One man is writing (a) book."
Dva čovjeka pišu knjigu. "Two men are writing (a) book." (**still use singular, but gen.; verb in plural!**)

...

Pet ljudi piše knjigu. "Five men are writing (a) book." (**must use gen. plural! verb must be in singular!**)

Warning! Some nouns cannot be counted, like *ulje* "oil" and similar "stuff". You must make a phrase with another noun *boca ulja* "bottle of oil" and then count bottles. Such nouns are incountable. Not so different from English, really.

But there are other nouns, like plurals *braća* "brethren", and *djeca* "children" that use a *different set of numbers* for counting, and that numbers will be explained later! If you want to count children, use forms of *dijete* "child" for numbers 2-4, and for counting more children you'll have to wait a bit more.

Imam jedno dijete. "I have one child."
Imam dva djjeteta. "I have two children."
Imam tri djjeteta. "I have three children."
Imam četiri djjeteta. "I have four children."
Imam ? djēce. (be patient)

Numbers 11-99

Numbers 11-20 follow:

#	word	#	word
11	<i>jedänaest</i>	16	<i>šesnaest</i>
12	<i>dvanaest</i>	17	<i>sedämnaest</i>
13	<i>trinaest</i>	18	<i>osämnaest</i>
14	<i>četrnaest</i>	19	<i>devetnaest</i>
15	<i>petnaest</i>	20	<i>dvadeset</i>

Gramatically, they behave as 10 (genitive plural follows, words never change form, the whole phrase behaves as neuter singular). A word about pronunciation — most people read sequence *æ* in these words as a simple *e*.

Bigger numbers are constructed using a following scheme.

"21" *dvadeset i jedän* or *dvadesetjedän* (or *dvadeset i jedno*, etc.)

"22" *dvadeset i dva* or *dvadesetdva* (or *dvadeset i dvijë*, etc.)

"23" *dvadeset i tri* or *dvadesettri*

. . . . etc.

"30" *trideset*

"31" *trideset i jedän* or *tridesetjedän*

"32" *trideset i dva* or *tridesetdva*

. . . . etc.

"40" *četrdeset*

"50" *pedeset*

"60" *šezdeset*

"70" *sedämdeset*

"80" *osämdeset*

"90" *devedeset*

Words for 21, 31, 41, etc. behave grammatically as word *jedän*; words for 22, 32 etc. as *dva/dvijë*, and so on:

Imam dvadeset i jednu kravu.

Imam dvadeset i dvijë krave.

etc.

Words for 100 and bigger we'll leave for the future.

A neat table summarises the whole scheme:

#	structure			all together behaves as
	number	adjective	noun	
1 21, 31,...	<i>jedän</i> agrees with the noun	agrees with the noun	in sg., case is free	same gender as the noun, singular
1+1, 2-4 22-24, 32-34,...	changes gender, rarely case	in dual	locked in dual	same gender as the noun, dual (= plural for verbs)
5-10 11-20, 25-30,...	doesn't change	in gen.pl.	locked in gen.pl.	sg.n

Telling Time

Since we now know numbers 1-60, we can tell time! For that we need several nouns:

sat mⁱ "hour"
minuta f "minute"
second f "sekunda"
podne n "noon"
ponoć f "midnight"
četvrt f "quarter"
pol, pola adv. "half"

Prepositions *u*, *za* and *prijē* can be used to tell absolute and relative time. If no noun is used, "hour" is assumed, but only with *u*:

Odlazim u tri sata. "I'm leaving at three o'clock."
Odlazim za tri sata. "I'm leaving in three hours."
Došao sam prijē tri sata. "I came three hours ago."
Odlazim u tri. "I'm leaving at three."
Odlazim u podne. "I'm leaving at noon."
Odlazim u ponoć. "I'm leaving at midnight."

Standard Croatian uses the 24-hour system. If you want a more precise measurement, you can say:

Odlazim u tri i dvadeset. "I'm leaving at three-twenty." (3:20)
Odlazim u tri i pol. "I'm leaving at half past three." (lit. "three and a half")
Odlazim za pola sata. "I'm leaving in half an hour."
Odlazim u tri i četvrt. "I'm leaving at quarter past three." (lit. "three and a quarter")
Odlazim u četvrt do tri. "I'm leaving at quarter to three." (lit. "three and a quarter")

Don't forget an *i* in *tri i dvadeset*!

However, in everyday speech people use informally the 12-hour system, and if it's not clear is it morning or evening, people use *ujutro* "in the morning", *popodne* "afternoon" and *navečer* "in the evening":

Odlazim u šest ujutro. "I'm leaving at 6 am."
Odlazim u šest popodne. "I'm leaving at 6 pm."
Odlazim u deset navečer. "I'm leaving at 10 pm."
Odlazim u deset ujutro. "I'm leaving at 10 am."

How to ask about time? It's too early to explain question-making, but as a preview, you should use *kada* "when" and *koliko* to ask "how many", since time is a countable thing — one can count hours.

Kada odlaziš? "When do you leave?"
Koliko je sati? lit. "How many hours are there?" = "What time is it?"

Answer use *je/su*, and can use a word *sada* "now":

Jedan je sat. "It's one o'clock." (nom.sg. all)
Tri su sata "It's three o'clock." (dual for *sat*, pl. for the verb)
Deset je sati. "It's ten o'clock." (gen.pl. for *sat*, sg. for the verb)

Rules of agreement of numbers with various forms of nouns of course apply. Please learn them. As for an excersize, try counting all Croatian nouns you know, and construct sentences like "I have..." etc.

17 Aspect of Verbs

Aspect Introduced

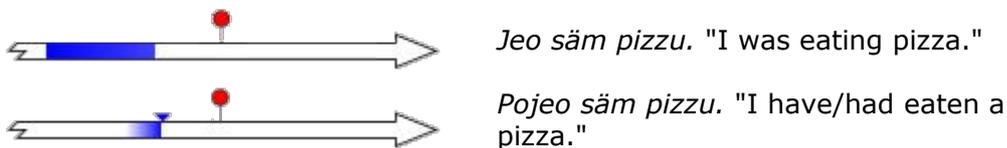
Croatian (as all other Slavic languages do) utilizes the so-called *aspect distinction*. By some accounts, this is the most difficult concept to grasp when learning Croatian. In my point of view, a similar distinction exists in English, so it should not be too hard!

English has "continuous" and "non-continuous" tenses:

"I was eating pizza."
 "I had eaten (up) a pizza."

The first sentence says what you have been doing, and emphasizes the duration of action. If you add time phrases to them, with the first one you can say how long it took ("for 15 minutes"), and with the second when you did it ("before lunch").

Croatian has roughly the same distinction, but uses two different verbs (the red circle is "now"):



English also distinguishes between "I have eaten" and "I had eaten" — the former refers to something completed right now or very recently, and the latter to something completed in the past. Croatian has only one form: *pojeo sam*. Only the context (and additional words) gives information if it was 5 seconds or 5 years ago.

Let me emphasize the point here: these are *two different verbs*, each having its own entry in dictionaries!

Verb *pojedem*, *pojeo* refers to the "completing of action" and is as such not used in the present tense, except in phrases translating to "if I...", "when he", etc. More about them later. So, in the present tense you should normally just use:

Jedem pizzu. "I'm eating pizza."

The verb used to indicate completing an action is called "**perfective**", and the other one (continuous action) is called "**imperfective**". These names I will abbreviate as perf. and impf. This has nothing to do with "the perfect tense". In Croatian, there are past, present, and future tenses. Perfective/imperfective has nothing to do with the tenses except for the fact that the perfective verbs are normally not used in the present tense, but just in the future and past tenses.

Let me repeat: these are properties of verbs, not forms of a verb.

Actually, some English verbs have "built-in" aspect as well: the verb "have" refers to something that lasts, or lasted. There's no way to "complete" "having" something. But there's a way to complete eating — when you're done.

The main difference between the English system and the Croatian one is with states ("sit", "live") in English, states are usually expressed with simple tenses, unless one wants to emphasize interrupted action; similar for emotions. Croatian always uses impf. verbs for states and emotions, for anything that lasts.

Spavao sam. "I slept."/"I was sleeping"
Imao sam loptu. "I had a/the ball."

Volim sladoled. "I love/like ice-cream."
Volio sam sladoled. "I loved/liked ice-cream."

Verb Pairs

I will show some common imperfective vs. perfective verbs. Sometimes a perfective verb is formed just by adding a prefix, the verb has otherwise exactly the same forms (the dash is normally not written, of course; I just used it here to emphasize the prefix):

impf.	perf.	meaning
<i>čitam</i>	<i>pro-čitam</i>	"read"
<i>pišem, pisao</i>	<i>na-pišem, na-pisao</i>	"write"
<i>učim</i>	<i>na-učim</i>	"learn, teach" (used for both meanings!)
<i>crtam</i>	<i>na-crtam</i>	"draw an image"
<i>pijem, pio</i>	<i>po-pijem, po-pio</i>	"drink"
<i>kuham</i>	<i>s-kuham</i>	"cook"

(I will not list perf. forms if they are completely regular and predictable from the present, e.g. *čitam, čitao, čitala!*)

This does not look too complicated; however, certain verbs don't use prefixes, but switch the verb class, and sometimes slightly modify their base:

impf.	perf.	meaning
<i>bacam</i>	<i>bacim</i>	"throw"
<i>primam</i>	<i>primim</i>	"receive"
<i>dajem, davao</i>	<i>dam</i>	"give"
<i>vraćam</i>	<i>vratim</i>	"return"
<i>odgovaram</i>	<i>odgovorim</i>	"answer"
<i>spajam</i>	<i>spojim</i>	"connect"
<i>guram</i>	<i>gurnem, gurnuo</i>	"push"
<i>skidam</i>	<i>skinem, skinuo</i>	"take down"

Normally, I will list verb pairs by simply writing impf. forms on the left, perf. on the right, in order impf. ~ perf., separated with a tilde; if the difference is only a prefix, I will just list the prefix, e.g.:

bacam ~ bacim "throw"
čitam ~ pro- "read"
imam "have"

This is much more compact and easier to remember. The last verb *imam*, has only impf. forms so there's not perf. part to list!

Occasionally, a completely unrelated verb is used:

dolazim ~ dođem, došao, došla "arrive"

Uses

In the present tense, only impf. verbs are normally used:

Pišem pismo. "I'm writing a/the letter."

An exception is when you want to say that you do something "every day", "sometimes", and each time complete it. For example, every day you write a letter. Then you can use a perf. verbs in the present tense — it means that you complete it every time:

Svaki dan napišem pismo. "I write a letter every day." (every day a new letter, you complete it every day)

Svaki dan pišem pismo. "I write a/the letter every day." (but you don't complete it, it implies you are "working on the letter every day")

However, in the past both verbs are used, depending what one wants to say. Maybe you were writing a letter, but then your pen broke, so it was never finished, never written as intended — you will say: *pisao sam, ali...* "I was writing, but..."

On the contrary, if you wrote a letter, but then lost it, you should say: *napisao sam, ali...* "I have written, but..."

There are some common perf. verbs that are used in normal present tense sentences, due to its nature. It's maybe best to treat them as "bi-aspectual", that is, getting their aspect from the context, like English verbs, so I'll list them as impf./perf.:

vidim, vidio, vidjela impf./perf. "see"

čujem, čuo impf./perf. "hear"

There are other verbs with similar meaning, but only impf., indicating not just that you took a notice, but you were paying attention:

gledam impf. "watch"

slušam impf. "listen"

For example:

Vidim Anu. "I (can) see Ana."

Gledam utakmicu. "I'm watching a/the match." (likely football, basketball, etc.)

Čujem zvono. "I (can) hear the bell."

Slušam radio. "I'm listening to the radio."

There *is* the verb *viđam* that looks like a impf. counterpart of *vidim*, but it has a slightly different meaning: "see frequently", "see from time to time", e.g. when you frequently see someone over a period of time. These are subtleties, we leave it for later...

Some impf. verbs have two perf. counterparts that are more or less meaning the same. Some people prefer one, some the other one, sometimes there's a very slight difference in meaning, but we won't go into such details for now:

Čistim. "I'm cleaning."

Očistio sam. "I have cleaned."

Počistio sam. "I have cleaned." (the same meaning)

Some imperfective verbs have two perf. counterparts with different meanings: *one indicates start of action, another successful completion of it*:

Spavam. "I'm sleeping."

Spavao sam. "I slept."/"I was sleeping."

Zaspao sam. "I fell asleep."

Odspavao sam. "I slept." (and woke up)

Normally, perf. verbs indicate that the whole action is completed, done. But it's not so in some verbs where starting and ending of action has similar importance. For another example:

English: I dove in.... I was diving.... I dove out
Croatian: *uronio sām... ronio sām... izronio sām*
aspects: perf-s. ... impf. ... perf.

I have decided to mark verbs that denote "start of action" by perfective-start (or perf-s.). It's not the same as "about to dive". If you say "I was about to dive", you did not say if you jumped in water or not. But if you say *uronio sām* it means "I have started diving." Not all verbs have perf-s. counter-pairs, only those where beginning of action/state is really important.

Some verbs that indicate motion have normally two counter-pairs, one derived by the prefix *od-*, *ot-*, and another by *do-*:

English: I started travel/departed from.... I was traveling.... I have traveled to/arrived
Croatian: *otputovao sām... putovao sām... doputovao sām*
aspects: perf-s. ... impf. perf.

Some verbs that indicate a state rather than an action have only a perf-s. One example is *sjedim* "sit":

Sjedim. "I'm sitting." (impf.)
Sjedio sām. "I sat"/"I was sitting." (impf.)
Sjeo sām. "I sat down." (perf-s.)

Let's summarize:

Verbs by Aspect

Imperfective verbs (e.g. *pišem, čitam*) are used for states or actions where action itself is emphasized. They can be used in all tenses.

Perfective verbs (e.g. *napišem, pročitam*) are used for things happening in an instant, change of states, completion of actions, where a change or instant action are emphasized. They cannot be used in the present tense in normal sentences.

The words *perfective* and *imperfective* are often abbreviated to *perf.* and *impf.* They are properties of verbs, not forms of single verb!

I will always list verbs as impf. ~ perf.

Warning: perfectives can also mean "entering a state", like "fall asleep". I will indicate such perfective verbs with perf.-s

Vocabulary and Exercise

Some important verbs, that belong to mixed classes, or have other complications, are listed here as present 1st pers. sg. (3rd pers. pl.), past participle m, past participle f (if not regular from past part. m), together with their aspect pairs. Where the perf. verbs are derived by a prefix only, just a prefix is written to keep this list simple:

brojim, brojao "count" ~ *iz-*
dajem, davao "give" ~ *dam*
dišem, disao impf. "breathe"
idem, išao, išla "go" ~ *odem, otišao, otišla* perf-s.; *dođem, došao, došla* perf., and more verbs, depending on meaning.
jedem, jeo "eat" ~ *po-*
kažem, kazao "say" ~ *rečem, rekao, rekla* (never used in present!)
kradem, krao "steal" ~ *u-*
ležim, ležao "lie" (on bed) ~ *legnem, legao, legla*
padam "fall" ~ *padnem, pao*
perem, prao "wash" ~ *o-*
pišem, pisao "write" ~ *na-*
pokazujem, pokazivao "show" ~ *pokažem, pokazao*

putujem, putovao "travel" ~ *ot-* perf-s.; *do-* perf.
sjedim "sit" ~ *sjednem, sjeo* perf-s.
šaljem, slao "send" ~ *po-*
skačem, skakao "jump" ~ *skočim*
stojim, stajao "stand" ~ *stanem, stao* perf-s.
trčim, trčao "run" ~ *o-* perf-s.; *do-* perf.
uzimam "take" ~ *uzmem, uzeo*
vučem (vuku), vukao, vukla "pull", *po-*
vičem, vikao "yell" (mostly used in impf.)
viđam "see occasionally, frequently"
zovem, zvao "call" ~ *po-*
želim, želio, željela "wish" ~ *po-* perf-s.

Verbs that can be used in both aspects:

čujem, čuo "hear"
vidim, vidio, vidjela "see"

Some more aspect pairs of plain class verbs:

bacam "throw" (a ball) ~ *bacim*
crtam "draw" (a drawing) ~ *na-*
čekam "wait" ~ *do-*
čistim "clean", "tidy" — *o-* or *po-*
čitam "read" ~ *pro-*
čuvam "guard, keep" (used mostly in impf.)
gledam "watch" ~ *po-*
guram "push" ~ *gurnem*
koristim "use" ~ *is-*
kuham "cook" ~ *s-*
odgovaram "answer" ~ *odgovorim*
pripremam "prepare" ~ *pripremim*
plaćam "pay" ~ *platim*
pijem "drink" ~ *po-*
plivam "swim" ~ *ot-* perf-s.; *do-* perf.
pitam impf. "ask" (used mostly in impf.)
primam "accept" ~ *primim*
radim "work" ~ *odradim*, but other verbs used as well
razgovaram impf. "talk" (used mostly in impf.)
ronim "dive" ~ *u-* or *za-* perf-s.; *iz-* perf.
skidam "take off" (clothes), "put down" (from an attic) ~ *skinem*
sjedim "sit" ~ *sjednem, sjeo, sjela* perf-s.
slušam impf. "listen" (used mostly in impf.)
spavam "sleep" ~ *zaspem, zaspao,...* perf-s.; *od-* perf.
trebam "need" (used mostly in impf.)
tražim "search, look for" (used mostly in impf.)
učim "study, learn" ~ *na-*
vozim "drive" impf. (used mostly in impf.)
vraćam "return" ~ *vratim*
znam "know" (used mostly in impf.)

Exercise: these sentences are in the present tense, rewrite them to the past using the same (impf.) verb, and with the perfective verb:

Ivan piše pismo. "Ivan is writing a letter."
Ana broji novčac. "Ana is counting money."
Goran leži na krevetu. "Goran is laying on (the) bed."
Ana uzima loptu. "Ana is taking (the) ball."
Ivan čita pismo. "Ivan is reading a letter."
Goran spava. "Goran is sleeping." (use a perfective verb for the *start of action*)
Ana sjedi. "Ana is sitting." (use a perfective verb for the *start of action*)

All the verbs are listed above. For instance:

Ana uzima loptu. — this is the present form

Ana je uzimala loptu. — this is the past form with the same (impf.) verb; we must use f gender (*uzimala*), Ana is a female noun

Ana je uzela loptu. — the past with the matching perf. verb; this means "Ana has taken the ball."

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18 Basic Cases for Pronouns

Now, let's take a look at forms of personal pronouns in accusative and dative — two basic cases beside the nominative. I have already shown forms in nominative singular and plural.

There are two important points. First, *forms in other cases are quite different than in the nominative*. There are no nice rules like in adjectives, despite some forms being quite similar to adjectives.

Second, in some cases (but not in the nominative) *each pronoun has two forms: full and short*. Short ones (also called **clitics**) are used in most circumstances, but when used, they cannot be just shuffled around in a sentence - they must go to a predefined place! Here are the forms:

case	1 st	2 nd	3 rd m	3 rd n	3 rd f
nom.sg.	<i>ja</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>ono</i>	<i>ona</i>
acc.sg.	<i>mene / me</i>	<i>tebe / te</i>	<i>njega / ga</i>		<i>nju / ju, je</i>
gen.sg.					<i>nje / je</i>
dat.sg.	<i>meni / mi</i>	<i>tebi / ti</i>	<i>njemu / mu</i>		<i>njoj / joj</i>
nom.pl.	<i>mi</i>	<i>vi</i>	<i>oni</i>	<i>ona</i>	<i>one</i>
acc./gen.pl.	<i>nas / nas</i>	<i>vas / vas</i>	<i>njih / ih</i>		
dat.pl.	<i>nama / nam</i>	<i>vama / vam</i>	<i>njima / im</i>		

So, some, but not all pronouns have two forms, full and short (clitic, shown in **boldface italic**).

Note that *genitive is very similar to the accusative* — the only differences are one form (3rd sg. f). So I rearranged the order of cases to emphasize it.

In Practice

Let's put them to use, for example in sentences meaning "I see you" ("you" is here actually "thee", representing just one person):

Vidim tebe.
Tebe vidim.
Vidim te.

You should normally use the third form, but then *te* (and all other clitics) cannot be anywhere except at the second place. If we add the personal pronoun for the subject (the sentence still means the same), only these sentences are permitted with *te*:

Ja te vidim.
Vidim te ja.

With acc. of *ona*, there are two possibilities: *ju* and *je*. Form *je* can be used when there's no auxiliary verb *je* present in a sentence:

Ja ju vidim. "I see her."
Ja je vidim. (same meaning)
Ja sam je vidio. "I saw her."
On ju je vidio. "He saw her." (we must use *ju*, since there's a different *je* as well!)

Of course, if there are direct and indirect objects, both can be represented with pronouns:

Daješ mi ga.
 pres. 2nd sg. dat. acc..
 you're giving to me it.

"You're giving it to me."

No other arrangement is allowed - *pronouns in dative must come before ones in accusative when using short forms - and both must be at the second place!*

How these short pronouns work together with short verbs (*sam, si..., ću, ćeš*)?

These sentences will illustrate the arrangement:

Dao sam ti ga. "I gave you it."
Dao si mi ga. "You gave me it."
Dao mi ga je. "He gave me it."
Dali smo im ga. "We gave them it."
Dali ste mi ga. "You gave me it."
Dali su joj ga. "They gave her it."

You see that a short present of "be" (*sam, si...*) always precedes short pronouns, except for the 3rd person singular *je* "is" that comes right after all short pronouns. More examples:

Ja sam ti ga dao. "I gave you it."
On ti ga je dao. "He gave you it."

You maybe recall some verbs that have a *se* (called a "reflexive") always with them; it's positioned also with the clitics, at the end of chain:

Bojim ga se. "I'm afraid of him."
Vratio sam se u grad. "I came back to the city."

The Placement Rule

Short (clitic) forms of pronouns and auxillary verbs are always put in the second place in a sentence, in the following order:

1. auxillary verbs, including present of "be" (*sam, si, smo...*) except *je*
2. pronouns in dative (*mi, ti, mu, joj...*)
3. pronouns in genitive (*me, te, ga, je...*) and in accusative (*me, te, ga, ju/je...*)
4. the 3rd pers. of "be" (*je*) and the "reflexive" *se*

You see there's always a compact chain of "short forms" (a.k.a. clitics) and other words are before and after. Normally there's only one word before clitics, but there can be more than one (some phrase that still behaves as one word):

Moj brat ti ga je dao. "My brother gave you it."

You will sometimes hear and read clitics splitting such phrases, but it's more bookish and poetic:

Moj ti ga je brat dao. "My brother gave you it."

I must emphasize that short forms of pronouns are almost always used, full forms are used only when emphasizing words:

Moj ga je brat tebi dao. "My brother gave it TO YOU."
Tebi ga je moj brat dao.
Dao ga je moj brat tebi.
Dao ga je tebi moj brat.

Words can be shuffled around, but clitics stay together, always at the second place. There's an interesting [article on the Web](#) on this issue. This is very natural for speakers of Croatian (and similar languages) and most of the people are not aware of this rule at all.

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19 Possessives and Country Names

• • • Review: **8 [First Steps with Adjectives](#)**

Possessives

Possessive adjectives are formed from nouns and pronouns and denote "belonging to someone". In English, words as "John's" and "my" can be regarded as possessive adjectives.

In Croatian, possessive adjectives behave as normal adjectives, but cannot be put into comparative or superlative — there's no "more John's" and "more my" both in English and Croatian.

Croatian does not distinguish between "my" and "mine" — there's only one word for both, similar to all other adjectives, like "blue".

Let me emphasize: possessives are derived from a *single noun*. If you want something to be possessed by "two word things" you must use genitive! So you really cannot make a compound possessive like "my sister's" in Croatian, you can say just "sister's".

The relation with genitives is: possessive NP = NP noun-in-gen. In practice, it means that one will find plates like these in the same street, actually across each other (I have taken these photos in downtown Zagreb). They refer to the same street, but there are "shortened" names (using possessives) in the second row. This gives some confusion to foreigners!



The first guy is actually *Andrija Medulić*: on the plate above both names are put in genitive (*Andrija* is a male name, and belongs to the m^a gender, but is an a-noun!) and in the bottom row only the last name is formed into a possessive.

People prefer possessives because they behave like adjectives, and for instance almost always refer to streets and squares using possessives. Unfortunately, there no single rule how to make a possessive adjective from a noun.

For m-nouns representing persons (and animals as individuals!), -ov or -ev is added according to the o/e rule. This includes personal names. For example:

Ivan → *Ivanov* "Ivan's"
brat → *bratov* "brother's"
mornar → *mornarov* "fisherman's"
profesor → *profesorov* "professor's"

Petär → *Petrov* "Peter's"
kralj → *kraljev* "king's"
kovač → *kovačev* "blacksmith's"
prijatelj → *prijateljev* "friend's"

Similar to adding case endings, ä is lost when adding -ov or -ev. Check also the street names above!

For a-nouns representing persons (recall, they are almost all of female gender), *-in* is added, and *-a* is dropped. Masculine a-nouns (the right column) use the same scheme. For example:

<i>An-a</i> → <i>Anin</i> "Ana's"	<i>Andrij-a</i> → <i>Andrijin</i> "Andrew's"
<i>mam-a</i> → <i>mamin</i> "Mom's"	<i>tat-a</i> → <i>tatin</i> "Dad's"
<i>sestr-a</i> → <i>sestrin</i> "sister's"	<i>gazd-a</i> → <i>gazdin</i> "boss', landowner's"
<i>žen-a</i> → <i>ženin</i> "wife's", "woman's"	<i>koleg-a</i> → <i>kolegin</i> "colleague's"

The form of a word without the nominative ending (e.g. *-a* for a-nouns) is called **stem**. All endings (for cases, but also for other uses) are normally attached to the stem. The precise definition of the stem is actually a bit more complicated, but I will explain complications a bit later. Much later, really.

Before the added *-in*, sounds change in stems ending on *-c* or *-k* to *-č*:

kraljic-a → *kraljič-in* "queen's"
majk-a → *majč-in* "mother's"
prijateljic-a → *prijateljič-in* "(female) friend's"

General Dependence

For nouns representing general, non-personal things another scheme is used. In English, one just says "school bus". In Croatian, you cannot say so. You must make an adjective out of *škola* f "school" in order to create such a phrase. The adjective is also called "possessive" but it does not stand for any possession really. Again, there's no single way to make it.

For some nouns, including most place names, ending *-ski* is added to the stem to denote some impersonal dependence regardless of gender of the noun. Some examples are:

<i>grad</i> "city" → <i>grad-ski</i>	<i>mornar</i> "sailor" → <i>mornar-ski</i>
<i>konj</i> "horse" → <i>konj-ski</i>	<i>ribar</i> "fisherman" → <i>ribar-ski</i>
<i>kuhinj-a</i> "kitchen" → <i>kuhinj-ski</i>	<i>škol-a</i> "school" → <i>škol-ski</i>
<i>London</i> → <i>london-ski</i>	<i>šum-a</i> "forest" → <i>šum-ski</i>
<i>mor-e</i> "sea" → <i>mor-ski</i>	<i>zim-a</i> "winter" → <i>zim-ski</i>

The adjective is never capitalized, as illustrated with *londonski*. Don't forget it's an adjective, so it changes according to gender, number and the case of the noun. So the translation of "school bus" would be:

školski autobus "school bus"
školska dvorana "school hall"
školsko dvorište "school yard" (*dvorište* n "yard")
Sjedim u školskom dvorištu. "I'm sitting in (the) school yard." (*školskom dvorištu* = dat.sg.)

There's one unfortunate complication: for many words, the *-ski* fuses with the last consonant of the stem, and results can vary:

bolnic-a "hospital" → *bolnički*
radnik "worker" → *radnički*
muž "man" (archaic) → *muški*
sudac "judge" → *sudäčki*

Nowadays, *muž* means only "husband" but previously it meant also "man" (compare *žena* "woman, wife"), but *muški* is still the only word that means "male, masculine".

You can see another interesting thing: the *ä*, that's normally lost before case endings is not lost before *-ski*!

The summary of sound assimilations with *-ski* is here:

stem ends on	<i>-c, -č, -k</i>	<i>-g, -h, -š, -ž</i>	<i>-s, -z</i>	<i>-ć</i>	<i>-b</i>
+ <i>ski</i> =	<i>-čki</i>	<i>-ški</i>	<i>-ski</i>	<i>-čki</i>	<i>-pski</i>

Unfortunately, there are many exceptions (or apparent exceptions) even to these complicated rules:

Pariz "Paris" → *pariški* "Parisian" (!)
Zagreb (city name) → *zagrebčki* (!)
Istra (region name) → *istarski* "Istrian" (!)
selo "village" → *seoski* (!)

zagrebčki and *istarski* are not names for dwellers at all. They are just adjectives, that something "belongs to Zagreb" etc.

For some nouns, *-ni* is added to the stem instead of *-ski*. Sound changes can occur:

kuća "house" → *kućni*: *kućni miš* "house mouse", "domestic mouse"
noć "night" → *noćni*: *noćni miš* "nocturnal mouse"
ljeto "summer" → *ljetni*: *ljetna vrućina* "summer heat"
rad "work" → *radni*: *radni dan* "working day"
ruka "hand" → *ručni*: *ručna kočnica* "hand brake"

Sometimes there's more than one adjective for a noun. For example, from the noun *žena* "woman, wife", one can construct two adjectives:

žena → *ženin* "possessed by a woman/wife"
žena → *ženski* "female, feminine", "that has to do with all women"

So, one would say:

ženin kaput "wife's coat" (a coat that's owned by some individual woman you know)
ženski kaput "female coat" (a coat that women would buy and wear)

The same thing is *mornarov* vs. *mornarski*, *profesorov* vs. *profesorski*, etc.

For some nouns (meaning living things), the suffix *-ji* is used for such "general dependance". This suffix causes sound changes a bit similar to *-in*:

dijete "child" → *dječji*
lav "lion" → *lavlji*
mačka "cat" → *mačji*
ptica "bird" → *ptičji*
zec "rabbit" → *zečji*

Such sound changes will be explained in detail later. Since they are complex, it's usually easier just to learn the adjective.

It's also interesting that nouns *bog* "god" and *vrag* "devil" make possessive adjectives (but also used in general meaning) using *-ji*:

bog "god" → *božji*
vrag "devil" → *vražji*

Unfortunately, there are no clear rules, it's a "dictionary thing", one has to learn the adjectives. The best illustration of how arbitrary it is, let's compare adjectives related to seasons and directions:

<i>proljeće</i> "spring" → <i>proljećni</i> (!)	<i>sjever</i> "north" → <i>sjeverni</i>
<i>ljeto</i> "summer" → <i>ljetni</i>	<i>zapad</i> "west" → <i>zapadni</i>
<i>jesen</i> "autumn" → <i>jesenski, jesenji</i>	<i>jug</i> "south" → <i>južni</i>
<i>zima</i> "winter" → <i>zimski</i>	<i>istok</i> "east" → <i>istočni</i>

Possessive Pronouns

Possessive adjectives created from personal pronouns are often called "possessive pronouns", but they behave and change as other possessive adjectives do.

person	1 st	2 nd	3 rd m	3 rd n	3 rd f
sg.	<i>ja</i> → <i>moj</i>	<i>ti</i> → <i>tvoj</i>	<i>on</i> → <i>njegov</i>	<i>ono</i> → <i>njegov</i>	<i>ona</i> → <i>njen</i> or <i>njezin</i>
pl.	<i>mi</i> → <i>naš</i>	<i>vi</i> → <i>vaš</i>	<i>oni</i> → <i>njihov</i>	<i>ona</i> → <i>njihov</i>	<i>one</i> → <i>njihov</i>

So, *njegov* means "his". Don't forget it's an adjective. There's a twist with *moj* and *tvoj*: they have more than one form in some cases, normal and "compact". There's no difference in use, placement, meaning — use ones you like. Here's a chart for *moj* (*tvoj* has exactly the same endings and forms) the special forms are highlighted:

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	<i>moj</i>	<i>moj</i>	<i>moje</i>	<i>moja</i>
acc.sg.	<i>mojeg(a), mog(a)</i>			<i>moju</i>
dat.sg.	<i>mojem(u), mom(u)</i>			<i>mojoj</i>
gen.sg.	<i>mojeg(a), mog(a)</i>			<i>moje</i>

The plural is formed according to the common adjective pattern. The "compact" forms have the -o- endings, since there's an *m-* or *-v-* (in e.g. *tv-om*) before it.

So, these two sentences have the same meaning:

*Sjediš u **mojem** automobilu.* "You're sitting in my car." (*mojem* = dat.sg.)
*Sjediš u **mom** automobilu.* "You're sitting in my car." (*mom* = dat.sg., alt. form)

Next, observe that endings of other possessives must follow the o/e rule, and it applies to *naš* and *vaš* (since they end on an -š):

*Sjedimo u **našem** automobilu.* "We're sitting in our car." (*našem* = dat.sg.)
*Hladno je u **njenom** automobilu.* "It's cold in her car." (*njenom* = dat.sg.)

There are important syntactic differences comparing English and Croatian possessives. In English, they are a quite special: you can say "this big cat" but you cannot say "this my cat"; you can say "the cat is big", but you cannot say "the cat is my" — you have to use the word "mine", etc.

In Croatian, it's not so: *moj* (beside having some special forms you have to learn) behaves exactly as *velik* "big"; it's perfectly OK in Croatian to say:

ova moja mačka... — literally, "this my cat..."
Ova mačka je moja. — literally, "this cat is my"

Next, in English there are words that almost require a possessive in front of them: you cannot say just "leg", "sister", but "my leg", "his sister", etc. Not so in Croatian, you can say basically whatever you want.

Croatian has an additional possessive pronoun *svoj* (with forms equal to *tvoj*, so it has alternative forms; it just has an *s-* instead of *t-*); it's called **reflexive possessive**. It's used when the subject of a sentence possesses something:

*Sjedim u **svojem** automobilu.* "I'm sitting in my car." (*svojem* = dat.sg.)
*Sjedim u **svom** automobilu.* "I'm sitting in my car." (*svom* = dat.sg., alt. form)

Again, these two sentences have no difference in meaning whatsoever.

In Standard Croatian, it's mandatory: you cannot use any other pronoun if the subject is the possessor. However, in colloquial speech rules are a bit relaxed in the first and second persons, since there cannot be any confusion. In the third person, the reflexive possessive is very useful. Take a look at the following English sentence:

"Ivan's friend drove his car."

Who does the "his" refer to? Ivan or his friend? Could be both. Croatian resolves such ambiguity by using *svoj* vs. some other possessive pronoun:

Ivanov prijatelj je vozio svoj auto. if "his" refers to "friend" (the subject)

Ivanov prijatelj je vozio njegov auto. if "his" doesn't refer to "friend" (so, to Ivan!)

Summary

Possessive adjectives

They indicate individual possession ("Ivan's car"), and are created by adding suffixes to the stem:

-*ov* for m-nouns: *Ivan* → *Ivanov*; *kralj* "king" → *kraljev*

-*in* for a-nouns (remove *-a*): *Ana* → *Anin*; *tata* "Dad" → *tatin*

Dependence adjectives

They indicate general dependence ("school bus"), and are created by adding one of the following suffixes:

-*ski* for some nouns and places: *škola* "school" → *školski*; *grad* "city" → *gradski*

-*ni* for some nouns: *ljeto* "summer" → *ljetni*

-*ji* for some (living) nouns: *ptica* "bird" → *ptičji*

It depends on the noun which suffix is used. Sound assimilations may occur.

Certain nouns have both adjectives (*ženin* and *ženski*) but their meanings differ.

Country and People's Names

This is maybe the right place to introduce country names. For each country, there are three nouns and an adjective in Croatian. The nouns are the country itself ("England"), names for male and female inhabitants ("Englishman", "Englishwoman") and the adjective ("English"), also used as a name of the language. The adjective is never capitalized, nouns always are.

	country/region name	male	female	adjective
Africa	<i>Afrika</i>	<i>Afrikanac</i>	<i>Afrikanka</i>	<i>afrički</i>
America	<i>Amerika</i>	<i>Amerikanac</i>	<i>Amerikanka</i>	<i>američki</i>
Arabia	<i>Arabija</i>	<i>Arapin, Arap</i>	<i>Arapkinja</i>	<i>arapski</i>
Austria	<i>Austrija</i>	<i>Austrijanac</i>	<i>Austrijanka</i>	<i>austrijski</i>
Australia	<i>Australija</i>	<i>Australac</i>	<i>Australka</i>	<i>australski</i>
Brazil	<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Brazilac</i>	<i>Brazilka</i>	<i>brazilski</i>
Britain	<i>Britanija</i>	<i>Britanac</i>	<i>Britanka</i>	<i>britanski</i>
Belgium	<i>Belgija</i>	<i>Belgijac</i>	<i>Belgijka</i>	<i>belgijski</i>
Bosnia	<i>Bosna</i>	<i>Bosanac</i>	<i>Bosanka</i>	<i>bosanski</i>

	country/region name	male	female	adjective
Bulgaria	<i>Bugarska</i> *	<i>Bugarin, Bugar</i>	<i>Bugarka</i>	<i>bugarski</i>
China	<i>Kina</i>	<i>Kinez</i>	<i>Kineskinja</i>	<i>kineski</i>
Croatia	<i>Hrvatska</i> *	<i>Hrvat</i>	<i>Hrvatica</i>	<i>hrvatski</i>
Cyprus	<i>Cipār</i>	<i>Cipranin</i>	<i>Cipranka</i>	<i>ciparski</i>
Czech	<i>Češka</i> *	<i>Čeh</i>	<i>Čehinja</i>	<i>češki</i>
Dalmatia †	<i>Dalmacija</i>	<i>Dalmatinac</i>	<i>Dalmatinka</i>	<i>dalmatinski</i>
Denmark	<i>Danska</i> *	<i>Danac</i>	<i>Dankinja</i>	<i>danski</i>
Egypt	<i>Egipat</i>	<i>Egipćanin</i>	<i>Egipćanka</i>	<i>egipatski</i>
England	<i>Engleska</i> *	<i>Englez</i>	<i>Engleskinja</i>	<i>engleski</i>
Finland	<i>Finska</i> *	<i>Finac</i>	<i>Finkinja</i>	<i>finski</i>
France	<i>Francuska</i> *	<i>Francuz</i>	<i>Francuskinja</i>	<i>francuski</i>
Germany	<i>Njemačka</i> *	<i>Nijemac</i>	<i>Njēmica</i>	<i>njemački</i>
Greece	<i>Grčka</i> *	<i>Grk</i>	<i>Grkinja</i>	<i>grčki</i>
Hungary	<i>Mađarska</i> *	<i>Mađar</i>	<i>Mađarica</i>	<i>mađarski</i>
India	<i>Indija</i>	<i>Indijac</i>	<i>Indijka</i>	<i>indijski</i>
Ireland	<i>Irska</i> *	<i>Irac</i>	<i>Irkinja</i>	<i>irski</i>
Istria †	<i>Istra</i>	<i>Istranin, Istrijan</i>	<i>Istranka, Istrijanka</i>	<i>istarski</i>
Italy	<i>Italija</i>	<i>Talijan</i>	<i>Talijanka</i>	<i>talijanski</i>
Latvia	<i>Latvija</i>	<i>Latvijac</i>	<i>Latvijka</i>	<i>latvijski</i>
Lithuania	<i>Litva</i>	<i>Litavac</i>	<i>Litavka</i>	<i>litavski</i>
The Netherlands	<i>Nizozemska</i> *	<i>Nizozemac</i>	<i>Nizozemka</i>	<i>nizozemski</i>
Norway	<i>Norveška</i> *	<i>Norvežanin</i>	<i>Norvežanka</i>	<i>norveški</i>
Poland	<i>Poljska</i> *	<i>Poljak</i>	<i>Poljakinja</i>	<i>poljski</i>
Portugal	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>Portugalac</i>	<i>Portugalka</i>	<i>portugalski</i>
Romania	<i>Rumunjska</i> *	<i>Rumunj</i>	<i>Rumunjka</i>	<i>rumunjski</i>
Russia	<i>Rusija</i>	<i>Rus</i>	<i>Ruskinja</i>	<i>ruski</i>
Scotland	<i>Škotska</i> *	<i>Škot</i>	<i>Škotkinja</i>	<i>škotski</i>
Serbia	<i>Srbija</i>	<i>Srbin</i>	<i>Srpkinja</i>	<i>srpski</i>
Slavonia †	<i>Slavonija</i>	<i>Slavonac</i>	<i>Slavonka</i>	<i>slavonski</i>
Slovakia	<i>Slovačka</i> *	<i>Slovak</i>	<i>Slovakinja</i>	<i>slovački</i>
Slovenia	<i>Slovenija</i>	<i>Slovenac</i>	<i>Slovenka</i>	<i>slovenski</i>
Spain	<i>Španjolska</i> *	<i>Španjolac</i>	<i>Španjolka</i>	<i>španjolski</i>
Sweden	<i>Švedska</i> *	<i>Šveđanin</i>	<i>Šveđanka</i>	<i>švedski</i>
Turkey	<i>Turska</i> *	<i>Turčin</i> (see note)	<i>Turkinja</i>	<i>turski</i>
Wales	<i>Vels</i>	<i>Velšanin</i>	<i>Velšanka</i>	<i>velški</i>

All country names marked with an * change case as (possessive) adjectives. Names marked with an ‡ are regions within Croatia. Sometimes inhabitants of the region use a different name for them than the rest (e.g. *Istrijan* locally).

All male inhabitants have always only short plural: *Grk* — *Grci*. Names for male inhabitants that end on *-in* have the plural just on *-i*. Noun *Turčin* "Turk" has plural *Turci* etc. (its root is actually *Turk-*). All nouns follow the common gender rules, no exceptions or i-nouns here, just plain a- and mⁱ-nouns.

nom.sg.	<i>Srbin</i>	<i>Rus</i>	<i>Turčin</i>	<i>Irska</i>
acc.sg.	<i>Srbina</i>	<i>Rusa</i>	<i>Turčina</i>	<i>Irsku</i>
dat.sg.	<i>Srbinu</i>	<i>Rusu</i>	<i>Turčinu</i>	<i>Irskoj</i>
gen.sg. / dual	<i>Srbina</i>	<i>Rusa</i>	<i>Turčina</i>	<i>Irske</i>
nom.pl.	<i>Srbi</i>	<i>Rusi</i>	<i>Turci</i>	—
acc.pl.	<i>Srbe</i>	<i>Ruse</i>	<i>Turke</i>	—
dat.pl.	<i>Srbima</i>	<i>Rusima</i>	<i>Turcima</i>	—
gen.pl.	<i>Srba</i>	<i>Rusa</i>	<i>Turäka</i>	—

Examples and Exercise

Some examples:

Hrvati uče engleski (jezik). "Croats are learning English (language)."

Ja sam Amerikanka. "I'm (an) American (woman)."

Francuski predsjednik je doputovao u Hrvatsku. "(The) French president has arrived to Croatia."

Većina Amerikanäca živi u gradovima. "Most Americans live in cities." (lit. "Most of Americans...")

For an exercise, try making sentences like above ones with various nationalities and country adjectives, e.g. "Frenchmen are learning German", "Czechs are learning Arab".

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20 Basic Prepositions and Government

Prepositions are words that somehow denote mode of action when added to nouns or noun phrases. For example, in English, "in", "to", "over", "under", "with", "except", etc. are prepositions.

The catch is that the whole noun phrase (more precisely, the "unlocked" part of it) must be put in the appropriate case. However, for some prepositions, there may be more than one appropriate case, each one giving a different meaning to the resulting prepositional phrase!

We can say that a preposition "demands" a case, or cases, meaning the noun phrase after the pronoun must be put in the case(s).

This looks incredibly complex, but we have already seen examples: the preposition *u* means "in" when the noun (or phrase) after it is in dative, and "into", "to" when the noun is in accusative!

Introducing Basic Prepositions

In this chapter I'll introduce seven prepositions (*u, na, kod, iz, od, do, s*). The first two are used with acc. and dat., the next four with gen. only, and for the last one we're interested only in its use with the genitive.

prep. + case	meaning	example
<i>u</i> + dat.	 Static location, meant to be within something, "in"	<i>Živim u gradu.</i> "I'm living in the city."
<i>na</i> + dat.	 Static location, meant to be on surface of something, "at, on"	<i>Vidim brod na moru.</i> "I see a ship at sea."
<i>kod</i> + gen.	 Static location, meant to be "at" or "by" something	<i>Živim kod brata.</i> "I live at my brother's place."
<i>u</i> + acc.	 Destination, meant to be within something, "into"	<i>Idem u grad.</i> "I'm going to the city."
<i>na</i> + acc.	 Destination, meant to be on top of something, "onto"	<i>Idem na krov.</i> "I'm going onto the roof."
<i>iz</i> + gen.	 Origin, meant to be within something, "out of", "from"	<i>Idem iz grada.</i> "I'm going from the city."
<i>s</i> + gen.	 Origin, meant to be on surface of something; "off"	<i>Idem s krova.</i> "I'm going off the roof."
<i>od</i> + gen.	 Origin, meant to be close to something, start; "from", "since"	<i>Idem od kuće.</i> "I'm going from the house."
<i>do</i> + gen.	 Destination, meant to some final limit, end; "to", "until"	<i>Idem do kraja.</i> "I'm going to (the) end."

Location Prepositions

The three prepositions for locations (*u*, *na*, *kod*) are quite similar to English "in", "on", "at", but there are some important differences (that was a problem for me when learning English).

Croatian *na* is often used when English uses "at". It's used for being "on" a surface, but also metaphorically; the best is to compare Croatian and English phrases:

English	Croatian	English	Croatian
"on the wall"	<i>na zidu</i>	"at the top"	<i>na vrhu</i>
"on a ship"	<i>na brodu</i>	"at the bottom"	<i>na dnu</i>
"on vacation"	<i>na odmoru</i>	"at the end"	<i>na kraju</i>
"at work"	<i>na poslu</i>	"at the door"	<i>na vratima</i>
"at lunch"	<i>na ručku</i>	"in the sky"	<i>na nebu</i>

Actually, "at" is almost always translated with Croatian *na* for "location", except in two phrases: *kod kuće* "at home" and *u školi* "at school".

Warning. It's not so when "at" is used for precise times ("at midnight"): for precise times, Croatian uses *u* (*u ponoć*)! We'll cover such things a bit later.

The preposition *kod* is used when a location is determined by a person or a prominent object. It does not mean that you're exactly where something is, but reasonably nearby it, e.g.

Bio sam kod zubara. "I was at dentist."
Bit ću kod tete. "I'll be at (my) aunt's place."
Čekam te kod mosta. "I'm waiting for you by the bridge."
Nisam kod kuće. "I'm not at home." (**a phrase!**)

The last phrase, *kod kuće*, is very often used, even if you are not living in a house: it simply means "at home". Another way to express such place is just with a single adverb *doma*:

Bio sam doma. "I was home."

There are rules how to use prepositions with cities, streets, and addresses. Basically, you use *u* for everything except for squares (*trg*), shores (*obala*) and floors (*kat*), for instance:

Živim u Zagrebu. "I live in Zagreb."
Živim na Britanskom trgu 5. "I live at 5 British Square."
Živim u Jurišićevoj 8. "I live at 8 Jurišićeva Street."
Živim na petom katu. "I live on the fifth floor."

Street names (e.g. *Jurišićeva ulica*) are often composed of possessive + *ulica*, it's literally "his or her street", and street names are often shortened to just possessive (e.g. *Jurišićeva*) that stays in appropriate gender (f for *ulica* "street"), which is then declined as any other adjective!

Directions

While English distinguishes location and direction with pairs "in/to", "at/to", etc. Croatian just uses different cases, as illustrated with the following examples of *na* and *u*, showing "location" and "destination":

Ja sam na odmoru. "I'm on vacation." (dat.)
Idem na odmor. "I'm going on vacation." (acc.)

Ja sam u krevetu. "I'm in bed."

Idem u krevet. "I'm going to bed."

Ja sam na poslu. "I'm at work."

Idem na posao. "I'm going to work."

Ja sam u poslu. "I'm (deeply) in work."

Ja sam na ulici. "I'm on the street."

Idem na ulicu. "I'm going to the street."

In Standard Croatian, *kod* stands for static locations only, but colloquially it's frequently used for directions as well:

Idem kod zubara. "I'm going to dentist." (not Standard, but frequent)

Ići ću kod tete. "I'll go to (my) aunt." (again not Standard)

For direction "home" there one can use *kući* and *doma* as well.

Idem kući. "I'm going home."

Idem doma. "I'm going home."

Pair od/do

Prepositions *od* and *do* are used as a pair with time phrases, meaning "work from", "work to":

Radim od devet sati. "I'm working since 9 o'clock."

Radim do pet sati. "I'm working until 9 o'clock."

Vozim od jutra. "I'm driving since morning."

Otvoreni smo od osam do pet. "We're open from eight to five."

Preposition *od* has also a meaning comparable with English "of", as in:

Od deset ljudi, pet su žene. "Out of ten people, five are women."

Očekujemo poklon od njih. "We're expecting (a) gift from them."

Preposition *do* sometimes also mean "next to", "close":

Telefon je do mene. "(The) phone is next to me."

Gurnuli smo stol do zida. "We have pushed (the) table to the wall."

Pairs s/na, iz/u

The preposition *s*, when used with the genitive, has a meaning opposite to *na* + acc:

Idem na posao. (acc.) "I'm going to work."

Idem s posla. (gen.) "I'm going from work."

The spelling rules for the preposition are the same as with the instrumental case. It's used as an exact opposite to *na* + acc., in the same way as *iz* + gen. is the exact opposite to *u* + acc.:

Idem u grad. (acc.) "I'm going to the city."

Idem iz grada. (gen.) "I'm going out of the city"

So, motion/time flow opposites are:

u grad (acc.) vs. *iz grada* (gen.)

na krov (acc.) vs. *s krova* (gen.)

do jutra (gen.) vs. *od jutra* (gen.)

Government: Cases and Prepositions with Verbs

Above I have shown the most common use of basic preposition. However, meaning of a preposition

— alike cases — ultimately depends on the verb used. The verb has in principle powers to use prepositions and cases as it likes to.

Such uses of cases and prepositions by verbs are called "government" (that is, a verb "governs" cases and prepositions around it), or "Rektion" in German.

For example, the verb *učim* ~ *na-* "learn/teach" has more than one meaning, depending on the cases and prepositions used around it. For instance:

Učim. "I'm learning." (or "studying")
Učim matematiku. (acc.) "I'm learning math." (or "studying")
Učim hrvatski. (acc.) "I'm learning Croatian." (or "studying")
Učim plivati. (inf.) "I'm learning to swim."

Učim Anu. (acc.) "I'm **teaching** Ana."
Učim Anu matematiku. (acc. acc.) "I'm **teaching** Ana math."
Učim Anu plivati. (acc.) "I'm **teaching** Ana to swim."

Učim matematiku od Ane. (acc. gen.) "I'm learning math from Ana."
Učim od Ane. (gen.) "I'm learning from Ana."

Whenever this verb gets an object in acc. that is animate (someone who can be taught, e.g. a person or an animal, e.g. *Ana*, acc. *Anu*) it shifts its meaning from "learn" to "teach". Other objects in acc. — stand always for what is taught or learned. To express who you learn from, you can use an expression *od* + gen. We can express all meanings in a nice table using even more shortened abbreviations of cases (N = nom., G = gen., etc.):

grammar	meaning
N (A-imp) (<i>od</i> G)	N learns (A-imp) (from G)
N INF (<i>od</i> G)	N learns to INF (from G)
N A-pers (A-imp)	N teaches A-pers (A-imp)
N A-pers INF	N teaches A-pers to INF

A-imp stands for "impersonal", and A-pers for "person"; INF is a verb in infinitive. Optional "arguments" are in brackets (). You see that is a quite compact summary.

If you got really worried that it will be impossible to learn all such combinations for thousands of verbs, rest assured: this is an extreme example, there are only couple of verbs that shift meanings like this! The great majority of verbs use simply nom. (who does it) and acc. (what), e.g. "Ana eats a cake". This was just an illustration what possibilities exist out there, I have shown you one of the most complex verbs, so you don't get surprised when you see a bit complicated verb!

21 The Instrumental Case

• • • Review: 13 [Genitive Case](#)

It's not a box used for instruments, it's a grammatical case! Well... actually it has something to do with tools and instruments, among other things. It's used to indicate manner of doing an action, tools used, and of course certain prepositions need it!

The *instrumental* (abbreviation: *ins.*) is a very cheap case: one has to remember only endings for singular, since it's always equal to the dative in plural! Now, isn't it easier than expected? Here is the scheme for nouns:

case	m ^a -nouns	m ⁱ -nouns	n-nouns	a-nouns	i-nouns
nom.sg.	-	-	- <i>œ</i>	- <i>a</i>	-
acc.sg.	- <i>a</i>	-	- <i>œ</i>	- <i>u</i>	-
dat.sg.	- <i>u</i>			(+) <i>i</i>	- <i>i</i>
gen.sg./dual	- <i>a</i>			- <i>e</i>	- <i>i</i>
ins.sg.	-<i>œm</i>			-<i>om</i>	-<i>i</i>, -<i>ju</i>
nom.pl.	-[<i>œv</i>]+ <i>i</i>		- <i>a</i>	- <i>e</i>	- <i>i</i>
acc.pl.	-[<i>œv</i>] <i>e</i>				
dat./ins.pl.	-[<i>œv</i>]+ <i>ima</i>		- <i>ima</i>	- <i>ama</i>	- <i>ima</i>
gen.pl.	-[<i>œv</i>] <i>a</i>		- <i>a</i>	- <i>a</i>	- <i>i</i>

There's a small complication: some i-nouns can also have *-ju* in instrumental sg., instead of *-i*. If an i-noun ends on *-t* in nom., it "fuses" with *-ju* to make *-ću*; also sometimes *lj* is found instead of *l*; other assimilations are possible as well. For instance:

krv "blood"; ins.sg. *krvi* or *krvlju*
mast "fat"; ins.sg. *masti* or *mašču*

However, many i-nouns like *noć*, *kost* etc. have only the *-i* form of the ins. sg. It's perfectly OK to use only the *-i* forms for all i-nouns!

Now the chart for adjectives. This is the definitive chart — we're missing just one more case, the *vocative*, but for adjectives it's the same as the nominative. So, the chart:

So, the chart:

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	-, -i	-, -i	-æ	-a
acc.sg.	-æg(a)			-u
dat.sg.	-æm(u), -ome			-oj
gen.sg.	-æg(a)			-e
ins.sg.	-im			-om
dual (2-4)				
	-a			-e
nom.pl.				
	-i	-a		-e
acc.pl.	-e			
dat./ins.pl.	-im			
gen.pl.	-ih			

We must also list forms for personal pronouns:

case	1 st	2 nd	3 rd m	3 rd n	3 rd f
nom.sg.	<i>ja</i>	<i>ti</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>ono</i>	<i>ona</i>
acc.sg.	<i>mene / me</i>	<i>tebe / te</i>	<i>njega / ga</i>	<i>nju / ju, je</i>	
gen.sg.				<i>nje / je</i>	
dat.sg.	<i>meni / mi</i>	<i>tebi / ti</i>	<i>njemu / mu</i>	<i>njoj / joj</i>	
ins.sg.	<i>mnom</i>	<i>tobom</i>	<i>njim</i>	<i>njom</i>	
nom.pl.					
	<i>mi</i>	<i>vi</i>	<i>oni</i>	<i>ona</i>	<i>one</i>
acc./gen.pl.	<i>nas / nas</i>	<i>vas / vas</i>	<i>njih / ih</i>		
dat./ins.pl.	<i>nama / nam</i>	<i>vama / vam</i>	<i>njima / im</i>		

There are no short (clitic) forms — instrumentals of personal pronouns can be anywhere in the sentence.

Use Without Prepositions

Why is this case used for? It can be used with or without prepositions. **Without prepositions**, it means *means*, or *medium* of movement. For instance, with verb *putujem* "I'm traveling", and nouns *šuma* f "forest", *cesta* f "road" and *vlak* mⁱ "train"; and using adjectives *brz* "fast" and *velik* "big", one can construct following sentences where all nouns are in the instrumental case standing for "means" or "medium" (you're traveling through...):

Putujem brzim vlakom. "I'm traveling by (a) fast train."

Putujem velikom šumom. "I'm traveling through (a) big forest."

Putujem brzom cestom. "I'm traveling on (a) fast road."

Some more examples, illustrating "tool-use":

Pišem olovkom. "I'm writing with (a) pen." *olovka* f "pen"
Radim čekićem. "I'm working with (a) hammer." *čekić* mⁱ "hammer"
Slikam kistom. "I'm painting with (a) brush." *kist* mⁱ "brush"

Although English distinguishes such "tool-use" from "means", Croatian *does not*.

We see that, without prepositions, it's used to state that one is using a train or road as means to travel, or some tools, but can also mean what one travels through. The last use can be stated also with the preposition *kroz* + noun in acc.:

Putujem kroz šumu "I'm traveling through forest"

Use With Preposition s(a) "with"

The instrumental is used also **with prepositions**, mainly with preposition *s/sa*. It states "company", and roughly corresponds to English "with":

Putujem s bratom. "I'm traveling with brother."
Igram se s mačkom. "I'm playing with (the) cat." (*se* will be explained later)

How is it supposed to be pronounced?! Well, together with the following word, so */sbratom/*, */smačkom/*, etc. Some people pronounce it separately, with a vowel similar to e in English "the". When the following word starts with an *s-*, *z-*, *š-*, *ž-*, or with 1st pers. *mnom*, the alternative form *sa* is used instead of *s*:

Jedem sendvič sa sirom. "I'm eating (a) sandwich with cheese."
Moj brat putuje sa mnom. "My brother is traveling with me."
Igram se sa sestrom. "I'm playing with (the) sister."

Some people use *sa* in all circumstances. It's discouraged in the Standard Croatian.

You will occasionally hear people use:

Putujem s vlakom.
Pišem s olovkom.

This is also considered not a good use. People understand it, and this is the norm in some dialects, but it's not considered good Croatian. (I will briefly cover dialects and regional variants later.)

So, an approximate rule would be: when in English you have "with blah blah" you should in Croatian use *s(a)* + instrumental of "blah blah", except if it means the tool use ("writing with a pen") where you should use *instrumental only*.

Bear in mind that the instrumental is used with some other prepositions as well, and the preposition *s/sa* can be used with some other cases, having a completely different meaning! It's not *that* simple.

Exercise

Put nouns *noć*, *more*, *čovjek*, *päs*, *noväc*, *nož*, and adjectives *dobär*, *visok*, *star* and *loš* in ins.sg. Don't forget the o/e rule.

22 The Infinitive and The Future Tense

Now I'm going to describe the future tense in Croatian. Similar to the past tense, it's a compound tense, actually a phrase consisting of two words:

- Present of verb *hoću* in a short form;
- The form of verb called "infinitive"

Infinitive

The **infinitive** is a form that really does not exist in English; the closest match is the infinitive phrase ("to eat"). Infinitives are neither nouns nor adjectives; they are forms of verb that have a special use. For instance, it's used in sentences like these:

Mogu jesti. "I can eat.", "I am able to eat."

Treballi smo čitati. "We needed to read."

Znam pisati. lit. "I know to write." = "I know how to write."

The last word in each sentence is an infinitive of a verb. In English, there's a special group of modal verbs (can, may, will...) that does not use "to" in such phrases. In Croatian, there's no such difference, all verbs require the same form — the infinitive.

Other words can be attached to an infinitive: it's a verb, after all; usually adverbs ("slowly", "easy") or objects are attached to it. Adverbs are placed before infinitives, and objects usually after it:

Volim	polako	piti	hladno	pivo.
1 st sg.		inf.	acc.sg. m ^l	acc.sg.
like	slowly	drink	cold	beer

"I like to drink cold beer slowly."

But adverbs can be placed after an infinitive as well:

Volim	piti	toplu	kavu	polako.
1 st sg.	inf.	acc.sg. f	acc.sg.	
like	drink	warm	coffee	slowly

"I like to drink warm coffee slowly."

English has no real infinitive, but a to-phrase: one can say "to drink slowly..." or "to slowly drink...", but "slowly to drink..." has a different meaning.

Here an adjective and an object are attached to a verb in infinitive — *piti*, not to present *volim*.

Warning. Not every English "to-verb" can be translated to a Croatian infinitive. Forms "noun-to-verb" do *not* correspond to Croatian infinitives, but to forms *za* + infinitive or to some more advanced forms of verbs:

"I have a book to read." *Imam knjigu za čitati.* or *Imam knjigu za čitanje.*

"I have enough money to buy the book." *Imam dovoljno novca da kupim knjigu.*

Infinitive is formed from the past base of a verb (hence also called the 'infinitive base'), by a simple rule: discard past participle endings (*-lo*, *-la*, etc.) and add a *-ti*:

class	present	past participle (m, f)	infinitive
e/0	<i>tres-e-m</i>	<i>tres--äo, tres--la</i>	<i>tres--ti</i>
	<i>pi-je-m</i>	<i>pi--o, pi--la</i>	<i>pi--ti</i>
n	<i>bri-ne-m</i>	<i>bri-nu-o, bri-nu-la</i>	<i>bri-nu-ti</i>
a	<i>pit-a-m</i>	<i>pit-a-o, pit-a-la</i>	<i>pit-a-ti</i>
i	<i>misl-i-m</i>	<i>misl-i-o, misl-i-la</i>	<i>misl-i-ti</i>
*v	<i>kup-uje-m</i>	<i>kup-ova-o, kup-ova-la</i>	<i>kup-ova-ti</i>
'je/a	<i>der-e-m</i>	<i>der-a-o, der-a-la</i>	<i>der-a-ti</i>
	<i>piš-e-m</i>	<i>pis-a-o, pis-a-la</i>	<i>pis-a-ti</i>
	<i>skač-e-m</i>	<i>skak-a-o, skak-a-la</i>	<i>skak-a-ti</i>
i/a	<i>drž-i-m</i>	<i>drž-a-o, drž-a-la</i>	<i>drž-a-ti</i>

If you know the past part., you will know the infinitive form!

We put the rule in a nice box:

Making infinitives

The infinitive is made by dropping *-li* in past part. f and adding **-ti**.

There are some exceptions to this rule.

We will examine the exceptions a bit later. Of course, there are verbs that do not fit to any schemes: one of them is *idem*, having inf. *ići*. But there are only few.

Verbs Often Used with Infinitives

There are verbs that are often used with infinitives, for example *moram* "must". While there are special, *modal* verbs in English (e.g. "must leave"), using special syntax (without "to") all verbs that can be used with other verbs in infinitives behave in the same way! The often used verbs are:

idem, išao, išla, ići "go"

mogu (možeš 2nd, može 3rd etc.), mogao, mogla, moći "can, be able to"

moram "must"

počinjem, počinjao ~ počnem, počeo (!) "start"

pokušavam ~ pokušam "try"

probam "try"

trebam "need", "should"

želim "want"

Infinitive *moći* represents one type of exception from the infinitive making rule: it ends on *-ći*. Such exceptions are covered in 27 [Weird Verbs](#).

Therefore, in Croatian "I must eat" is just *moram jesti*. More examples:

Trebam jesti. "I need to eat." or "I should eat."

Želim jesti. "I want to eat."

Mogu jesti. "I can eat."

Pokušavam jesti. "I'm trying to eat."

In Croatian, there's no difference between "need" and "should". (I will explain expressing "should" a bit later in more detail.)

For use of *idem* + inf., see below.

Future Tense

Now, to the future tense! It's formed with short forms of verb *hoću, hoćeš...* "will":

pers.	full form	short form	negative
1st sg.	<i>hoć-u (!)</i>	<i>ć-u (!)</i>	<i>neć-u (!)</i>
2nd sg.	<i>hoć-eš</i>	<i>ć-eš</i>	<i>neć-eš</i>
3rd sg.	<i>hoć-e</i>	<i>ć-e</i>	<i>neć-e</i>
<hr/>			
1st pl.	<i>hoć-emo</i>	<i>ć-emo</i>	<i>neć-emo</i>
2nd pl.	<i>hoć-ete</i>	<i>ć-ete</i>	<i>neć-ete</i>
3rd pl.	<i>hoć-e (!)</i>	<i>ć-e (!)</i>	<i>neć-e (!)</i>

The verb has an irregular pattern, but similar to #e-present. The short forms are 'clitic', that is, they should be placed at the second place in the sentence, among all clitics, but before ones representing personal pronouns.

Sutra ću ga vidjeti.

1st sg. acc. inf.

tomorrow will he see

"I'll see him tomorrow."

Vidjet ću ga sutra.

inf. 1st sg. acc.

see will he tomorrow

"I'll see him tomorrow."

Yes, there's a **spelling curiosity** in the future tense: if an infinitive ending on *-ti* is *immediately* followed by *ću, ćeš*, etc. it is spelled without the final *i*. Even better, in the Standard Croatian the final infinitive *-t* is not pronounced in this situation, and both words should be pronounced as one, so one should say:

vidjēt ću = /vidjěću/

imat ću = /imaću/

pisat ću = /pisaću/

Negation of future tense uses the forms from the third column, it's not a clitic and can be at any place in the sentence:

Neću ga vidjeti. "I won't see him."

Neće mi pisati pismo. "(He/she) won't write (a) letter to me."

The system is actually very similar to the past tense — but there is other auxiliary verb and a past participle instead of the infinitive:

Vidjeli smo ga. "We had seen him."

Nismo ga vidjeli. "We hadn't seen him."

Some people spell these words separately: *ne ću, ne ćeš*, etc.

Existential expressions in future ("there's, there isn't") use *biti*, similar to the past tense — *imam*

is used for that purpose only in the present tense:

Bit će vina. "There will be some wine."
Neće biti problema. "There will be no problems."
Neće biti plina. "There will be no gas."

Long forms of verb (*hoću, hoćeš,...*) are used as any other verb with an infinitive or an object, and do not mean a future event:

Hoću piti. "I want to drink."
Hoću loptu. "I want (a) ball."

Croatian does not have a "going to" future similar to English, but a phrase *idem* + inf. can mean something in immediate future.

Idemo jesti. "We are going to eat (right now)."

Since infinitive is the third important form of a verb, I have listed it with other forms in verb lists, when it's not trivial (that is, just *-ti* instead of *-la* in past part. f).

There are many people who don't pronounce the final *-i* in infinitive, and some even spell it that way all the times: *imat, čitat, peć, moć*, etc. That's not considered Standard, but is often seen.

There's another form of the future tense, more about it later.

Exercises

1. Translate to Croatian: "I must drink", "I'll drink", "I won't drink"; now replace "drink" with "learn" (*učim*) and "write" (*pišem*).
2. Analyze the following sentence: *morat ću učiti*.
3. What is the infinitive of *sām* ("to be" verb)?

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23 Questions, Part 1

This one and the next chapter will introduce to composing questions and the question-words (sometimes called "relational pronouns", but they are not really all pronouns, I prefer "generalization words"; together with demonstratives, they are part of a whole "generalization scheme" that will be introduced in the short while).

Yes/No Questions

The simplest questions are those where one just answers with a yes or no. Such short answers are, by the way, acceptable in Croatian. In Croatian, recipe for such simple questions is quite simple: move the verb to the beginning if it isn't already there, and then insert a particle *li* to the second place (before all 'clitics'):

Ideš u školu. "You're going to (the) school."

Q: *Ideš li u školu?* "Are you going to the school?" A: *Da.* "Yes." or *Ne.* "No."

Napisao je pismo. "He wrote (a) letter."

Q: *Je li napisao pismo?* "Did he write (a) letter?" A: *Je.* "(He) did." or *Nije.* "(He) didn't."

Vratili smo se. "We came back."

Q: *Jesmo li se vratili?* "Did we come back?" A: *Jesmo.* "We did." or *Nismo.* "We didn't."

Kupit ćemo bicikl. "We will buy (a) bicycle."

Q: *Hoćemo li kupiti bicikl?* "Will we buy (a) bicycle?" A: *Hoćemo.* "We will." or *Nećemo.* "We won't."

If an auxillary verb is used (*sam, si.. or ću, ćeš...*) it's put at the beginning of the sentence in its full form, except for *je*, where the short form can be used as full as well (we see again that *je* stands apart from the rest!). When answering, a simple *da* "yes" or *ne* "no" is sufficient, but one can answers with just the full form of the auxillary verb used. So much for the simplest questions.

In everyday speech there are other ways to make the simplest questions, one of them is to leave *li* out, another is to use *Da li...*

Making yes/no questions

1. Find a verb in the sentence, and move it to the beginning.
2. If the verb is a short (clitic) form of *sam, si, smo...* or *ću, ćeš...* convert it to the full form.
3. If it is a *je* (3rd sg.), it can be used in the beginning as it is.
4. Add a particle *li* immediately after the verb at the beginning.

Noun Questions

Now, to more complex questions: one can ask questions about any part of a sentence. In such questions, answer is not a simple yes or no, but can be any information. It's possible to ask questions about subject, object, means, time, place, etc. For instance:

"I came here yesterday."

Q: "Where did I come yesterday?"

"I came here by car."

Q: "How did I come here?"

"I came here yesterday."

Q: "Who came here yesterday?" (in English, such questions use a different mechanism from others)

"I rented a car."

Q: "What did I rent?"

In English, such questions are sometimes called wh-questions, and words to make them are called wh-words. Croatian has a very similar way to make such questions and similar k-words — also called question words or *relative pronouns* (I would call them "generalizations").

Question words that replace nouns, pronouns, adjectives or noun phrases are "declinable" — they have cases like nouns, personal pronouns and adjectives do. Question words that replace adverbs and prepositional phrases are not declined.

Two most often used relative pronouns stand for nouns and noun phrases. *Tko* is used for people (sometimes for animals) and *što* for everything else. Here are their forms, there is no difference between singular and plural:

case	persons	non-persons
nom.	<i>tko</i>	<i>što</i>
acc.	<i>koga (kog)</i>	
dat.	<i>kome, komu</i>	<i>čemu</i>
gen.	<i>koga</i>	<i>čega (čeg)</i>
ins.	<i>kim, kime</i>	<i>čim, čime</i>

We see that — nominative aside — forms are like for some fictional adjectives *k-* and *č-*, including variants with and without final vowels. Let's put them to use to make some questions about the indirect object, object and subject of a sentence — in Croatian, they are just *questions about nouns* in a sentence:

Ivan piše pismo Ani. (N.nom V N.acc N.dat) "Ivan is writing a letter to Ana."

Q: *Kome Ivan piše pismo?* A: *Ani.* (*kome* = dat., persons)

Q: *Što piše Ivan?* A: *Pismo.* (*što* = acc., non-persons)

Q: *Tko piše pismo?* A: *Ivan.* (*tko* = nom., persons)

We see the recipe: just take appropriate form (case) of a relative pronoun, and put it in the beginning to make a question. Answer is in the same case as the word in the original sentence, and in the same case as the relative pronoun in the question. Word order plays no role, except for the relative pronoun in the beginning, and verbs are not changed in any way — *in Croatian, verbs have nothing to do with composing this type of questions!*

We can ask questions about nouns within prepositional phrases. Phrase with a pronoun is moved to the beginning of the sentence:

Išao sam s bratom. "I was going with (the) brother." (*bratom* = ins.)

Q: *S kim sam išao?* "Who was I going with?"

Kuham jelo bez mesa. "I'm cooking a dish without meat." (*mesa* = gen.)

Q: *Bez čega kuham jelo?* "What am I cooking a dish without?"

An important thing to remember: there are two relative pronouns used to stand for nouns, one (*tko*) is used for people, and another (*što*) is used for everything else.

Exercise

Ask questions about all nouns in the following sentences:

Ana kuha ručak za Ivana. "Ana is cooking a lunch for Ivan." (*Ivana* = acc.)
Ivan loži vatru u peći ugljenom. "Ivan feeds the fire in the furnace with coal."
Ključevi su na stolu. "The keys are on the table."
Ana se boji aviona. "Ana is afraid of airplanes." (*aviona* = gen.)

For instance, questions about nouns in the first sentence would be:

Ana: *Tko kuha ručak za Ivana?* (*tko* = nom.) "Who is cooking a lunch for Ivan?"
Ručak: *Što Ana kuha za Ivana?* (*što* = acc.) "What is Ana cooking for Ivan?"
Ivan: *Za koga Ana kuha ručak?* (*koga* = acc.) "Who is Ana cooking a lunch for?"

24 Questions, Part 2

• • • Review: [23 Questions, Part 1](#)

Now, let's take a look at other question-words. We have already seen how to make questions asking for nouns or noun phrases. But it's possible to make other questions, about places, means (things usually described by prepositional phrases or "adverbs") or about adjectives. For instance:

"I came here yesterday."

Q: "Where did I come yesterday?"

"I came here by car."

Q: "How did I come here?"

"I came here very quickly."

Q: "How quickly did I come here?"

"I came here yesterday."

Q: "When did I come here?"

First, let's take a look at question-words that are not standing for adjectives. They behave more or less like adverbs, that is, they don't have cases. They correspond to manner ("how"), place ("where"), time ("when"), reason ("why") etc. They are:

manner	<i>kako</i> "how"	<i>Došao sam vlakom.</i> "I came <u>by train</u> ."	<i>Kako sam došao?</i> " <u>How</u> did I come?"
place	<i>gdje</i> "where"	<i>Živim u gradu.</i> "I live <u>in a city</u> ."	<i>Gdje živim?</i> " <u>Where</u> do I live?"
time	<i>kada</i> "when"	<i>Došao sam jučer.</i> "I came <u>yesterday</u> ."	<i>Kada sam došao?</i> " <u>When</u> did I come?"
reason	<i>zašto</i> "why"	<i>Došao sam na odmor.</i> "I came <u>for a vacation</u> ."	<i>Zašto sam došao?</i> " <u>Why</u> did I come?"
direction	<i>kamo</i> "where to"	<i>Putovao sam na odmor.</i> "I was traveling <u>to vacation</u> ."	<i>Kamo sam putovao?</i> " <u>Where</u> was I traveling to?"
medium of motion	<i>kuda</i> "what through"	<i>Šetao sam kroz šumu.</i> "I was walking <u>through (a) forest</u> ."	<i>Kuda sam šetao?</i> " <u>What</u> was I walking through?"
quantity	<i>koliko</i> "how many/much"	<i>Imamo deset dana.</i> "We have <u>ten days</u> ."	<i>Koliko imamo dana?</i> " <u>How many</u> days do we have?"

English has only "where", "how", "when", and "why". Croatian does not distinguish "uncountable" (e.g. "salt"), and "countable" (e.g. "days") nouns when making questions.

In everyday speech, *gdje*, *kuda*, and *kamo* are often confused (to dismay of the language police), and people sometimes ask questions like:

Gdje idemo? (not the best use!) "Where are we going?"

Again, these were questions about "ways" of the whole sentence, those question words had nothing to do with cases.

It's possible to ask questions about individual adverbs, using *kako* and *koliko*; in some circumstances one moves some more words to the beginning to show what is the question about:

Auto je jako brz. "(The) car is very fast."
 Q: *Koliko je auto brz?* "How fast is (the) car?"

Vozimo auto jako brzo. "We are driving (the) car very fast."
 Q: *Koliko brzo vozimo auto?* "How fast are we driving (the) car?" (we move *brzo* as well)

Q: *Koliko hladno...?* "How cold..."
 Q: *Koliko visoko...?* "How high...", etc.

Next, we can ask questions about adjectives in the sentence. There are two basic types of adjectives: the possessives and the rest. There are four question-words, all behaving as regular adjectives, but they have no meaning except the grammatical role. They do change with the cases! They are:

- *čiji* "whose";
- *kakāv* m, *kakvo* n "what like";
- *kolik* "how big";
- *koji* "which one".

(It's interesting that they too start with *k-* or *č-*...) Two of them have *-ji*, so please apply the o/e rule when constructing forms for all cases. Again, gender/case must agree with the word the adjective is about!

Knjiga je moja. "(The) book is mine." (*moja* = nom. f)
 Q: *Čija je knjiga?* "Whose book is it?" A: *Moja.* "Mine." (*čija* = nom. f again!)

Pojeo je tvoju jabuku. "He ate your apple." (*tvoju* = acc. f)
 Q: *Čiju je pojeo jabuku?* "Whose apple did he eat?" A: *Tvoju.* "Yours." (*čiju* = acc. f again!)

Igrali su se Ivanovom loptom. "They were playing with Ivan's ball." (*Ivanovom* = ins. f)
 Q: *Čijom su se igrali loptom?* "Whose ball were they playing with?" A: *Ivanovom.* "Ivan's." (*čijom* = ins. f again!)

Vozimo njen auto. "We are driving her car." (*njen* = acc. mⁱ)
 Q: *Čiji vozimo auto?* "Whose car are we driving?" A: *Njen.* "Hers." (*čiji* = acc. mⁱ again!)

It's clear what you are asking about because the question-word and noun you're asking about agree in gender. However, people sometimes reshuffle words to emphasize what is one asking about:

Q: *Čiju jabuku je pojeo?*
 Q: *Čijom loptom su se igrali?*
 Q: *Čiji auto vozimo?*

If you are worried about the placement rule, it's just that *čiju jabuku* is just a noun phrase (an adjective + a noun), and clitics (*su se*, etc.) can be after a noun phrase, not just after a single word. Now, let's see examples for *kakāv*:

Knjiga je zanimljiva. "(The) book is interesting." (*interesting* = nom. f)
 Q: *Kakva je knjiga?* "What is the book like?" A: *Zanimljiva.* "Interestimg." (*kakva* = nom. f again!)

Pojeo je zelenu jabuku. "He ate (a) green apple." (*zelenu* = acc. f)
 Q: *Kakvu je pojeo jabuku?* "What was the apple he ate like?" A: *Zelenu.* "Green." (*kakvu* = acc. f again!)
 Q: *Kakvu jabuku je pojeo?* (words shuffled, the same meaning)

Igrali su se starom loptom. "They were playing with (an) old ball." (*Ivanovom* = ins. f)
 Q: *Kakvom su se igrali loptom?* "What was the ball they were playing with like?" A: *Starom.* "Old." (*kakvom* = ins. f again!)
 Q: *Kakvom loptom su se igrali?* (words shuffled, the same meaning)

Another question-adjective means "how big". The answer is an adjective describing size.

Pojeo je veliku jabuku. "He ate (a) big apple." (*veliku* = acc. f)

Q: *Koliku je pojeo jabuku?* "How big apple did he eat?" A: *Veliku.* "Big." (*koliku* = acc. f again!)

Q: *Koliku jabuku je pojeo?* (words shuffled, the same meaning)

Igrali su se malom loptom. "They were playing with (a) small ball." (*malom* = ins. f)

Q: *Kolikom su se igrali loptom?* "How big ball were they playing with?" A: *Malom.* "Small."

(*kolikom* = ins. f again!)

Q: *Kolikom loptom su se igrali?* (words shuffled, the same meaning)

Many people don't use this question-word, but rephrase it with *kakäv* or sometimes *koliko velik* (this would be a question about an adverb, an answer could be "really big")

The last question-adjective means "which one". The answer is something that defines the ball, be it an adjective or a demonstrative.

Pojeo je zelenu jabuku. "He ate the green apple." (*zelenu* = acc. f)

Q: *Koju je pojeo jabuku?* "Which apple did he eat?" A: *Zelenu.* "The green one." (that's enough to identify it; *koju* = acc. f again!)

Q: *Koju jabuku je pojeo?* (words shuffled, the same meaning)

Igrali su se tom loptom. "They were playing with that ball." (*tom* = ins. f)

Q: *Kojom su se igrali loptom?* "Which ball were they playing with?" A: *Tom.* "That one." (*tom* = ins. f again!)

Q: *Kojom loptom su se igrali?* (words shuffled, the same meaning)

The question-adjectives have the same endings as everyday adjectives, so one does not need to think too much about cases (compare endings of possessives and or question-words in the examples above). It's really not too different from English: just put the question-adjective in the same case, gender and number of the noun it is about! You see now why I said that mastering adjectives is essential to learn Croatian.

25 Saying No, Generic Words

Negative sentences

How to say "no" in Croatian? It turns out to be both simpler and more complex than in English. The easiest way is to say just *ne* "no". But if we have a more complex sentence, we must learn how to put sentence in *negation*. For instance, for sentences:

Ana jēde jabuku. "Ana is eating an apple."

Ana je jēla jabuku. "Ana was eating an apple."

Ana će jēsti jabuku. "Ana shall eat an apple."

We must negate *verbs* in the sentences. Auxillaries *sām, si, je...* and *ću, ćeš...* have own negated forms (prefix *ni-* for *sām, si...* and *ne-* for *ću, ćeš...*); the verb *imam* "have" has its own negation *nēmam*, and for other verbs just put a *ne* in front of them:

Ana ne jēde jabuku. "Ana is not eating an apple."

Ana nije jēla jabuku. "Ana was not eating an apple."

Ana neće jēsti jabuku. "Ana shall not eat an apple."

However, it gets more complicated if we use words like "somewhere", "any", "no one" etc. So, this is the right time to learn all such words.

Adverb-like generic words

There are some words: "how", "where", "there"... I decided to call them "generic words". In English, they show a bit of a pattern: e.g. "where", "somewhere", "nowhere", etc. In Croatian, they fall into a much bigger scheme, with just a couple of exceptional forms. Here are such words that behave as adverbs (that is, do not change according to gender, case, number):

	time	place	destination	path
question	<i>kad(a)</i> "when"	<i>gdjē (!)</i> "where"	<i>kamo</i> "where to"	<i>kud(a)</i> "where through, which way"
close	<i>sad(a) (!)</i> "now"	<i>ovdjē</i> "here"	<i>ovamo, simo(!)</i> "here"	<i>ovud(a)</i> "this way"
mid	<i>tad(a)</i> "right then"	<i>tu (!)</i> "there"	<i>tamo</i> "there"	<i>tud(a)</i> "that way"
far	<i>onda</i> "then"	<i>ondjē</i> "over there"	<i>onamo</i> "over there"	<i>onud(a)</i> "way over there"
no-	<i>nikad(a)</i> "never"	<i>nigdjē</i> "nowhere"	<i>nikamo</i> "to nowhere"	<i>nikud(a)</i> "through nowhere"
some-	<i>nekad(a)</i> "sometimes"	<i>negdjē</i> "somewhere"	<i>nekamo</i> "to somewhere"	<i>nekud(a)</i> "through somewhere"
every-	<i>uvijēk (!)</i> "always"	<i>svugdjē</i> "everywhere"	<i>svakamo</i> "to everywhere"	<i>svukud(a)</i> "through everywhere"
any-	<i>ikad(a)</i> "ever"	<i>igdjē</i> "anywhere"	<i>ikamo</i> "to anywhere"	<i>ikud(a)</i> "through anywhere"

I hope you can see the pattern: *k-* for questions (*k-amo, k-ako*), *ov-* for "close" adverbs (*ov-amo, ov-ako*), etc.

Most words in the table are really often-used. They don't change in case, gender or number, that is, they are adverbs:

Auto je tamo. "(The) car is there."

Sada jëdem. "I'm eating now."

Onda nisam bio gladän. "I wasn't hungry then." (see *nisam* "wasn't" = negation)

Quantity adverbs have expected forms for the upper part of the table but not for the lower part, where they break between countable and uncountable, and have unexpected forms. There's an additional adverb for "reason" having only few forms:

	manner	quantity		reason
		countable	uncountable	
question	<i>kako</i> "how"	<i>koliko</i> "how many/much"		<i>zašto</i> "why"
close	<i>ovako</i> "like this"	<i>ovoliko</i> "this much/many"		—
mid	<i>tako</i> "so"	<i>toliko</i> "so much/many"		<i>zato</i> "for that reason"
far	<i>onako</i> "like that"	<i>onoliko</i> "that much/many"		—
no-	<i>nikako</i> "in no way"	<i>(nijedän)</i> "not one"	<i>ništa</i> "no"	<i>nizašta</i> "for no reason"
some-	<i>nekako</i> "somehow"	<i>(neki)</i> "some"	<i>nešto</i> "some"	—
every-	<i>svakako</i> "in every way"	<i>(svi)</i> "all"	<i>sve</i> "all"	—
any-	<i>ikako</i> "any way"	<i>(ijedän)</i> "any"	<i>išta</i> "any"	—

Some examples:

Tako je hladno. "It's so cold."

On je tako visok! "He's so tall!"

Ovako je bolje. "It's better like this."

Onako je bilo bolje. "It was better that (other) way."

Toliko te volim! "I love you so much!"

The word *sve* "all, everything" exists in sg. only, and has slightly specific case forms (nom. = acc. and -e- in case endings):

nom.	<i>sve</i>
acc.	
dat.	<i>svemu</i>
gen.	<i>svega</i>
ins.	<i>svim(e)</i>

Adjective-like generic words

Now, there are more generic words, this time adjectives (words similar to "big", "my"). There are much less such words compared to adverbs:

	selection	size	quality	possession	noun	
					person	thing
question	<i>koji</i> "which"	<i>kolik</i> "how big"	<i>kakäv</i> "what like"	<i>čiji</i> "whose"	<i>tko</i> "who"	<i>što</i> "what"
close	<i>ovaj</i> "this"	<i>ovolik</i> "this big"	<i>ovakäv</i> "like this"	—	—	—
mid	<i>taj</i> "that"	<i>tolik</i> "so big"	<i>takäv</i> "such"	—	—	—
far	<i>onaj</i> "that one over there"	<i>onolik</i> "that big"	<i>onakäv</i> "like that"	—	—	—
no-	<i>nijedan</i> "not one"	—	<i>nikakäv</i> "no (kind)"	<i>ničiji</i> "nobody's"	<i>nitko</i> "noone"	<i>ništa</i> "nothing"
some-	<i>neki</i> "some"	—	<i>nekakäv</i> "some (kind)"	<i>nečiji</i> "somebody's"	<i>netko</i> "someone"	<i>nešto</i> "something"
every-	<i>svaki</i> "every"	—	<i>svakakäv</i> "all (kind)"	<i>svačiji</i> "everyone's"	<i>svatko</i> "everyone"	<i>svašta</i> "everything"
any-	<i>ijedan</i> "any"	—	<i>ikakäv</i> "any (kind)"	<i>ičiji</i> "anybody's"	<i>itko</i> "anyone"	<i>išta</i> "anything"

Remember that they all change like adjectives, more or less. Some of them we have already encountered.

Ovo je nečiji auto. "This is someone's car."
Ovakav auto ću kupiti. "I'll buy a car like this one."
Netko je bio ovdje. "Someone was here."

Words *netko*, *itko*, *nitko*, *svatko* change like *tko*; likewise, *nešto*, *ništa*, *išta*, *svašta* change like *što*, except that some of them end on *-a* in nom. and acc.

Observe the following curiosity: negative words start with *ni-* and words meaning "some" on *ne-*. Confusing, but that's the way it is. Funny, let's try to translate the last sentence to Croatian; it would sound something like "that is so", i.e.:

To je tako. "That's so.", "That's the way it is."

Another important word is *svi* "all people", "everyone" and *sve* "all things". Really it's just an adjective *säv*, *sva*, *svo* "all", so these are just two gender forms in plural. It's case forms use *-em* and so instead of the expected *-om*. It's mainly used in the plural.

Rekao sam svima. "I told everyone."
Svi će doći. "Everyone will come."
Treba pokositi svu travu. "One needs to mow all the grass." (*svu*, *travu* = acc.)

There are some other similar words, like *drugdje* "elsewhere".

Negation and Generic Words

All of the tables above contain a row with "no-" (negatives). They are used to negate rows "some-", "every-" and "any-". In English, one can negate a sentence by twisting such word:

"Ana has an apple." → "Ana has no apples."
 "Ana has some money". → "Ana has no money." or "Ana doesn't have any money."

The "bad thing" in English is when people make double negations: "Ana doesn't have no money."

But it's the must in Croatian. Every negatable word must be negated! The words "somewhere", "someone", "somehow", etc. must be negated to "nowhere", "noone", "no way". It means that Croatian counter-parts of "anywhere" etc. are *not* used in negated sentences. Therefore:

Ana ima nešto novca "Ana has some money".

Ana něma ništa novca. lit. "Ana doesn't have no money." — Yes. We talk like that all the time.

More examples, for adverbs:

Nigdje ne mogu naći ključeve. lit. "Nowhere I cannot find keys." = "I can't find keys anywhere."

Nikako ne mogu naći ključeve. lit. "No way I cannot find keys." = "I can't find keys whatever I do."

Unfortunately, there's really no good English translation for *nikako*, it roughly means, "no way, in no circumstance, in no case". More examples, for *netko* vs. *nitko* and *nešto* vs. *ništa*:

Netko je došao. "Somebody came."

Nitko nije došao. lit. "Nobody didn't came." = "Nobody came."

Vidim nešto. lit. "I see something." = "I can see something."

Ne vidim ništa. lit. "I don't see nothing." = "I can see nothing."

Please observe that *nešto* and *ništa* when used on its own (and declined) mean "something" and "nothing", but when used as adverbs (and not declined) mean "some" and "no":

Ana ima nešto. "Ana has something."

Ana ima nešto čokolade. "Ana has some chocolate." (*čokolade* gen.)

Words *nekakäv*, *nikakäv* are adjectives that also have no good English counterparts, but sometimes they are used like English "some" and "no":

Imam nekakve probleme. "I have some problems."

Němam nikakve probleme. "I have no problems whatsoever."

The literal translations would be "I have problems of some kind" and "I don't have problems of no kind". Observe *nekako* in the first sentence, and *nikako* in the second — they have completely opposite meanings!

However, adverbs and adjectives like *tamo*, *sada* have nothing to do with negation, they are normally used with negative sentences:

Sada němam novaca. "I don't have money now."

Onda nisam imao ključeve. "I didn't have the keys then."

Start and End Adverbs

There are additional generic adverbs related to actions that spread in time or space: one can express (or ask) the terminal points, like "from", "since", or "up to", "until" by prefixing (or combining) *od* "from" and *do* "up to, until" with many of above adverbs. However, place and direction are not distinguished, and some adverbs have multiple versions:

	time		place	
	from	to	from	to
question	<i>otkad(a)</i> <i>otkako (!)</i> "since when"	<i>dokad(a)</i> <i>dokle (!)</i> "how long"	<i>odakle (!)</i> <i>otkud(a)</i> "where from"	<i>dokle (!)</i> <i>dokud(a)</i> "up to where"
close	<i>odsad(a)</i> "now on"	<i>dosad(a)</i> "before now"	<i>odavde (!)</i> "from here"	<i>dovde (!)</i> "to here"
mid	<i>otad(a)</i> "since then"	<i>dotad(a)</i> "until then"	<i>otamo</i> "from there"	<i>dotamo</i> "to there"

far	<i>odonda</i> "since that time"	—	—	—
some-	—	—	<i>odnekud (!)</i> <i>odnekle (!)</i> "from somewhere"	<i>donekud (!)</i> "to somewhere"

No, these are not typos: sometimes it's *od-*, and sometimes *ot-*! Adverbs like *odakle* "where from" and *otkad* "since when" are very frequent:

Odakle dolazi vlak? "Where does the train come from?"

Otkad učiš hrvatski? "Since when have you been learning Croatian?"

In contrast, *ondonda* is quite infrequent. Additionally, *dokle* has two meanings, so you will hear it sometimes instead of *dokad*:

Q: *Dokad će padati kiša?* "How long will the rain fall?" (lit. "until when")

Q: *Dokle će padati kiša?* "How long will the rain fall?"

Answer to such questions wouldn't be "for three hours" or so, but "until..." since the ending is asked (as will all *do-* words), e.g.:

A: *Do navečer.* "Until evening." (lit. "up to evening-time")

Also there's the sometimes used *otkako* having the same meaning as *otkad*, which is unexpected, I admit... The adverb *donekle* also exists, but it took an unrelated meaning, something like "to a certain degree", and is really not used in everyday conversation.

26 Demonstratives and Definiteness

Introducing Demonstratives

Demonstratives are really a kind of adjectives, but have a somewhat grammatical role, they are close to "function words". Together with some other words they are a part of a larger "generalization scheme".

English has demonstratives "this" (pl. "these") and "that" (pl. "those"). Croatian scheme is more like adjectives, that is, forms for all cases plus a threefold distinction instead of twofold in English.

The threefold distinction is quite alike the one for personal pronouns, where we have three "persons". Forms are basically *ovaj* "this" for things close to speaker, *taj* "that" for things close to both speaker and listener, and *onaj* for things not close to speaker and listener, for things distant in space, and, we'll see in a short while, things distant in time, manner and other aspects.

Since speaker and listener are actually close, *ovaj* and *taj* are often confused in everyday use, to dismay of people worried about the "proper use" of language (I'm personally not worried!).

Forms of Demonstratives

Their case forms (a.k.a. "declension paradigms") are no different from everyday adjectives except for nom. masculine, where is an unexpected additional *-aj*:

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	<i>taj (!)</i>	<i>taj (!)</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>ta</i>
acc.sg.	<i>tog, toga</i>			<i>tu</i>
dat.sg.	<i>tom, tome, tomu</i>			<i>toj</i>
gen.sg.	<i>tog, toga</i>			<i>te</i>
ins.sg.	<i>tim</i>			<i>tom</i>
dual	<i>ta</i>			<i>te</i>
nom.pl.	<i>ti</i>	<i>ta</i>		<i>te</i>
acc.pl.	<i>te</i>			
dat./ins.pl.	<i>tim</i>			
gen.pl.	<i>tih</i>			

In the same way, one constructs the case forms for *ovaj* and *onaj*.

In Practice

Let's see some examples. *ovaj* refers to something present, current, like a house you're currently in; compare it with other adjectives and you'll see that forms and use are identical:

U ovoj kući je hladno. "It's cold in this house."

U mojoj kući je hladno. "It's cold in my house."

U velikoj kući je hladno. "It's cold in (a/the) big house." (all dat.)

Moj otac je kupio ovu kuću. "My father bought this house."

Moj otac je kupio moju kuću. "My father bought my house."
Moj otac je kupio veliku kuću. "My father bought (a/the) big house." (all acc.)

Ovaj stan ima tri sobe. "This apartment has three rooms."
Moj stan ima tri sobe. "My apartment has three rooms."
Veliki stan ima tri sobe. "The big apartment has three rooms." (all nom.)

Demonstrative *taj* is used to refer to an exactly known instance, close to both speaker and listener, in place, but also in mind: it refers to last thing discussed, and has something similar to English "the":

Bio sam u njegovoj kući. U toj kući je hladno. "I was at his house. It's cold in that house."
Želim taj bicikl. "I want that bicycle."
Želim ta dva kolača. "I want those two cakes." (an example for "dual" form)
Taj stan je velik. "That apartment is big."

As in English, demonstratives come before all adjectives and numbers: you cannot say:

~~*dva ta bicikla*~~ "two ~~those~~ bicycles"
~~*velik taj stan*~~ "big ~~that~~ appartment"

Special Uses

To is used to refer to any object, regardless of what it is; it is used what we don't know what is actually something, and sometimes is used for persons as well:

Što je to? To je... "What is that? That is..."
Tko je to? To je... "Who is that? It is..."

Demonstrative *onaj* refers to something distant, not present, mentioned much before, belonging to somewhere else, etc. and always contrasts with *ovaj*. We can translate it to English again with "that", but it's really a pity, since speakers of Croatian sometimes use *ovaj* instead of *taj* and vice versa, but *never* confuse them with *onaj*; this demonstrative is a world apart from the other two:

U onoj kući je hladno, ali je u ovoj toplo. "It's cold in that house, but it's warm in this one."

All demonstratives, as shown in the previous example, can be used without nouns, meaning "this one", "that one", etc. However, most adjectives can be used like that as well:

U tvojoj kući je hladno, ali je u mojoj toplo. "It's cold in your house, but it's warm in mine."
U velikoj kući je hladno, ali je u maloj toplo. "It's cold in a big house, but it's warm in a small one."
U žutoj kući je hladno, ali je u zelenoj toplo. "It's cold in the yellow house, but it's warm in the green one."

Finally, demonstratives in neuter gender are often used with verb *sam, si...* to make phrases like "This is..." or "That is...":

Ovo je moja kuća. "This is my house."
To je moja kuća. "That is my house."
Ono je moja kuća. "That (distant one) is my house."

Here *ovo* etc. were forms for neuter, a *kuća* is, of course, feminine. However, forms agreeing on gender are also sometimes used, but then have a slightly different meaning:

Ova je moja kuća. "This one is my house."
Ta je moja. "That one is mine."
Ona je moja kuća. "That (distant one) is my house."

Forms *ona, ono* are identical with personal pronouns of similar meaning, but it's only for nominative, all other forms are quite different.

People often use the following sentences (both demonstrative and possessive are in neuter, referring

to anything):

To je moje. "That is mine."

To nije moje. "That isn't mine."

To je tvoje. "That is yours.", etc.

Expressing Definiteness

As I have already written, Croatian has no definite or indefinite articles. Therefore, usually there's no difference between "a friend" and "the friend" in Croatian, one says just "friend".

There are circumstances when one must express indefiniteness, such as "I saw a friend of yours". Croatian uses *jedän* "one" as marker of indefiniteness. However, that word behaves like any other adjective, and possessives behave as adjectives as well, so you should just say:

Vidio säm jednog tvog prijatelja. "I saw a friend of yours."

The literal translation would be "I saw one your friend". Another word to express indefiniteness is *neki* some, used when you don't know which one it was; for example, a dog was barking, but you don't know which one:

Neki pas je lajao. "Some dog was barking."

When in Croatian you talk about "friend"... "friend"... it's of course assumed that it's the *same* friend. When you want to discontinue it (switch to another friend), you should use *drugi* "another":

Drugi prijatelj vozi. "Another friend is driving."

In plural, the adjective *drugi* means "other". The word also means "second"; in Croatian, there's no difference between "another", "other" and "second"!

Drugi prijatelji putuju vlakom. "Other friends travel by train."

On the other hand, if you want to express definiteness, you can always use *taj* "that":

Taj tvoj prijatelj dolazi sutra. "That friend of yours will come tomorrow."

Again, the literal translation would be "that your friend comes tomorrow". Don't forget, *jedän*, *neki*, etc. are adjectives: they must adapt to the case, number and gender of the noun, that is, they must be declined.

27 Weird Verbs

I will introduce more types of verbs. They will all cause problems to you.

Weird e/0 Verbs in Present

There are verbs having 1st pers. sg. on *-em* that have one sound in 1st pers. sg. — 2nd pers. pl. root, and a different one in the 3rd pers. pl. The difference is always:

1st sg. — 2nd pl.		3rd pl.
-č-e-		-k-u
-ž-e-	◀	-g-u
-š-e-		-h-u

However, it does not mean that if a verb which 1st pers. sg. ends on *-čem* will inevitably have the 3rd pers. pl. *-ku*: it's the other way round — if the 3rd pers. pl. ends on *-ku* then other forms have *-če-*!

A counter-example is verb *vičem* "yell": its 3rd pers. pl. is *viču*. So it depends on the 3rd pers. pl.

Sometimes you can hear: *pečeju*, *misliju*. It's really so in some dialects, but most people consider them mistakes children make.

If such verbs have roots ending on *-k* or *-g*, their infinitives end on *-ći* instead of *-ti*:

1st sg.	<i>peč-e-m</i>	<i>vuč-e-m</i>
3rd pl.	<i>pek-u</i>	<i>vuk-u</i>
past m	<i>pek--äo</i>	<i>vuk--äo</i>
past f	<i>pek--la</i>	<i>vuk--la</i>
infinitive	<i>pe--ći</i>	<i>vu--ći</i>

There are no e/0-verbs having roots ending on *-g* in common use, but there are similar n/0 verbs shown below.

Weird e/0 Verbs in Past/Infinitive

There are also issues with e/0 verbs in past (and of course infinitive, since it's derived from the past part.).

The first problem is that there are some verbs that change their root from present to past. So, for them the present base is different from the past base in a very peculiar way: a sequence vowel + consonant is rearranged into the consonant + *a*. It happens only in the e/0 present/past class, and for a very limited number of verbs; two examples are *perem* "wash" and *zovem* "call".

The second problem also occurs in this (0) past class (meaning: nothing is between the base and *-la*, "zero"). There are some verbs that have roots ending, unfortunately, on *-d* or *-t*. Due to some guys having problems with pronunciation 2000 years ago, those sounds are dropped in the past. Again, two verbs will serve as examples: *jëdem* "eat", and *pletëm* "knit"; the table summarizes both problems:

1st sg.	<i>per-e-m</i>	<i>zov-e-m</i>	<i>jěd-e-m</i>	<i>plet-e-m</i>
3rd pl.	<i>per-u</i>	<i>zov-u</i>	<i>jěd-u</i>	<i>plet-u</i>
past m	<i>pra--o</i>	<i>zva--o</i>	<i>jě--o</i>	<i>ple--o</i>
past f	<i>pra--la</i>	<i>zva--la</i>	<i>jě--la</i>	<i>ple--la</i>
infinitive	<i>pra--ti</i>	<i>zva--ti</i>	<i>jěs--ti</i>	<i>ples--ti</i>

As you can see, infinitives for such verbs are derived from past part. f, except for an additional *-s-* before *-ti* that appears only when present base ends on a *-d* or *-t*.

All common e/0 verbs with root change and other difficulties are listed in the [Summary of Verb Forms](#).

Strange *v Verbs

Other classes have no issues really, except the *v class. It will now get clear why is it called "***v**". You see that for *kupujem*, *-uje-* of the present was "transformed" to *-ova-* in the past. So far so simple, but the deal is that it can transform to any of *e*, *o*, *i* + *va*! It transforms to different vowels and there's no other way but to learn the past participle for every such verb. To illustrate this, I took verbs *dajem* "I'm giving", *pokazujem* "I'm showing" and *pljujem* "I'm spitting" (I cannot think of a better example), *kraljujem* "I'm ruling as a king", together with the already listed verb:

1st sg. *d-aje-m* *plj-uje-m* *kralj-uje-m* *pokaz-uje-m* *kup-uje-m*

3rd pl. *d-aju* *plj-uju* *kralj-uju* *pokaz-uju* *kup-uju*

past m *d-ava-o* *plj-uva-o* *kralj-eva-o* *pokaz-iva-o* *kup-ova-o*

past f *d-ava-la* *plj-uva-la* *kralj-eva-la* *pokaz-iva-la* *kup-ova-la*

infinitive *d-ava-ti* *plj-uva-ti* *kralj-eva-ti* *pokaz-iva-ti* *kup-ova-ti*

Now, *kraljujem* is really not often used, but *kupujem* is. However, there are in reality only a handful of verbs similar to ones in the left three columns. The vast majority is like *pokazujem* and *kupujem*.

As you can see, the infinitive completely follows the infinitive rule.

Mixed Classes

Now, the last issue: some verbs use one present class and a completely different past class! To show what mix-ups exist, I have made a table with verbs *stanem* "stand", *želim* "wish", and *držim* "hold", in addition to some verbs I have already listed, and have highlighted "mixed" types.

	present			
past	e	n	a	i
0	<i>tres-e-m</i> <i>tres-u</i>	<i>sta-ne-m</i> <i>sta-nu</i>		
	<i>tres--äo</i> <i>tres--la</i>	<i>sta--o</i> <i>sta--la</i>		

	present			
past	e	n	a	i
n		<i>bri-ne-m</i> <i>bri-nu</i> <i>bri-nu-o</i> <i>bri-nu-la</i>		
a			<i>pit-a-m</i> <i>pit-a-ju</i> <i>pit-a-o</i> <i>pit-a-la</i>	<i>drž-i-m</i> <i>drž-e</i> <i>drž-a-o</i> <i>drž-a-la</i>
i				<i>misl-i-m</i> <i>misl-e</i> <i>misl-i-o</i> <i>misl-i-la</i>
jě				<i>žel-i-m</i> <i>žel-e</i> <i>žel-i-o</i> <i>žel-jě-la</i>

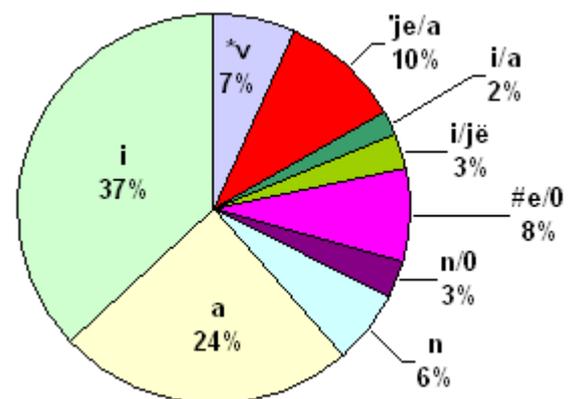
Many grammars have quite a opaque system of "verb classes" with subclasses and so on. I find this table much more insightful. One sees that there are "regular" types (on the diagonal) from e/0 to i, and off-diagonal "mixed" types. It's best to just remember both present and past of mixed verbs.

The pie on the right shows breakdown of about 1700 most frequently used Croatian verbs. The best way is just to remember the present and the past in "weird" verb classes, since there are rules, but they are quite complicated. Therefore, you can regard them "irregular" if it makes life easier for you, but really they are not.

Let's review the mixed classes. I have already shown the i/a-verbs (e.g. *drž-i-m* — *drž-a-o*).

Next, the **i/jě** class is again nothing special. It's interesting that in speech of some people verbs from this class are moved to i-verbs (it's really similar): you will often hear *žel-i-la* and similar (non-standard) forms.

The third mixed class is **n/0**. Some verbs in that not really big class have *-d* or *-t* that behave as in the e/0 class (because, it's really the 0-class in the past that matters!):



1st sg.	<i>sta-ne-m</i>	<i>pad-ne-m</i>	<i>sret-ne-m</i>	<i>leg-ne-m</i>
3rd pl.	<i>sta-nu</i>	<i>pad-nu</i>	<i>sret-nu</i>	<i>leg-nu</i>
past m	<i>sta--o</i>	<i>pa--o</i>	<i>sre--o</i>	<i>leg--äo</i>
past f	<i>sta--la</i>	<i>pa--la</i>	<i>sre--la</i>	<i>leg--la</i>
infinitive	<i>sta--ti</i>	<i>pa<i>s</i>--ti</i>	<i>sre<i>s</i>--ti</i>	<i>le--ći</i>

The rule for infinitives is the same as for e/0-verbs since it's the only the past form that matters for the infinitive.

Exceptional Infinitives

We can summarize exceptions for forming infinitives:

Making infinitives for past 0-verbs

Exception #1:

if the past base of a verb ends on *-k* or *-g*,
then the infinitive ends on *-ći* and the *-k* or *-g* is lost.

e.g. past part. *pek--äo* m, *pek--la* f → inf. *pe--ći*

past part. *leg--äo* m, *leg--la* f → inf. *le--ći*

Exception #2:

if the present base of a verb ends on *-d* or *-t*,
 (since it's 0-verb in the past, that *d* or *t* is dropped when forming the past part.)
then in the infinitive, *d* or *t* are converted to *s*

e.g. pres. *plet-e-m* past part. *ple--la* f → inf. *ples--ti*

pres. *jed-e-m* past part. *je--la* f → inf. *jes--ti*

One final remark: in dictionaries, verbs are usually listed in their infinitive form, and that's how they are traditionally learned. The problem is that it's not trivial to get the present form for some verbs, since some sounds from present (*k*, *g*, *d*, *t*) are not visible in the infinitive! These two subtypes of verbs having exceptional infinitives are then often called "*ći*" verbs and "*sti*" verbs and are considered "irregular". However, you can see they are complicated, but quite regular if you learn their present instead of infinitive!

28 Verbs Derived from 'idem'

• • • Review: **20 Basic Prepositions and Government**

The Croatian verb *idem* "go" is irregular in respect to its past participle: it's quite unexpected *išao*, *išla*.

This verb is quite important, and there's a substantial group of very often used verbs derived from it: they are even more irregular. They are all perfective, and their impf. pairs (thankfully, all regular) are look quite different from them! They also have a wide range of meanings.

A strange thing about these verbs: they are derived by means of prefixing prepositions to them (or former prepositions now used in verb derivation only, like *raz-*), but they seem to be used with the same prepositions again! For instance, *ušao sam* means "I came in", but it's used again with *u* + acc.:

Išao sam u kuću. "I was going into (the) house." (= impf., obviously)

Ušao sam u kuću. "I came into (the) house." (= perf.)

Išao sam iz kuće. "I was going out of (the) house." (= impf.)

Izašao sam iz kuće. "I came out of (the) house." (= perf.)

What then the derived impf. verbs mean? The act of "leaving", "entering", etc. taken as a *process* (that is what imperfective aspect really stands for!):

Ulazim u kuću. "I'm coming into the house."

Izlazim iz kuće. "I'm coming out of the house."

The difference is actually subtle, but there are so many ways to finish or start "going", "be leaving", so all those verbs have developed.

With this in mind, let's go over 14 derived verbs; they are listed in the usual impf. ~ perf. pairs:

Verbs *odem* and *dođem*

- *odlazim* ~ *odem*, *otišao*, *otišla*, *otići* "leave, go away"
- *dolazim* ~ *dođem*, *došao*, *došla*, *doći* "come, arrive"

These two verbs have opposite meanings: "depart" and "arrive". *odem* is used with the preposition *iz* + gen., and *dođem* with: *u* + acc.

Otišao sam iz grada. "I left (the) city." (*grada* = gen.)

Odlazim iz grada. "I'm leaving (the) city."

Odlazio sam iz grada. "I was leaving (the) city."

Došao sam u grad. "I came to (the) city." (*grad* = acc.)

Dolazim u grad. "I'm coming to (the) city." *Dolazio sam u grad.* "I was coming to (the) city."

As I already said, all impf. verbs paired to the perf. verbs derived from *idem* are 100% regular, with present on *-im* and perfect and infinitive on *-i-*, as regular as it gets!

Verbs *uđem*, *izađem* and *zađem*

- *ulazim* ~ *uđem*, *ušao*, *ušla*, *ući* "enter, come in"
- *izlazim* ~ *izađem*, *izašao*, *izašla*, *izaći* "exit, come out"
- *zalazim* ~ *zađem*, *zašao*, *zašla*, *zaći* diverse meanings

The first two verbs have again opposite meanings: "enter" and "exit". *izađem* is used with the preposition *iz* + gen., and *uđem* with: *u* + acc. (the same system as the previous pair):

Izašao sam iz kuće. "I came out of (the) house." (*kuće* = gen.)

Izlazim iz kuće. "I'm coming out of (the) house."

Izlazio sam iz kuće. "I was coming out of (the) house."

Ušao sam u kuću. "I came into (the) house." (*kuću* = acc.)

Ulazim u kuću. "I'm coming into (the) house." *Ulazio sam u kuću.* "I was coming into (the) house."

The verb *zađem* has diverse meanings. It's used opposite to *izađem* meaning "come up" and "come down" (of Sun) without any prepositional phrases:

Sunce je izašlo. "The Sun came up."

Sunce je zašlo. "The Sun came down."

Otherwise, *zađem* usually means "come behind", but also — in the impf. form — to mean "visit occasionally" or something similar, with *u* + acc.:

Zalazio sam u krčme. "I was occasionally visiting inns." (*krčme* = acc.pl.)

Verbs *nađem*, *snađem* and *naiđem*

- *nalazim* ~ *nađem*, *našao*, *našla*, *naći* "find"

The verb *nađem* has an unexpected meaning: "find". It's the main way to express this meaning in Croatian. It's used just with an object in acc.:

Našao sam ključeve. "I found (the) keys." (*ključeve* = acc.pl.)

Naći ću ključ. "I'll find (the) key." (*ključ* = acc.sg.)

Its impf. pair, *nalazim*, is seldom used.

These verbs (*nađem* and *nalazim*) are not used in phrases like "I find her attractive" and "I want to find out about it" (for that use, Croatian has *mislim* "think" besides another strange way to express it, which will be explained later). It's only used if you physically "find" some object that was unknown or lost.

With *se*, it changes meaning to "find oneself", for example:

Našao sam se u Zagrebu. "I found myself in Zagreb."

- *snalazim* ~ *snađem*, *snašao*, *snašla*, *snaći* "get accustomed, find way"

The verb *snalazim* ~ *snađem*, *snašao*, *snašla*, *snaći* is always used with a *se*, and mean roughly "manage", "find way" "get accustomed", "be able to do without assistance". For instance, it means that you can find your way in the city, on a job, what you need in a shop... it's hard to translate with one English verb. For instance:

Nisam se odmah snašla u Zagrebu. "I didn't get accustomed to Zagreb immediately."

- *nailazim* ~ *naiđem*, *naišao*, *naišla*, *naići*. "come unexpectedly"

This verb is not that much used, it means that somebody came out of the blue, that one came for a brief, occasional visit; secondly, that someone was going somewhere and unexpectedly stumbled upon something. The second variant is not that distant from *nađem* "find". If you "stumbled upon" something, you should use *na* + acc.:

Moj brat je naišao. "My brother came unexpectedly."

Moj brat je naišao na bunar. "My brother stumbled upon (a) well." (*bunar* = acc.sg.)

Verbs *obiđem*, *prěđem* and *prođem*

- *obilazim* ~ *obiđem*, *obišao*, *obišla*, *obići* "go around", "visit"
- *prělazim* ~ *prěđem*, *prěšao*, *prěšla*, *prěći* "cross, come over"

- *prolazim ~ prođem, prošao, prošla, proći* "pass, come through"

These verbs sound quite alike, and their meaning is all about moving with respect to something other than the destination or origin of motion. What is special about them is that they can use prepositions but also just objects, without much difference in meaning.

The verb *prođem* "pass" is very often used to refer to "passing of time". A derived noun *prošlost* f means "past".

Prošao sam kroz šumu. "I passed through (the) forest." (*šumu* = acc.)
Prošao sam šumu. "I left (the) forest behind." (*šumu* = acc.)
Prolazim kroz šumu. "I'm passing through (the) forest."
Vrijeme prolazi. "Time is passing." (derived meaning, the same as in English)
Bol će proći. "(The) pain will pass."

The verb *prēdem* "cross" can be used with *prēko* "over" + gen. or just with an object in acc.:

Prēšao sam prēko mosta. "I crossed over (the) bridge." (*mosta* = gen.)
Prēšao sam most. "I crossed (the) bridge." (*most* = acc.)
Prēlazim most. "I'm crossing (the) bridge."

The verb *obiđem* "go around" can be used with *oko* "around" + gen. or just with an object in acc.:

Obišao sam oko kuće. "I went around (the) house." (*kuće* = gen.)
Obišao sam kuću. "I went around (the) house.", "I visited the house" (*kuću* = acc.)
Obišao sam groblje. "I visited (the) cemetery." (*groblje* = acc., derived meaning)

Other verbs

There are more verbs I will just summarize briefly:

polazim ~ pođem, pošao, pošla, poći "start going"
prilazim ~ priđem, prišao, prišla, prići "approach, come close"
proizlazim ~ proizađem, proizašao, proizašla, prozaći "come out as a result"
razilazim ~ raziđem, razišao, razišla, razići "go separate ways"
silazim ~ siđem, sišao, sišla, sići "come down, come off"

Summary

Since all verbs are derived from the same bases by mean of prefixes (e.g. *u-lazim ~ u-đem, u-šao, u-šla, u-ći*), it's very efficient to list just prefixes, the cases and prepositions demanded by the verb, and the meaning in a compact table, similar to one I've described when explaining government:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N (DEST)	N comes (to DEST)
<i>iz- *</i>	N (<i>iz</i> G)	N exits (G)
<i>na-</i>	N A	N finds A
<i>nai-</i>	N (DEST)	N comes unexpectedly (to DEST)
<i>od- *</i>	N (<i>od</i> G) N (<i>iz</i> G)	N leaves G
<i>obi-</i>	N A N <i>oko</i> G	N goes around, visits A N goes around G
<i>po-</i>	N	N starts going
<i>pri-</i>	N (D)	N approaches, comes close (to D)

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>prë-</i>	N A N (<i>preko</i> G)	N crosses A N crosses (over G)
<i>pro-</i>	N A N N <i>kroz</i> A N I	N passes (A) N passes N passes through A N passes through I
<i>proiz-</i>	N (<i>iz</i> G)	N results (from G)
<i>raz-</i>	N <i>se</i>	N disperses, scatters
<i>si-</i>	N (<i>s</i> G)	N comes, steps down (from G)
<i>sna-</i>	N <i>se</i> (PLACE)	N finds way (PLACE)
<i>u-</i>	N (<i>u</i> A)	N enters, comes into (A)
<i>za-</i>	N (<i>iza</i> G) N (DEST)	a. N [Sun, Moon] comes down (behind G) b. N occasionally visits (DEST)

I will use such tables when describing other verb "families", that is, groups of verbs derived from one verb. This looks "mathematical" but it's just another way of writing what I wrote above (and it's much more transparent).

DEST means "destination", usually a *u/na* + noun in acc; PLACE is a "place", usually a *u/na* + noun in dat. (but there are other ways to express destinations and places!).

Actually such table is not well-suited for this family, since everything about *idem* is a bit irregular: prefixes *od-* and *iz-* are added unlike others, in an irregular way, hence the asterisks (*).

Updated 2013-02-22

29 Telling When and How Long

Telling *when* and *how long* is not so simple in Croatian. There are constructs involving cases and prepositions and a very weird feature that we are going to jump straight into!

How Long

First, how to tell how long did you work for a company or lived somewhere?

Radio sam jednu godinu. (acc.) "I worked for a year."

Radio sam pet godina. (acc.) "I worked for five years."

Radio sam godinama. (ins. pl.) "I worked for years."

The phrase for time is in acc. if it's a definite duration, or ins. pl. if it's an indefinite duration (just "years"). Since in phrase *jedna godina* both words are free to change case, both words do: *jednu godinu*. In phrase *pet godina* the word *godina* is permanently in gen. pl., a *pet* looks the same in all cases. Complicated, but OK. However, now the tricky part!

Time-Phrase Rule

Time phrases involving **definite durations must be in acc.** and must contain **at least two words.**

For intervals longer than one day, instead of *jedän/jednu X*, one can use *X dana*, where *X* (= *tjedän, mjësec, godinu*) is taken as a measure.

Instead of *jedän sat* "one hour", one can use *sat vrëmena*.

What?! Does it mean that you cannot say just *radio sam godinu*? No, *you cannot*. You must tell *how many* years. But you can tell also:

Radio sam godinu dana. (acc.) "I worked for a year." (lit. "a year of days")

Radio sam jedän mjësec. (acc.) "I worked for a month."

Radio sam mjësec dana. (acc.) "I worked for a month." (lit. "a month of days")

Radio sam jedän tjëdän. (acc.) "I worked for a week."

Radio sam tjëdän dana. (acc.) "I worked for a week." (lit. "a week of days")

Now, *dana* is here in gen. pl. — *godina, mjësec* and *tjëdän* are understood as measures! They lock *dana* in gen. pl., and themselves are of course in acc.

For *dan* "day", you should use always a number in front of it (when specifying time intervals):

Radio sam jedän dan. (acc. acc.) "I worked for a day."

Radio sam dva dana. (acc. dual) "I worked for two days."

Radio sam danima. (ins. pl.) "I worked for days."

However, this constraint does not apply to *minuta* "minute" and *sekunda* "second". They can be used freely.

Radio sam jednu minutu. (acc. acc.) "I worked for a minute."

Radio sam dvijë minute. (acc. dual) "I worked for two minutes."

Radio sam minutu. (!) (acc.) "I worked for a minute."

One can also use words like *cijëli* "whole", *pola* "half", *skoro* "almost" etc. with both tenses:

Radim cijëlu godinu. (acc. acc.) "I have worked for a whole year."

Radim pola mjëseca. (adv. gen.sg.) "I have worked for half a month."

Weird, isn't it? You cannot say just "month", "year", "week", "day", "hour" in Croatian.

Ongoing Intervals

The above sentences mean that you don't work (live, study...) anymore, that the whole thing was in the past. But what if you want to say that it still goes on?

Here Croatian and English differ, English has a special tense for it, but Croatian *always uses the present tense for actions that still go on*:

Radim jednu godinu. (acc. acc.) "I have worked for a year."
Radim tjedän dana. (acc. gen.pl.) "I have worked for a week."
Radim godinama. (ins. pl.) "I have worked for years."
Radim danima. (ins. pl.) "I have worked for days."

This applies to *sat* mⁱ "hour" as well, but one uses *vrijeme* n "time" as a second word in the construct if needed. Beware, this noun has a kind of strange declension, its gen sg. is *vrëmena*:

Radio säm jedän sat. (acc. acc.) "I worked for an hour."
Radio säm dva sata. (acc. dual) "I worked for two hours."
Radio säm sat vrëmena. (acc. gen.pl.) "I worked for an hour."
Radio säm satima. (ins. pl.) "I worked for hours."

Weekdays

These are names of days in the week in Croatian:

"Monday"	<i>ponedjëljäk</i>
"Tuesday"	<i>utoräk</i>
"Wednesday"	<i>srijëda</i>
"Thursday"	<i>çetvrtäk</i>
"Friday"	<i>petäk</i>
"Saturday"	<i>subota</i>
"Sunday"	<i>nedjëljä</i>

The names are nouns and normally change case; they are never capitalized (except they are the first word in a sentence) and the week starts on Monday. Saturday and Sunday are known as *vikend* "weekend". The instrumental case of weekdays is used with meaning "on Sundays" etc.:

Nedjëljom igramo nogomet. "We play football on Sunday."

If you want to tell when something happened/will happen, use *u* + dat:

U nedjëlju igramo nogomet. "We will play football on Sunday."
U nedjëlju smo igrali nogomet. "We played football on Sunday."

Special Words for Telling When

There are special words to tell when something occurred: in English, we have "yesterday" for instance. There are also special words for "this day" = "today". There are also adjectives like "daily" and "today's" (although English uses just "today" as an adjective). The deal is that Croatian has a lot more special words like those:

	noun e.g. "day"	adverb "during..."	adjective e.g. "daily"	adverb "this..." e.g. "today"
"day"	<i>dan</i>	<i>danju</i>	<i>dnevni</i>	<i>dānās</i>
"night"	<i>noć f</i>	<i>noću</i>	<i>noćni</i>	<i>noćas</i>
"morning"	<i>jutro</i>	<i>ujutro</i>	<i>jutarnji</i>	<i>jutros</i>
"noon"	<i>podne</i>	<i>u podne</i>	<i>podnevni</i>	—
"afternoon"	<i>popodne</i>	<i>popodne</i>	<i>popodnevni</i>	—
"evening"	<i>večer f</i>	<i>navečer</i>	<i>večernji</i>	<i>večeras</i>
"midnight"	<i>ponoć f</i>	<i>u ponoć</i>	<i>ponoćni</i>	—
"winter"	<i>zima</i>	<i>zimi</i>	<i>zimski</i>	<i>zimus</i>
"spring"	<i>proljeće</i>	<i>u proljeće</i>	<i>proljećni</i>	<i>proljećos</i>
"summer"	<i>ljeto</i>	<i>ljēti</i>	<i>ljētni</i>	<i>ljētos</i>
"fall"	<i>jesen f</i>	<i>najesen</i>	<i>jesenji</i>	<i>jesenas</i>

It's interesting that we find a lot of i-nouns. Words like *noćas* mean "this night", but they are not completely precise: it could be the last night or the next night. Words ending on *-s* (*dānās*, *jutros*, *noćas*, *zimus*) are a short way to tell "this day, morning, night, winter etc". Such words are really frequently used, except for seasons (you will not often hear *zimus*). Also there are words to indicate "during (any) X": *ujutro*, *zimi*, *danju*, etc.:

Zimi je hladno. "It's cold during winter."

Ljēti nēma posla. "There's no work in summer."

Ujutro se brijem. "I shave (myself) in (the) morning."

To make adjectives like "today's", change the final *-s* to *-šnji*:

dānās → *dānāšnji* "today's"

noćas → *noćašnji* "tonight's"

jutros → *jutrošnji*, etc.

e.g. *dānāšnje vijēsti* "today's news"

However, I never heard *zimušnji*, and words derived from other seasons (*ljētošnji*, etc.) are really used rarely. There are five special words relating to now:

	adverb	adjective
"last year"	<i>lani (!)</i>	<i>prošlogodišnji</i>
"last night"	<i>sinoć</i>	<i>sinoćnji</i>
"yesterday"	<i>jučer</i>	<i>jučerašnji</i>
"tomorrow"	<i>sutra</i>	<i>sutrašnji</i>
"day before yesterday"	<i>prēkjučer</i>	<i>prēkjučerašnji</i>
"day after tomorrow"	<i>prēksutra</i>	<i>prēksutrašnji</i>

Other periods of time allow also forming of adjectives (like "year"- "yearly") and special adjectives ("this year's"), but using a different pattern (*ovo-*):

	noun	adjective	"this" adjective
"week"	<i>tjedan</i>	<i>tjedni</i>	<i>ovotjedni</i>
"month"	<i>mjesec</i>	<i>mjesečni</i>	<i>ovomjesečni</i>
"year"	<i>godina</i>	<i>godišnji</i>	<i>ovogodišnji</i>

If you are trying to tell when will something happen in the future, in relation to now, you should use present (or future) + *za* + acc. The time-phrase rule restriction still applies, *za* does not count!

Vraćam se za jedän sat. (acc.) "I'm coming back in an hour."
Odlazim za tjedän dana. (acc.) "I'm leaving in a week."
Odlazim za tri tjedna. (acc.) "I'm leaving in three weeks."
Odlazim za dva mjeseca. (acc.) "I'm leaving in two months."
Vraćam se za sat vremena. (acc.) "I'm coming back in an hour."

If you are trying to tell when something did happen in the past, in relation to now, it's a bit more complicated: you should use past + *prijë*, and a normal time phrase in acc., except when the phrase starts with *jedän/jedna*: then the phrase moves to the genitive case. The time-phrase rule restriction still applies, so the *prijë* does not count!

Vratio sam se prijë jednog sata. (**gen. gen.**) "I came back an hour ago."
Otišla sam prijë tjedän dana. (acc. gen.pl.) "I left a week ago."
Otišla sam prijë tri tjedna. (acc. dual) "I left three weeks ago."
Otišla sam prijë dva mjeseca. (acc. dual) "I left two months ago."
Vratio sam se prijë sat vremena. (acc. gen.pl.) "I came back an hour ago."

Expected time (*još, tek, već*)

There are couple of words that are used to indicate that something is taking longer than expected ("still"), or something happened earlier than expected ("already"), and so on. You must be careful when to use impf. and when perf. verbs with such constructs.

If you want to say that at some moment (or now) something is "still" ongoing (and it was expected not to), use *još* with an impf. verb. You can also say that something was not yet done or has not happened at the moment: use again *još*, but with a negation of a perf. verb in past tense:

Još kuham. (impf.) "I'm still cooking."
Još sam u Zagrebu. (impf.) "I'm in Zagreb."
Još nisam skuhao. (perf.) "I still haven't cooked (finished cooking)."
Još nisam otišla. (perf.) "I didn't leave yet." (fem. speaking)

If you want to that some action didn't start at all, use negation of an impf. verb:

Još ne kuham. (impf.) "I'm still not cooking." "I'm not cooking yet."

As you see, this looks complicated, but it's very similar to English.

Next, you might want to say that something happened/was done/started earlier than expected ("already") using *već*:

Već kuham. (impf.) "I'm still cooking."
Već sam skuhao. (perf.) "I've already cooked (finished cooking)."
Već sam u Zagrebu. (impf.) "I'm already in Zagreb."

Things happened later than expected ("just, only") use *tek*, but it's usually used with a time reference, e.g. *sad(a)* "now", or some time, etc.:

Tek sad kuham. (impf.) "I'm cooking only now."
Došao sam tek jučer. (perf.) "I've arrived just yesterday."

There's another use of these three words: *već* and *tek* can be inserted before a *duration*, with meaning that something lasted more or less than expected (I have taken the same sentences as above, to illustrate how the meaning is subtly changed):

Radim već jednu godinu. "I have worked already for a year."
Radim već tjedän dana. "I have already worked for a week."
Radim već godinama. "I have worked already for years."

Radim tek jednu godinu. "I have worked only for a year."
Radim tek tjedän dana. "I have worked only for a week."

This looks very different from the first use, but is again very similar to English. Some books advise using *već* for any ongoing interval, but it really means "already". It's not a translation of English present perfect tense!

The word *još* is used to indicate how much an ongoing action should last in future:

Radit ću još jednu godinu. "I'll work for one year more." (implies you are already working!)

Next, *još* and *već* can be inserted before a phrase that indicates moment when something happened/will happen (either absolute, or in relation to now) to indicate it's sooner than expected; I feel that it's a bit better to use *već* in this role:

Došla sam već u šest ujutro. "I arrived already at 6 am."
Došla sam još u šest ujutro. "I arrived already at 6 am."
Otišla sam već prijë dva mjeseca. "I already left two months ago."
Otići ću već za dva mjeseca. "I'll leave in just two months."

The word *tek* means exactly the opposite, as expected:

Došla sam tek u šest ujutro. "I arrived only at 6 am."
Otišla sam tek prijë dva mjeseca. "I left just two months ago."
Otići ću tek za dva mjeseca. "I'll leave in two months, not earlier." (unlike English!)

You see how these words are versatile, not so different e.g. from English "already", but the logic is a bit different.

Beware, *još* has more uses, with measuring (where it means, roughly, "more") and some others!

Abandoned and Stopped Actions and States

This is much simpler than it sounds, it's just an expression that something "does not happen anymore", or "will not happen anymore"; to express this in Croatian, use *više* "more" (beware, it's also used in other meanings, and does not really correspond to English "more"):

Više ne igram nogomet. "I don't play football anymore."
Nećemo više prodavati čokoladu. "We will not sell chocolate anymore."

Normally, *više* comes in front of the verb, or in front of *ne* (in present tense).

30 Reflexive Pronoun

Reflexives are a really important part of Croatian that has no good English equivalent. However, if you are a bit familiar with a Romance language (Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian), you will find many similarities.

The Pronoun

Compare the following sentences:

"I see him."
 "I see myself."
 "He sees her."
 "He sees him."
 "He sees himself."

There's a special form of pronoun used to indicate the object (one who is seen) is the same as the subject (one who sees). It's really not needed for the 1st and 2nd person ("I", "you"), since there's only one possible "I", but it is nevertheless used.

Now, such "the same as subject" pronouns are called *reflexive pronouns* and Croatian uses them a lot — actually, there's only one reflexive pronoun in Croatian, and it's quite similar to other personal pronouns, except for 2 things:

1. It does not have nominative;
2. Same forms are used for singular and plural.

Its forms are:

acc.sg./pl.	<i>sebe</i> / se
dat.sg/pl.	<i>sebi</i> / si
gen.sg./pl.	<i>sebe</i> / se
ins.sg./pl.	<i>sobom</i>

As usual, clitic forms are shown in boldface, and they are preferred ones. Let's see some examples of its use:

Perem majicu. "I'm washing (a) T-shirt"
Perem se. "I'm washing myself."

Brije bradu. "(He/she) is shaving (the) beard."
Brije se. "(He/she) is shaving himself/herself."

Razgovara s prijateljem. "(He/she) is talking to (a) friend."
Razgovara sa sobom. "(He/she) is talking to himself/herself."

Pišem pismo prijatelju. "I'm writing (a) letter to (a) friend."
Pišem si pismo. "I'm writing (a) letter to myself."

We could have used *sebe* instead of *se*, but it's seldom used, only to emphasize the object of action:

Perem sebe. (not someone or something else!)
Brije sebe.

This is the basic use of the pronoun. But the pronoun has other uses. In reality, it depends on the verb what *se* will do: for some verbs it's even optional, doesn't do anything. For others, it's

mandatory: they always require *se*. There are a lot of other combinations, even more than one with a single verb; I'll show you now the basic ones.

Important. For any other use of *se* except the most basic one ("shave oneself") you cannot use the long form (*sebe*) instead of the short one!

Always-transitive Verbs

There are certain verbs that must have an object — so, when in English one would use just a verb, in Croatian one must use a *se* as a "filler" or "dummy object":

Vraćam knjigu sutra. "I'm returning (the) book tomorrow."

Vraćam se sutra. "I'm returning tomorrow."

This really cannot be said in Croatian:

Vraćam sutra. (warning!)

Recall, you cannot use the long form *sebe* with this verb.

Some common verbs like that are:

budim ~ pro- "wake up"

dizem, dizao ~ dignem "lift"

igram "play (a game, with toys)"

mičem, micao ~ maknem "move" (a bit, not to another house)

otkrivam ~ otkrijem, pokrio "uncover"

pokrivam ~ pokrijem, pokrio "cover"

zaustavljam ~ zaustavim "stop"

etc.

That is, in Croatian, you must always "play" something: you cannot just "play"; if you want to express that someone is just playing, you should use a *se*!

Most such verbs-that-require-an-object-or-*se* have different meaning in English when used with an object ("return a book") or without ("return"). When you "return a book", the book moves, but when you just "return", you don't move something, it's you who moves.

When *se* Changes Meaning

There are some verbs where *se* can be used, and then everything has a different meaning: it again must be a short *se*:

Našao sam knjigu u sobi. "I found (a) book in (the) room." (a male speaker)

Našao sam se u sobi. lit. "I found myself in (the) room." = "I came to the room."

Common verbs that change meaning are:

verb	+ object (acc.)	+ <i>se</i>
<i>činim ~ u-</i>	"do"	"appear, seem"
<i>javljam ~ javim</i>	"inform"	"contact, get in touch"
<i>nalazim ~ nađem, našao, našla, naći</i>	"find"	"be located, be in/at"
<i>poklanjam ~ poklonim</i>	"give (a gift)"	"bow down"
<i>slažem, slagao ~ složim</i>	"assemble, put together"	"agree"
<i>sjjećam ~ sjjetim</i>	"remind"	"remember"

verb	+ object (acc.)	+ se
<i>vladam</i>	"rule"	"behave"
<i>zovem</i>	"call"	"be named"

For instance:

Ana zove Ivana. "Ana is calling Ivan."

Zovem se Ana. lit. "I call myself Ana" = "My name is Ana."

There's more to it; actually a *se* can do strange things to a verb, but I will leave it for now.

In dictionaries, such verbs are most often listed twice: once without *se*, and once with *se*.

Permanent se

Finally, with some verbs, *se* must always be used (as with the previous group, *sebe* cannot be used) — they have their object permanently blocked by a dummy reflexive pronoun. We can call those verbs "permanently reflexive" (often they are called just "reflexive"). They are listed in dictionaries together with a *se*. Some very often used verbs are in this group:

bojim se (+ gen.) "be afraid"

borim se "fight"

kajem, kajao se "repent"

nadam se (+ dat.) "hope"

natjěčem, natjěcao se (*u* + dat.) "compete"

raspadam se ~ raspadnem, raspao, raspala, raspasti se "fall apart"

smijem se "laugh"

trudim se "make effort"

zaljubim se (*u* + acc.) perf. "fall in love"

Some verbs can have an indirect object in the indicated case, acting as a "logical object", for instance:

Bojim se mraka. "I'm afraid of dark"

Nadam se lijepom vremenu. "I'm hoping for fair weather."

Zaljubio sam se u Anu. "I fell in love with Ana."

Some verbs from the previous group could be included in this one as well: *sjěćam ~ sjětim* is not much used without *se*.

Company Verbs

With some verbs, an object (or a *se*) must be always present, but adding the *se* makes a very little difference. Such verbs always imply company:

dogovaram ~ dogovorim "negotiate, discuss"

srećem, sretao ~ sretnem, sreo, sreła, sresti "meet"

With a *se*, one can add an "object" using *s* + ins.:

Sreo sam Anu. "I met Ana."

Sreo sam se s Anom. "I met Ana."

~~*Sreo sam.*~~ (cannot say that!)

Sreli smo se jučer. "We met yesterday."

Mutual se

When you want to express action that is mutual, that is, when more than one person does

something with another, you can often use a verb in plural with *se*:

Ivan i Ana se vole. "Ivan and Ana love each other."

Optional *se*

Finally, there are some verbs where *se* is purely optional and does not change meaning or behavior of verbs (that is, which cases are needed). Common ones are:

brinem (se) * "worry, care"
kližem, klizao (se) "slid, skate"
odlučujem, odlučivao ~ odlučim (se) "decide"
šećem, šetao (se) ~ pro- (se) "walk"
žurim (se) * "hurry"

For instance:

Šetao sam parkom. "I was walking in the park."
Šetao sam se parkom. (no difference)

Standard Croatian insists that verbs marked (in the list above) with an asterisk (*) must be always used with a *se*; forms without *se* are often found in spoken, colloquial Croatian.

Bear in mind that there are more uses of *se* that will be explained a bit later!

Order of Words

There's one final subtlety. Words *se* and *si* are short forms of pronouns, and take the same place as *me* and *mi* among the "second place clitics". However, instead of:

Vratila se je jučer. "She came back yesterday."

The usual (and correct sentence) is:

Vratila se jučer. (this is correct)

If there's a reflexive pronoun *se*, a *je* (the short 3rd person present of "to be") is almost always dropped. It works only for *je*. Recall that it's also the only clitic (among *sam, si, je, smo...*) to come *after* short pronouns:

Vratila sam se jučer. "I came back yesterday." (a female speaker)
Vratila si se jučer. "You came back yesterday." (speaking to a female person)
Vratili ste se jučer. "You came back yesterday." (you = a group of people)

etc., but:

Vratila se jučer. "She came back yesterday." (*je* would come after *se*, but it's dropped)

31 Verbs 'stavim', 'tvorim'; More on Aspect

Now I'm going to explain two "verb families", with very diverse meanings, we'll learn how to say "close" and "put" in Croatian!

Verbs Derived from 'stavim'; the Symmetric Aspect Pattern

The verb *stavim* perf. is a very often used verb, and means "place something", "put". Its imperfective form is *stavljam*:

Stavljam meso u lonac. "I'm putting (the) meat in (a) pot."
Stavio sam meso u lonac. "I have put (the) meat in (a) pot."

Verbs derived from *stavim* are perf., and ones derived from *stavljam* impf. This is a very frequent scheme in Croatian, I'll call it **symmetric**:

	perf.	→	impf.
basic	<i>stav-im</i>	<i>-'jam</i>	<i>stavlj-am</i>
↓	prefix		prefix
derived	<i>x-stav-im</i>	<i>-'jam</i>	<i>x-stavlj-am</i>

Passive adjectives are formed like *stavljan* ~ *stavljen*. To list various meanings, I'll just list prefixes. Furthermore, I'll list all the possibilities of cases and prepositions used with a verb. To make things more compact, I'll abbreviate nom. to N, acc. to A, etc. Possible infinitive is indicated with INF. If there are more nouns in one case, distinguished by either word order, or preposition use, I'll mark them as e.g. A1, A2... PLACE indicates a prepositional phrase for a static location, e.g. *u* + dat.

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N (D) (A)	N delivers, brings (A) (to D)
<i>izo-</i>	N (A)	N excludes (A), N leaves out (A)
<i>na-</i>	N (INF)	N continues (to INF)
<i>obu-</i>	N (A)	N discontinues, aborts (A)"
<i>o-</i>	N (A)	N leaves behind (A)
<i>po-</i>	N (A) (PLACE)	N puts in place, installs (A)
<i>pretpo-</i>	N (A)	N assumes, hypothesizes (A)
<i>pred-</i>	N (A) (D)	N presents, introduces (A) (to D)
<i>ra-</i>	N (A) (<i>na</i> A1)	N puts apart, disassembles (A) (to A1)
<i>sa-</i>	N (A)	N puts together, assembles (A)
<i>zau-</i>	N (A)	N stops, halts (A)

Some examples:

Dostavio sam pizzu. "I have delivered (the) pizza."
Nastavila sam jesti. "I have continued eating."
Rusija je obustavila isporuku plina. "Russia has discontinued supplying gas."
Ostavio sam auto. "I have left (the) car behind."
Postavila sam sliku. "I have put (the) picture (on its place)."
Pretpostavljam to. "I'm assuming that."

Rastavio sām sat. "I disassembled (the) clock."
Sastavio sām sat. "I assembled (the) clock."

Common nouns and adjectives derived from these verbs:

dostava "delivery"
nastava "instruction"
nastavāk "continuation, extension"
pretpostavka "assumption"
predstava "performance, show"

Verbs Derived from 'tvorim'; the Asymmetric Aspect Pattern

Verb *tvorim* impf. has a completely different basic meaning "make" (and is seldom used) but verbs derived from it are also important. The verb means "make" (in meaning: "bricks make a house"), but is very seldom used nowadays. Verbs derived by prefixing from it are perf., and to "imperfectize" them again, base of verb changes to *-tvaram* so the verb class is changed as well. This "derived-basic" verb is not used on its own:

	impf.		perf.		impf.
basic	<i>tvor-i-m</i>				
		prefix			
derived			<i>x-tvor-i-m</i>	→	<i>x-tvar-a-m</i>

I'll call this scheme **asymmetric**.

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>o-</i>	N A (I) N se	N opens A (with I) N opens †
<i>pre-</i>	N A1 u A2 (I)	N transforms A1 to A2 (with I)
<i>pri-</i>	N A (I)	a. N partially closes A (with I) b. N detains A
<i>s-</i>	N A	N creates A
<i>za-</i>	N A (I) N se	N closes A (with I) N closes †

(See below for †)

Passive participles are expected *-tvaran* ~ *-tvoren*, impf. Words *otvoreno* and *zatvoreno*, meaning "open" and "closed" are very frequently used in shops, offices, etc.

The vowel in the verb root changed from *o* (perf.) to *a* (impf.). This is a very common change, like in the following pairs:

spajam ~ *spojim* "connect"
nagovaram ~ *nagovorim* "persuade"
 etc.

Other vowel alternations are also possible:

mičem ~ *maknem* "move"
izvlačim ~ *izvučem* "pull out"

Of course most verbs have no alternation at all, only change of verb class: *guram* ~ *gurnem* "push",

etc.

Remember: verbs "open" and "close", when they are used without object, must be translated to the Croatian verb with *se*:

"He closed the window." *Zatvorio je prozor.*

"The window closed." *Prozor se zatvorio.*

"He opened the window." *Otvorio je prozor.*

"The window opened." *Prozor se otvorio.*

One must be careful not to translate verbatim such strange English verbs that shift meaning if they have a subject or not!

Common nouns and adjectives derived from these verbs (all these nouns have only short plural):

izlog "shop window"

nalog "order, written command"

polog "deposit"

prilog "appendix, attachment, side dish"

prijedlog "proposal"

razlog "reason, cause"

sloga "concord, agreement of people"

složan adj. "concerted, in agreement"

ulog "investment"

zalog "pledge, pawn"

More on Aspect

You see how verbs start from a basic meaning and then attain a specialized one. The whole "verb family" follows the same pattern of perfectivization and imperfectivization. From now on, the major part of Croatian is just learning different verb families.

It would be worthy to review aspect use in Croatian, especially differences between impf. and "be x-ing". They are used differently in recurring events:

Graphic representation	Croatian	English
	<i>Spavam.</i> (impf.)	"I'm sleeping."
	<i>Živim u kući.</i> (impf.)	"I live in a house."
	<i>Spavam svaki dan.</i> (impf.)	"I sleep every day."
	<i>Jedem svako jutro.</i> (impf.)	"I eat every morning."
	<i>Spavao sam.</i> (impf.)	"I was sleeping."
	<i>Jeo sam.</i> (impf.)	"I was eating."
	<i>Pojeo sam.</i> (perf.)	"I have eaten."
	<i>Zaspao sam.</i> (perf-s.)	"I fell asleep." (maybe I'm still sleeping, maybe not)
	<i>Spavao sam svaki dan.</i> (impf.)	"I slept every day." (not talking about now)

32 Conditionals

Conditional Tenses

In Croatian, there are two "conditional" tenses: present and past conditional (or there is a "conditional mood" with two tenses... whatever). Basically, they represent *desires*: you could say almost the same with "I want to", but they are really often used as figures of speech.

For instance, phrases "I would..." or "I could" are represented by conditionals in Croatian.

Conditionals are compound tenses — more than one word is involved. They are constructed in the following way:

Pres. Cond. = (conditional verb) + (past participle)

Past Cond. = (conditional verb) + *bio/bila/bilo* + (past participle)

The "conditional verb" is a special verb that has following forms:

pers.	sg.	pl.
1 st	<i>bih</i>	<i>bismo</i>
2 nd	<i>bi</i>	<i>biste</i>
3 rd	<i>bi</i>	<i>bi</i>

In some dialects, and in everyday speech of many people, just *bi* is used in all persons and numbers, but it's not standard.

Let's compare normal tenses with the conditional ones:

Jedem. "I am eating."

Mogu jesti. "I can eat."

Jeo sam. "I was eating."

Mogu doći. "I can come."

Conditionals:

Jeo bih. "I would eat."

Mogao bih jesti. "I could eat."

Bio bih jeo. "I would have been eating"

Mogao bih doći. "I could come." (meaning: "maybe, I'll come")

Use of Conditionals

People use conditionals a lot when trying to be polite or soften expressions, but it could be ironic as well:

Hoću jesti. "I want to eat." (not too polite)

Htio bih jesti. lit. "I would want to eat." (much more polite)

Sometimes, *bih, bi...* is used for every desire, not just with verbs (children mostly talk like that):

Ja bih čokoladu. lit. "I would a chocolate." = "I want a chocolate."

The past conditional is much less used than the present one. It stands for things that would have happened in the past. There's no future conditional.

Regarding the placement of the conditional verb, it's really a clitic, and it should be placed after *li* in the "clitic-chain" but before everything else:

Ivan bi mi ga trebao dati "Ivan should give it to me."

However, when making questions, it can be freely used at the first place:

Bismo li išli u kino? "Would we go to (the) cinema?"

Wishing Impossible

Croatian has a form for "impossible" things, either in present or past, formed with *da* + verb, corresponding to English subjunctive:

Da sam bogat, kupio bih ovaj auto. "If I were rich, I'd buy this car."

However, they are mostly used in compound sentences like the one above. Sometimes they are used as standalone "wishes":

O, da imam više vremena! "Oh, if I had more time!" (talking about the present situation)

O, da sam imao više vremena! "Oh, if I had had more time!" (talking about the present situation)

Obligations

English has a special verb "should" that expresses an obligation: "you should go to bed". Croatian does not have such a verb, and simply uses the verb *trebam* "need" + infinitive:

Trébaš íci u krevet. "You should go to bed." (lit. "you need to go to bed.")

One can "weaken" it so it does not sound like a command, by putting *trebaš* to conditional:

Trébao bi íci u krevet. "You should go to bed." (lit. "you would need to go to bed.")

Additionally, Croatian has a special form for expressing questions about obligations, using *da* + verb, where a perf. verb is often used:

Da odem u krevet? "Should I go to bed?"

Da kupimo pivo? "Should we buy beer?"

Conjunction *da* has many other important uses, regarding subclauses.

33 Ordinals, Other Numbers, and Dates

• • • Review: **15 Numbers and Time**

I will show you more kinds of numbers in Croatian.

Ordinals

Now let's focus our attention to so-called *ordinal numbers*, called so because they are used to order things. In English, they are "first", "second"... All ordinal numbers in Croatian are normal adjectives, except there is no gradation — no "the firstest". For numbers 1-20, the ordinals are:

1 <i>prvi</i>	8 <i>osmi</i>
2 <i>drugi</i>	9 <i>deveti</i>
3 <i>treći</i>	10 <i>deseti</i>
4 <i>četvrti</i>	11 <i>jedanaesti</i>
5 <i>peti</i>	12 <i>dvanaesti</i>
6 <i>šesti</i>	...
7 <i>sedmi</i>	20 <i>dvadeseti</i>

For bigger numbers, the pattern is:

21 *dvadeset i prvi* or *dvadesetprvi*
 22 *dvadeset i drugi* or *dvadesetdrugi*
 23 *dvadeset i treći* or *dvadesettreći*
 ...
 30 *trideseti*
 40 *četrdeseti*
 ..
 100 *stoti*

The ordinal *drugi* also means "other". Don't forget it's an adjective, and it changes as one. If it's used standalone (as many adjectives can be), it means "others":

Drugi su otišli prije mene. "Others left before me."
Drugi auto je brži. "The other car is faster."

Dates

One thing the ordinal numbers are used for in Croatian is for dates. In Croatian, number of a year is an ordinal.

Bilo je to trideset i druge. lit. "It was in the thirty-second (year)." = "It was in thirty-two."

Croatian uses ordinal numbers for days, but also for the months. Normally people would say:

Rođen sam petog osmog. lit. "I am born on the fifth of the eighth." = "I am born on the fifth of August." (August = the eighth month)

Both *petog* and *osmog* are genitives of adjectives *peti* and *osmi*.

In the Croatian practice, ordinal numbers are abbreviated to just number + a period, so it's usually written:

Rođen sam 5. 8.

There are also Croatian names of months, used chiefly in the more "elevated" style:

Rođen sām 5. kolovoza.

As with ordinal dates, the name of the month must be in genitive.

The names are (those ending on an *-a* are a-nouns, others *mⁱ*, plain vanilla):

#	Standard	colloquial	#	Standard	colloquial
1	<i>sijēčanj</i>	<i>januar</i>	7	<i>srpānj</i>	<i>juli</i>
2	<i>veljača</i>	<i>februar</i>	8	<i>kolovoz</i>	<i>august</i>
3	<i>ožujāk</i>	<i>mart</i>	9	<i>rujān</i>	<i>septembār</i>
4	<i>travānj</i>	<i>april</i>	10	<i>listopad</i>	<i>oktobār</i>
5	<i>svibānj</i>	<i>maj</i>	11	<i>studenⁱ *</i>	<i>novembār</i>
6	<i>lipānj</i>	<i>juni</i>	12	<i>prosināc</i>	<i>decembār</i>

The month of *studenⁱ* is declined like an adjective.

The third column are colloquial names that sometimes heard but are not Standard (they are common in Bosnia and Serbia). The whole phrase with a date is always in gen.sg.:

Otišao sām u mirovinu prvog trećeg tisućudevetstoosamdesetdruge godine. "I went into retirement on the 1st of March, 1982."

Check also the above examples. All words after *mirovinu* are in genitive.

When talking about things that happen sometimes in a month, *u + dat.* is used, as for places:

U osmom (mjēsecu) idemo na odmor. "We go to vacation in August."

Other Cardinal Numbers

Cardinal number *nula* "zero" behaves as every a-noun does and it has, as expected, f gender. Counted nouns come after it in gen.pl.

The suitable ordinal is *nulti*.

There are big numbers as well. Sometimes groups of thousands are divided by space, and sometimes with a period (.), decimal parts by a comma (,):

1000 *tisuća* f
 1 000 000 *milijun* *mⁱ* (1.000.000)
 1 000 000 000 *milijarda* f
 1 000 000 000 000 *bilijun* *mⁱ*
 10¹⁸ *trilijun* *mⁱ*

All these numbers are declined as any other noun. However, all them are sometimes used "frozen" in the accusative case:

Imam tisuću dolara. "I have (a) thousand dollars."
Tisuća dolara je mnogo. "(A) thousand dollars is a lot." (*tisuća* = nom.)
Tisuću dolara je mnogo. (*tisuću* = acc.)
Imam milijun dolara. (*milijun* = acc. & nom.)
Milijardu dolara je mnogo.

The acc. is always used in ordinals of type 1690th or 65845538th.

All these numbers demand counted nouns in gen.pl.

Imam milijun dolara.

Croatians count always in thousands, never in hundreds, therefore 1700 is always:

Tisuća i sedamsto (cardinal)

Tisuću i sedamstoti (ordinal)

Never "17 hundreds".

Fractions and Multiples

The next groups of numbers are fractions. They are all a-nouns, and demand a counted noun in the gen.sg., the same as *čaša vina* "a glass of wine."

1/2 polovica

1/3 trećina

1/4 četvrtina

etc.

All fractions except 1/2 are formed as an ordinal + *na*.

For 1/2, there are often used words *pol* and *pol*, that don't change in case but behave really strange:

Pol zemlje je moje. (*moje* = nom.sg.n)

Mojih pol zemlje je mnogo. (*mojih* = gen.pl.)

There are multiples: there are adverbs and adjectives for multiplicity:

1 *jedanput* "once"; *jednostruk* "single"

2 *dvaput* "twice"; *dvostruk* "double"

3 *triput* "thrice"; *trostruk* "triple"

4 *četiriput*; *četverostruk*

5 *petput*; *peterostruk*

etc.

Word *put* can correspond to English "time": *drugi put* "another time", "second time".

Numbers make more composite words, cardinals use them same scheme as in *četverostruk*: e.g. *četveroslojan* adj. "four layered".

Ordinals make composites as well, quite simply from their nom.sg.n forms: *prvoklasan* adj. "first-class"; *trećerođen* "third-born", etc.

There's an adverb *jednom* "once".

People often use adjectives *dupli* "double" and *trodupli* "triple" instead of *dvostruk* and *trostruk*, and their nom.sg.n forms meaning "twice" and "thrice", but it's not preferred in the standard.

Case Forms for Numbers 2-4

As I stated before, there are forms for different cases for numbers 2-4. They not really frequent in everyday use:

case	2		1+1		3	4
	m/n	f	m/n	f	m/n/f	m/n/f
nom.	dva	dvijë	oba	objë	tri	četiri
acc.						
dat./ins.	dvama	dvjëma	objëma	objëma	trima	(četirima)
gen.	dvaju	dviju	obaju	objiju	triju	(četiriju)

Some forms are quite archaic nowadays, I have put them into parentheses. With declined words you should use nouns in the corresponding plural case:

Razgovarala sãm s dvijë prijateljice. (not declined, dual)

Razgovarala sãm s dvjëma prijateljicama. (declined, ins. pl.)

Both sentences have the same meaning: "I was talking with two girlfriends", but the second sentence is seldom found in everyday conversation or occasional writing.

34 Degrees of Adjectives and J-Softening

Many adjectives and some adverbs in Croatian have *comparatives* ("bigger") and *superlatives* ("the biggest"). However, possessives (Ivanov "Ivan's", moj "my") or material adjectives (voden "watery") don't have them, together with many adverbs. The basic form ("big") is called *positive*.

Comparatives and superlatives of adjectives behave as normal adjectives regarding the case/number/gender forms. The normal rules for making case forms apply.

The only complicated thing is creation of comparatives.

Comparatives on -ši

The first way to create **comparatives** (abbreviation: comp.) is to add *-ši* to the original adjective (also called the "positive"). This way is used for these three adjectives only:

lijep "nice" → *ljepši* (note an *ijë — jë* alternation)
mek "soft" → *mekši*
lak "light" → *lakši*

Irregular Comparatives

Second, there are some adjectives that use a completely unrelated form for its comparative (English has the same thing with e.g. "good" - "better"):

dobar "good" → *bolji*
zao, zla "evil" → *gori* (however, it mostly means "worse")
mali "small" → *manji*
velik "big" → *veći*

Comparatives on -'ji and J-Softening

Most short, one-syllable adjectives add a *-ji*. However, the *j* from this suffix fuses with the final consonants, according to a not really simple pattern. It does not happen only in comparatives, it's a common thing in Croatian. Not every *j* does that — observe the word *vidjela* where a *j* happily coexists with a *d*. **Only some j's cause it.** I will mark such *j*'s with an apostrophe: *j*'.

It's sometimes called "iotation" and I will call it "j-softening". The j-softening acts on all consonants in the final "cluster" (on all consonants from the last vowel to the end of the word). All consonants that are "shiftable" are "softened" in this way:

original	<i>k, c</i>	<i>g, z</i>	<i>h, s</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>n</i>
softened	<i>č</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>đ</i>	<i>ć</i>	<i>lj</i>	<i>nj</i>

Observe that the results are all Croatian-specific letters. It is so because this process is specific for Slavic languages, and we had to invent symbols for all those sounds... For example:

jak "strong" → *jak-j'i* → *jač'-ji*
dug "long" → *dug-j'i* → *duž'-ji*
brz "fast" → *brz-j'i* → *brž'-ji*
suh "dry" → *suh-j'i* → *suš'-ji*

mlad "young" → *mlad-j'i* → *mlad'-ji*
žut "yellow" → *žut-j'i* → *žuć'-ji*
gust "thick" → *gust-j'i* → *gušć'-ji*
glup "stupid" → *glup-j'i* → *glup'-ji*

Next, either the inserted *j* disappears, or it turns into a *lj* if the sound immediately left of it is a *b, p, m* or *v* (note that all those sounds are made with lips, that's one way to remember them). This then happens with the the adjectives above:

jak "strong" → *jak-’ji* → *jači*
dug "long" → *dug-’ji* → *duži*
brz "fast" → *brz-’ji* → *brži*
suh "dry" → *suh-’ji* → *suši*

mlad "young" → *mlad-’ji* → *mlađi*
žut "yellow" → *žut-’ji* → *žući*
gust "thick" → *gust-’ji* → *gušći*
glup "stupid" → *glup-’ji* → *gluplji*

Two-syllable adjectives ending on an *-äk*, *-ek*, *-ok* mostly drop that ending, and then behave as one-syllable adjectives (the *j*-softening still applies!):

nizäk "low" → *niz-’ji* → *niži*
dubok "deep" → *dub-’ji* → *dublji*
visok "high" → *vis-’ji* → *viši*
uzäk "narrow" → *uz-’ji* → *uži*
tänäk "thin" → *tän-’ji* → *tänji*

kratäk "short" → *krat-’ji* → *kraći*
širok "wide" → *šir-’ji* → *širi*
plitäk "shallow" → *plit-’ji* → *plići*
debeo, debela "fat" → *deb-’ji* → *deblji*
dalek "far" → *dal-’ji* → *dalji*

The rule can be simplified as this:

J-softening

In certain endings, when *’j* is added, to a word ending on a consonant, there's a shift of all consonants from the end to the rightmost vowel. The *’j* itself is consumed.

These consonants are affected:

sound	all after the last vowel							only the last one			
original	<i>k, c</i>	<i>g, z</i>	<i>h, s</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>v</i>
+ <i>’j</i> =	<i>č</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>š</i>	<i>đ</i>	<i>ć</i>	<i>lj</i>	<i>nj</i>	<i>blj</i>	<i>mlj</i>	<i>plj</i>	<i>vlj</i>

For instance: *čist-’ji* → *čišći*, *glup-’ji* → *gluplji*

Comparatives on *-iji*

For all other adjectives that have comparatives, *-iji* is added, no strange shifts happen with it:

zelen "green" → *zeleniji*
crven "red" → *crveniji*
mršav "thin" → *mršaviji*
zdrav "healthy" → *zdraviji*

If there's an inconstant *ä* at the end of the adjective, it will disappear (recall that it disappears whenever any suffix or ending is added):

dosadän "boring" → *dosadniji*
gibäk "flexible" → *gipkiji*
hladän "cold" → *hladniji*
lažän "fake" → *lažniji*
mokär "wet" → *mokriji*

mudär "wise" → *mudriji*
prazän "empty" → *prazniji*
ružän "ugly" → *ružniji*
strašän "terrible" → *strašniji*
tamän "dark" → *tamniji*

However, some one-syllable adjectives add *-iji* as well — sorry, you need to learn them by heart! The most often used are:

<i>crn</i> "black" → <i>crniji</i>	<i>slab</i> "weak" → <i>slabiji</i>
<i>loš</i> "bad" → <i>lošiji</i>	<i>slan</i> "salty" → <i>slaniji</i>
<i>nov</i> "new" → <i>noviji</i>	<i>spor</i> "slow" → <i>sporiji</i>
<i>plav</i> "blue" → <i>plaviji</i>	<i>star</i> "old" → <i>stariji</i>
<i>pun</i> "full" → <i>puniji</i>	<i>strm</i> "steep" → <i>strmiji</i>
<i>rani</i> "early" → <i>raniji</i>	<i>zdrav</i> "healthy" → <i>zdraviji</i>

There are some adjectives that have more or less the same meaning, for example *mek* and *mekan*, people use them interchangeably, and so their comparatives *mekši* and *mekaniji* — a lot of people would say that comp. of *mekan* is *mekši*, but they all mean the same, so it's not a problem.

Certain adjectives can use both endings:

čist "clean, pure" → *čišći* but also *čistiji*
sladāk "sweet" → *slad-* + *ji* = *sladi*, but sometimes *slatkiji* (*d + k = tk*)
žut "yellow" → *žući* and sometimes *žutiji*

For some *-iji* is understood as colloquial.

Use of Comparatives

The comparative is often used in sentences "X is A", and often with *od* + gen. "than":

Moj auto je brži. "My car is faster".
Moj auto je brži od bicikla. "My car is faster than bicycle". (*bicikla* = gen.)
Moj auto je brži od tvog. "My car is faster than yours". (*tvog* = gen.)

But it can be used as any other adjective, however it is then "determining" the noun, so the question-word for it should be *koji* "which one" (in the appropriate case, of course):

Uzet ću brži auto. "I'll take the faster car."
 Q: *Koji ćeš uzeti auto?* "Which car will you take?" (*koji* = acc.) A: *Brži.* "The faster one."

Superlatives

A **superlative** ("the biggest", abbreviation: super.) is made just by prefixing *naj-* to a comparative, without any exceptions:

Velik → *veći* → *najveći* "the biggest"
dubok → *dublji* → *najdublji* "the deepest" etc.

Some adverbs exist only as superlatives and comparatives — no positive form exist. For instance:

prijē "before" → *najprijē* "first"

Superlatives used similarly to the comp., sometimes with *od svih* + gen.pl. "of all":

Moj auto je najbrži. "My car is the fastest".
Moj auto je brži od svih automobila. "My car is the fastest of all cars". (*automobila* = gen.pl.)
Uzet ću najbrži auto. "I'll take the fastest car."
 Q: *Koji ćeš uzeti auto?* "Which car will you take?" (*koji* = acc.) A: *Najbrži.* "The fastest one."

Excessives

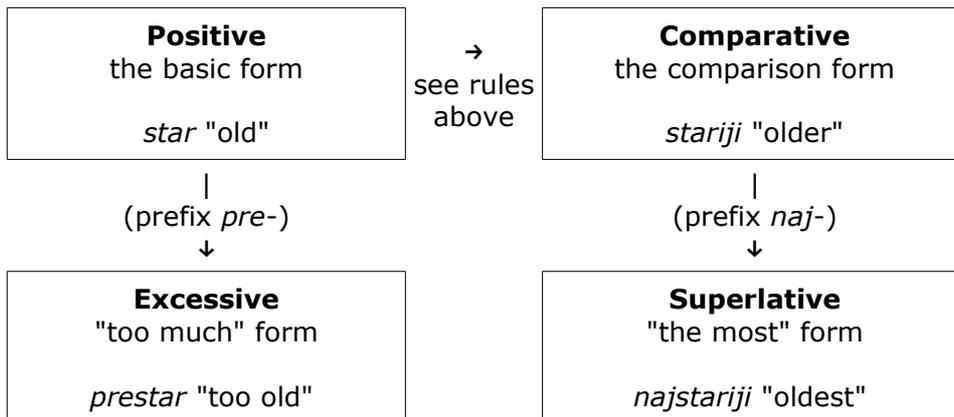
There's yet another degree — the **excessive** (abbreviation: exces., also called *elative* or *absolute superlative*). In Croatian, there's one word for "too big", "too loud", "too salty", or anything that has a positive and can have a comparative (this excludes "too mine" and "too before"). It's made very

simply: just prefix *pre-* to an adjective (in positive), without any exceptions::

lijep "nice" → *prelijep* "too nice"
dug "long" → *predug* "too long"
mršav "thin" → *premršav* "too thin"
zelen "green" → *prezelen* "too green"

The resulting adjective has all normal forms as any adjective does, and has case forms identical to the adjective you started with, but with a prefixed *pre-*.

Most books don't list this as an degree, but as an separate adjective; however, note that you cannot make a comparative or superlative from *prevelik*, it actually does behave as a special degree. So, *why not simplify things when possible*, and just say there's a fourth degree? Here's the full scheme:



Adjectives vs. Adverbs

Many adjectives can be used as adverbs as well. Where in English a -ly must be added to form an adverb, in Croatian just a nom.sg.n of an adjective is used:

brz "fast, quick" — *brzo* "quickly"
dubok "deep" — *duboko* "deeply"

So, *duboko* can mean both "deep" and "deeply", depending on its use. If it's used on its own and not agreeing with any noun, it's used as an adverb:

Jezero je duboko. "(the) lake is deep." (adjective, agrees with *jezero*)
Ivan razmišlja duboko. "Ivan is thinking deeply." (adverb, no agreement)

Adverbs can be used to modify adjectives:

Ivan je prilično visok. "Ivan is quite tall."

Adverbs used often to do that are:

vrlo "very"
malo "little"
stvarno "really"
jako "very" (lit. "strongly")

Adverbs *više* "more" (from the adjective *viši*, comparative of *visok*), and *manje* "less" (from the adjective *manji*, comparative of *mali*) are used sometimes to make "compound" degrees of some adjectives that don't have comparatives, or people choose not to use them for some reason:

više raznolik "more diverse" (comp. would be *raznolikiji*)
manje raznolik "less diverse"
previše raznolik "too diverse"
premalo raznolik "too little diverse"
najviše raznolik "the most diverse"

There are some words (maybe "intensifiers" would be a good name?) that can be used to modify adverbs and adjectives. These words behave as adverbs, don't change case and don't have comparatives, etc.:

baš "so, exactly", "just", "really"
čak "even", "surprisingly"
jako "very", "highly"
još "even more", "still"
tek "just now", "surprisingly late"
već "already", "surprisingly early"

These words are really often used:

Ivan je već došao. "Ivan already came."
Ivan je još viši. "Ivan is even taller."
Ivan je baš došao. "Ivan just came."
Ivan je baš pametan. "Ivan is really smart."
Ivan je jako pametan. "Ivan is very smart."
Ivan je došao čak iz grada. "Ivan came even from (the) city."
Ivan je tek došao. "Ivan came just a while ago."

Još means that something is still going on, later than expected:

Ivan je još ovdje. "Ivan is still here."
Ivan još nije došao. "Ivan still didn't come."

35 Basic Conjunctions

A [conjunction](#) is a word that joins two words in a phrase, or two phrases, or even two sentences in a new sentence. I have occasionally shown use of a conjunction *i* "and" in examples, but now is the time to explain more.

First, there are conjunctions that connect words and phrases quite freely, where both parts stay on equal footing, none of them has to be rearranged, etc. One example is before mentioned *i* "and". Another type of conjunctions introduce dependent sub-sentences, called clauses; an example is *dok* "while". We'll leave the second type for a later time and explore the simpler kind.

The simplest conjunction is *i* "and" (right, just one letter, single sound). It links two words, phrases, or sentences that are both on equal footing, in no opposition whatsoever, and used in a positive sense:

Ivan i Ana rade. "Ivan and Ana are working". (two nouns)
Ivan je žedän i gladän. "Ivan is thirsty and hungry". (two adjectives)
Ivan je jeo i pio. "Ivan was eating and drinking". (two participles)
Ivan jede i pije. "Ivan is eating and drinking". (two verbs)
Uredi su u prizemlju i na katu. "Offices are on the ground floor and on the first floor". (two phrases)

An *i* can be used before each part, making a stronger statement, similar to English "both ... and ...":

I Ivan i Ana rade. "Both Ivan and Ana are working". (two nouns)
Ivan je i žedän i gladän. "Ivan is both thirsty and hungry". (two adjectives)
Ivan je i jeo i pio. "Ivan was both eating and drinking". (two participles)
Ivan i jede i pije. "Ivan is both eating and drinking". (two verbs)
Uredi su i u prizemlju i na katu. "Offices are both on the ground floor and on the first floor". (two phrases)

Another conjunction is *ili* "or". It links two words, phrases, or sentences in a way similar to *i*, but it means "only one of them", "not both":

Ivan ili Ana rade. "Ivan or Ana are working". (two nouns)
Ivan je žedän ili gladän. "Ivan is thirsty or hungry". (two adjectives)
Ivan je jeo ili pio. "Ivan was eating or drinking". (two participles)
Ivan jede ili pije. "Ivan is eating or drinking". (two verbs)
Uredi su u prizemlju ili na katu. "Offices are on the ground floor or on the first floor". (two phrases)

ili can be used before each part, making a stronger statement, similar to English "either ... or ...":

Ili Ivan ili Ana rade. "Either Ivan or Ana are working". (two nouns)
Ivan je ili žedän ili gladän. "Ivan is either thirsty or hungry". (two adjectives), etc.

With both conjunctions, more than one part can be joined. Note that a comma is not written before a conjunction. Also, with *i*, time order can be implied:

Ivan, Ana i Goran rade. "Ivan, Ana, and Goran are working".
Otišao sam u trgovinu, kupio meso i skuhao ručak. "I went to a shop, bought meat, and cooked a lunch".
I Ivan i Ana i Goran rade. "All of them, Ivan, Ana, and Goran are working".
Ivan, Ana ili Goran rade. "Ivan, Ana, or Goran are working".
Ili Ivan ili Ana ili Goran rade. "Either Ivan, or Ana, or Goran are working".

Another conjunctions are *ni* and *niti* "neither". They link two words, phrases, or sentences, but they mean "none of them". They are actually negations of *i* and *ili*, so the multiple-negation rule apply:

Ni Ivan ni Ana ne rade. "Neither Ivan nor Ana are working".

Ivan nije ni žedän ni gladän. "Ivan is neither thirsty nor hungry".
Uredi nisu ni u prizemlju niti na katu. "Offices are neither on the ground floor nor on the first floor".

With conjunctions *a* (again, just one letter, single sound) and *ali* we can join only two sentences, or two phrases or verbs into another one. The conjunction *a* means just a contrast, and *ali* an opposition. In many cases, English translates *a* as "and":

Ivan radi, a Ana spava. "Ivan is working, and Ana is sleeping."
Ivan radi, ali samo do podneva. "Ivan is working, but only until noon."
Ivan danas radi, ali sutra ne radi. "Ivan is working today, but tomorrow he's not working".

Remember: *i* is used only when there's no contrast whatsoever.

Time sequence, or sometimes cause-and-effect can be constructed using the conjunction *pa*, and seldom used *te* (not to be confused with a demonstrative):

Otišao sam u trgovinu, pa sam kupio meso. "I went to a shop, and then I bought meat."
Bila je gladna, pa je pojela ručak. "She was hungry, so she has eaten (a) lunch."

A *pa* really *starts* another sub-sentence, therefore it's at the first position of the sentences, the placement rule is applied twice, there are two "second places" within the compound sentence.

Conjunctions *i* and *a* cannot fill the first position of the sentence — they are not "words on its own"! The word after it is the first word, and so on:

I gladän sam i sit. "I'm both hungry and fed."
Otišao sam u trgovinu i kupio sam meso. (word order!)
Nisam znao, a gledao sam televiziju. "I didn't know, and I was watching TV."

But we can join participles (not sentences) and say:

Otišao sam u trgovinu i kupio meso. (joined participles, not sentences!)

But *ali* and *ili* (they are *longer*, have a *li* appended, the way to remember the fact) both can work as the first place words:

Ili sam gladän, ili sam sit. "I'm either hungry or I'm fed."
Nisam znao, ali sam gledao televiziju. "I didn't know, but I was watching TV."

Similar to *pa* is the conjunction *jer*, linking sentences, explicitly stating a reason; the sentence starting with a *jer* is the reason:

Pojela je ručak jer je bila gladna. "She has eaten (a) lunch because she was hungry."

It's really an subordinate clause, but of the simplest type.

Another conjunction *zato*, is exactly the opposite, it is linking sentences, explicitly stating an effect:

Bila je gladna, zato je pojela ručak. "She was hungry, therefore she has eaten (a) lunch."

Similar is less often used *dakle*. Both can be used just with one sentence, marking it as an conclusion of a whole series of sentences.

... Zato je pojela ručak. "Therefore she has eaten (a) lunch."

Remember: *i* and *a* do not restart the counting of words, the word after them is the first word, but other conjunctions serve as first words.

36 'da' and Similar Clauses

• • • Review: **32 Conditionals**

Content Clauses

The simplest type of compound sentences is where the whole sentence is inserted into another sentence meaning "action" taken as an object in the main sentence. Sub-sentences are usually called *clauses*, and this type is called *content clause*. For instance, in English (inserted sentences are marked with brackets [...]).

"I saw [that you bought a car]." — "I saw that."
 "Ana told me [that you had left]." — "Ana told me that."
 "I know [that I cannot sleep]." — "I know that."

"That" can be left out in such sentences. All of them refer to **facts**. You saw something happening, you were told some thing. It maybe not true but it's treated as it is. Croatian inserts a *da* and it starts a sub-sentence (short words come after it):

Vidio sām [da si kupio auto]. — *Vidio sām to.*
Ana mi je rekla [da si otišao]. — *Ana mi je rekla to.*
Znam [da ne mogu spavati]. — *Znam to.*

In the short sentences (after —) the sub-sentence is contracted to *to* "that". But that word is *not* used to insert sentences, *da* is used. *Da* is a very often used word; used on its own it means "yes". It cannot be left out, it's the essential thing.

Now, something important: in "reported speech" or "facts" English performs **adjustment of tenses**, that is, if the main sentence is in the past, the inserted clause will be "back-shifted":

"Ana told me 'I am eating' → "Ana told me she was eating." (shift)
 "I know 'Ana is here'." → "I know Ana is here."
 "I knew 'Ana is here'." → "I knew Ana was here." (shift)

Not so in Croatian: there's no automatic tense adjustment! The tenses in the inserted clause are exactly as they were known, said (that is, they are relative to the main sentence):

Ana mi je rekla 'jēdem'. → *Ana mi je rekla da jēde.*
Znam 'Ana je ovdjē'. → *Znam da je Ana ovdjē.*
Znao sām 'Ana je ovdjē'. → *Znao sām da je Ana ovdjē.*

There's no shift at all the Croatian examples!

Note that *da* starts a clause, sub-sentence, and fills the position 1: any short words in the clause come always right after it (I have underlined the short words in both the main sentence and the *da*-clause):

Ana mi je rekla [da si otišao.]
Znao sām [da je Ana ovdjē.]

Another case are actions that are **possible or desired**. English uses "to" and reconstructs the sentence:

"I want [you to buy a car]." — "I want that."
 "I need [to be able to sleep]." — "I need that."
 "I have [to sleep]." — "I have to do that." (awkward English grammar...)

Croatian uses again *da*, but if the clause (= inserted sentence) has the same subject ("I want that I...") then an infinitive is preferred. Moreover, inserted sentence is the present tense, but here present of perfective verbs can be used as well. You want something to "get done" and sometimes

to "be happening". This is where the present tense of perfective verbs is used. The sentence is not reconstructed if infinitive is not used:

Želim [da kupiš auto]. — Želim to. (kupim = perf. verb!)
Trëbam [moći spavati]. — Trëbam to.
Moram [spavati]. — Moram to.

Now, more or less everything I have written up to now could be applied to Serbian as well. But here Croatian prefers infinitives (if possible), but Serbian uses *da* again:

Serbian: *Moram [da spavam].*

This is the famous difference, *da* + present vs. an infinitive in desires and possibility constructs. I leave it up to you to decide how this thing is important to the whole system. One further point: you can use infinitive only when you don't have a direct object in acc. attached to the first verb (not to the one in infinitive), otherwise you are forced to use *da*:

Moram [kupiti auto]. "I must buy a car."
Moram [se vratiti]. "I must return."
Moram [se vratiti] [da kupim auto]. "I must return to buy a car."

This second verb, is now used for reason: *why do you have to return?* — "to buy a car", *da kupim auto* or *kupiti auto*.

Usually you cannot just attach two infinitives to one verb, the second one must use *da* + present instead, but it's possible with some verbs, that normally have infinitives attached to them:

Počela sãm učitì hrvatski. "I have started learning Croatian." (female speaking)
Moram početi učitì hrvatski. "I have to start learning Croatian."

Such verbs are *počnem*, *počeo* "start", *prestanem*, *prestaó* "quit", *nastavim* "continue", *prekinem* "stop", and maybe some others (I must admit I don't know).

Word *da* is also used with *dajem* ~ *dam* "give", meaning "allow"; I will explain it a bit later.

Conditional Clauses

This was inserting one sentence into another as the whole "action". But there's a way to use clause as a "prerequisite" for the main sentence:

- A "If I return, I'll need the car." = meaning "I might return, then I'll need a car." (present - future)
- B "Unless I return, you may drive the car." = meaning "I might return, otherwise you may drive the car." (the same)
- C "If I had money, I'd buy a car." (past - conditional)
- D "If I had had money, I would have bought the car." (past perfect - past conditional)

English tenses distinguish possible events in the future from unlikely options or missed opportunities. Well, Croatian does not use tenses for such purposes. The straightforward translations are:

- A *Ako se vratim, trëbat ću auto* (present-future = English)
- B *Ako se ne vratim, možeš voziti auto.* (use *ako...ne* "if...not")
- C *Da imam novca, kupio bih auto.* (present - cond. — unlike English)
- D *Da sãm imao novca, kupio bih (bio) auto.* (past - (past) cond. — unlike English)

I hope you get it. Croatian uses *ako* for things that are possible in the future, but the part after it is in present (but it may be in future as well). However, *da* is used for things that are not real, either situation now or in the past. The second part just tells when the consequence will happen. Since people use just conditional for possible consequences in the past and now, you will hear people adding *sada* "now" or *tada* "then". In any occasion, present of perf. verbs (e.g. *vratim* can be used in both types! It implies a slight future, since it really cannot happen right at the moment of speaking, and if it was to happen before, you would have used the past tense. So present of perf.

verbs in this use is means "right now or from now on".

The placement of sub-sentences can be changed. Commas are not written then.

- A *Trëbat ću auto ako se vratim.*
 B *Možeš voziti auto ako se ne vratim.*
 C *Kupio bih auto da imam novca.*
 D *Kupio bih (bio) auto da sām imao novca*

Warning. These sentences are not about certain, but possible events. To talk about things bound to happen, use *kad(a)* "when". It's a different type of clause, this is just a preview.

Trëbat ću auto kada se vratim. "I'll need the car when I return."

You will often hear conditional with A-type, things in future (*Trëbao bih auto ako...*). It means just as any normal conditional — your desire for a car *if* something happens.

A good example is [Samo za taj osjećaj](#) "Just for that feeling" by *Hladno pivo*.

The song begins with two different *da*-constructs. The first one is a conditional, unreal sub-sentence ("If I were..."), and the second one indicates the desired action/reason (like *da kupim auto* above): what would he use a "thicker brush" for?:

<p>[<i>Da sām prazan list, potpuno čist,</i> <i>koristio bih puno, puno deblji kist,</i> <i>i samo jarke i šarene boje</i> <i>[da napišem ime tvoje i moje].</i></p>	<p>"[If I were an empty sheet, completely clean], I'd use a much, much thicker brush, and only strong and motley colors [to write your and my name]."</p>
---	--

The following verses use exactly the same constructs:

<p>[<i>Da sām prazna glava, potpuno zdrava,</i> <i>ne bih više ništa učio za badava,</i> <i>samo onolko kolko mi treba</i> <i>[da još ostanem paf od tolikog neba].</i></p>	<p>"[If I were an empty head, completely sane], I wouldn't learn anything more in vain, only so much as I need [to still stand amazed by so big sky]."</p>
--	---

Yet another type are *jer*-clauses ("because") but I have already shown them. Naturally, part after *jer* cannot happen after the action before it, but it's the same in English:

Trëbam auto jer sām se vratio. "I need the car because..."
Kupit ću auto jer imam novca. "I'll buy the car because..."
Kupujem auto jer imam novca. "I'm buying the car because..."

Such sentences cannot be reordered, it's always "action" *jer* "reason".

The last type are "in despite of" sentences, meaning something happened or is going to happen despite some pre-requisite not being fulfilled. One uses *iako* "even though" and sentences can be reordered:

Ne trëbam auto iako sām se vratio. "I don't need the car even though I came back."
Kupit ću auto iako nëmam novca. "I'll buy the car even though..."
Kupujem auto iako nëmam novca. "I'm buying the car even though..."
Iako nëmam novca, kupujem auto.

With all such sentences, *da*, *ako*, *kad(a)*, *iako* and *jer* restart the word counting: the short words are immediately after them (e.g. *jer sām se...*). If *da*, *ako*, *iako*, or *kad(a)* start the whole sentence, the second part is usually separated by a comma, after which the counting restarts (e.g. ... *trëbat ću...*)

Summary	
Talking about facts, happening	(know/say...) <i>da</i> (fact)
Talking about desires, possible things	(want/try...) <i>da</i> (fact) or infinitive
Talking about reasons for actions, "what for"	(do something to...) <i>da</i> (reason)
A possible future action condition for another	(consequence) <i>ako</i> (condition)
An unrealized past action was condition for another	(consequence in cond.) <i>da</i> (condition)
A certain future action precedes another	(consequence) <i>kad(a)</i> (condition)
A reason for another action	(action) <i>jer</i> (reason)
An action despite expected	(action) <i>iako</i> (expected)

All these words start word-counting; short words of clauses come after them.
Tenses have different uses than in English:

- Present of perf. verbs is often used in conditions.
- Opportunities use the conditionals.

37 Talking, Eating, Drinking

- • • Review: [36 'da' and Similar Clauses](#)

Talking

Croatian has several verbs regarding speaking. Some of them are used chiefly in present, some have special, others generic meaning. This list summarizes verbs:

govorim "speak, talk"
kažem, kazao ~ rečem, rekao, rekla, reći perf. "say"
pričam ~ is- "tell"
razgovaram "talk, discuss"
objašnjavam ~ objasnim "explain"

The verb *govorim* is generic, it stands for any speech, even if you don't understand what is said:

Ana će govoriti. "Ana will speak."
Něšto je govorio. "He was saying something."

A related noun *govor* means "speech".

The verb *rečem, rekao, rekla, reći* is mostly used as perf. counterpart of *govorim*, implying something was said (even if you didn't understand it):

Něšto je rekao. "He said something."

To indicate what was said, you can use an object (in acc.) or a whole *da*-clause:

Rekao je istinu. "He told the truth."
Rekao mi je da je gladan. "He told me he was hungry."

Note that the tenses in Croatian and English do not match in the inserted clause!

The verb *razgovaram* always implies a conversation, that is, at least two sides talking.

To say what you are/were talking about something, use *o* + dat.:

Razgovarali smo o projektu. "We were talking/discussing about the project."
Razgovarali smo o Ani. "We were talking/discussing about Ana."

If you were talking with someone (two-sided!), use *s(a)* + ins.:

Razgovarao sam s Anom. "I was talking with Ana."

The verb *razgovaram* is intransitive, cannot have an object, so in Croatian you cannot "talk business", you can only "talk about business". The same goes for *govorim*.

If you were talking to someone (one-sided!), use *govorim* + dat.:

Govorio sam s Anom. "I was talking to Ana.", "I spoke to Ana."

A related noun *razgovor* means "conversation, discussion".

The verb *pričam* chiefly is used for one-sided "story-telling":

Pričala sam o svom poslu. "I was talking about my job."

(Note that the example implies female speaker, and uses reflexive possessive).

There's a related noun *priča* meaning "story".

Colloquially, *pričam* is often used in a generic manner, instead of *razgovaram* and *govorim*:

Pričali smo o projektu. "We were talking about the project." (not Standard)

Pričali smo o Ani. "We were talking about Ana." (not Standard)

Pričao sam s Anom. "I was talking with Ana." (not Standard)

Něšto je pričao. "He was telling something." (not Standard)

This is often heard, but it's not standard. The verb *ispričam* is a perf. counterpart of *pričam*, but it's not used in such colloquial meaning at all.

The verb *kažem*, *kazao* is seldom used.

Food and Drink

Let's explore verbs regarding eating and drinking:

jëdem, jëo, jëla, jësti ~ po- "eat"

pijem, pio, ... ~ po- "drink"

žderem, žderao, ... ~ po- perf. "eat grossly"

ispijam, ispijao, ... ~ ispijem, ispio, ... "drink all"

Preparation of food frequently uses these verbs:

kuham, ... ~ s- "cook"

pečem (peku), pekao, pekla, peći ~ is- "bake"

Some more verbs:

točim, ... ~ na- "pour" (water, wine)

Often used nouns are:

janjetina "lamb meat"

juha "soup"

kelj "cabbage"

krumpir (also *krompir*) "potato"

kupus "cabbage"

meso "meat"

piletina "chicken meat"

pivo "beer"

puretina "turkey meat"

salata "salad"

svinjetina "pork"

sol f "salt"

šećer "sugar"

teletina "veal"

tjestenina (also *pašta*) "pasta"

vino "wine"

People in Croatia usually have three meals a day: *ručak* (pl. *ručkovi* or *ručci*) "lunch" is the main meal, it was once at noon, but it's now mostly from noon to 2 pm. *doručak* is in the morning, and *večera* "supper" is in the evening.

Sometimes there's a light meal between breakfast and lunch, usually in school or at work. People call it *gablec* (inland, pl. *gableci*) or *marenda* along the coast. The "official" name is *užina*, but it's seldom used, only in school schedules, etc.

Satiative verbs

So-called *satiative verbs* (or *sative*, both meaning "satisfy") are perf. verbs that can be derived from many impf. verbs, meaning roughly "have enough of doing that", "do that a lot", "do that too much", or "overdo that".

All satiative verbs have a prefixed *na-*, use a filler *se*, and have an object in gen., since acc. is blocked by the *se*:

Jëdem kolače. "I eat cakes." / "I'm eating cakes." (*kolače* = acc.pl.)

Jëo sãm kolače. "I was eating cakes."

Pojëo sãm kolače. "I have eaten (the) cakes."

Najëo sãm se kolača. "I have eaten enough cakes." (*kolača* = gen.pl.)

You will often hear:

Jesi li se najëo? (to a male person) "Have you eaten enough?" = "Are you fed?"

Jesi li se najëla? (to a female person)

Najëla se kolača. "She has eaten enough cakes." (so she cannot eat anything else)

There are too many verbs to list, I will just indicate when a satiative verb can be formed. But not all the verbs have a satiative one. Few examples are:

Načekao sãm se. "I have waited long enough."

Naradio sãm se. "I had enough of work."

Nakuhao sãm se. "I had enough of cooking."

Sometimes, satiative verbs have an additional meaning:

Napio sãm se vode. "I have drunk enough water."

Napio sãm se vina. "I have drunk enough wine." = "I got drunk of the wine."

Therefore, *napijem se* means also "get drunk".

38 Important Adverbs and Related Words

Now let me summarize some important adverbs and words related to them.

Space

In a similar way to prepositions and cases, some adverbs distinguish "location" and "direction", but most do not. They stand for generic space, in relation to something known or assumed.

Such adverbs usually have associated adjectives derived from them, with meanings like "outer" (related to "out"), "upper" (related to "up"), and so on.

adverb	adjective	meaning (adv. / adj.)
<i>vani</i> * (static) <i>van</i> * (direction)	<i>vanjski</i> *	"out(side)" / "outer"
<i>unutra</i>	<i>unutrašnji</i>	"inside, inward" / "inner"
<i>gore</i>	<i>gornji</i>	"up" / "upper"
<i>dolje</i>	<i>donji</i>	"down" / "lower"
<i>naprijed</i> (direction)	—	"forward"
<i>natrag, nazad</i> (direction)	—	"backward"
<i>sprijeda</i>	<i>prędnji</i>	"at front / front"
<i>straga, otraga</i>	<i>stražnji</i>	"behind / back"

Words indicated with an asterisk (*) are different in Serbian (see below).

Some adverbs distinguish location/direction, and others (where it's not indicated) do not. Some examples for adverbs:

Idem van. "I'm going out."
Ana se igra vani. "Ana is playing outside."
Što je unutra? "What is inside?"
Trebamo se vratiti unutra. "We should return inside."

Some examples for adjectives:

Bole me donji zubi. "My lower teeth hurt."
Otvorio sam stražnje prozore. "I have opened back windows."

Adverbs *gore* and *dolje* are also used to express meaning "upstairs" and "downstairs".

Warning. There's a similar-sounding adverb *gore* "worse" from adjective *gori*. Don't confuse those two words, although they are spelled exactly the same.

Note that the adverbs from the table above cannot be used with nouns except for *van* (but usually one uses preposition *izvan*). You **cannot** say:

Što je gore stola? (cannot say that)
Bio sam van kuće. "I was outside of the house."

It's interesting to remark that there's no real difference between prepositions and adverbs regarding words like *van*: adverbs demand nouns in genitive, and there are prepositions that demand genitive... the distinction is blurred. The main point is that prepositions are never used on its own, and adverbs can always be used on their own (that is, without a noun attached to it).

There are two more adverbs with related meaning: when used in a "static" context, they imply the "surface" (interior or exterior), but when used in a direction context (with verbs meaning "come", "go", "exit"...) they imply "from inside" or "from outside":

adverb	meaning
<i>izvana</i> *	"on the outside", "from outside"
<i>iznutra</i>	"on the inside", "from within"

Again, an asterisk (*) indicates differences from Serbian (see below).

Examples:

Kuća je topla iznutra. "The house is warm on the inside."

Kuća je obojana plavo izvana. "The house is painted blue on the outside."

Another set of adverbs is related to closeness and left/right distinction:

adverb	adjective	meaning (adv. / adj.)
<i>blizu</i>	<i>blizāk</i>	"close"
<i>daleko</i>	<i>dalek</i>	"far, distant"
<i>nedaleko</i>	<i>nedalek</i>	"not far"
<i>lijēvo</i>	<i>lijēvi</i>	"left"
<i>desno</i>	<i>desni</i>	"right"
<i>izbliza</i>	—	"from a short distance"
<i>izdaleka</i>	—	"from afar"

Some examples for adverbs:

Bio sām blizu. "I was close."

Izlaz je lijēvo. "The exit is on the left."

If you want to use these adverbs in relation to nouns ("close to..", "left of"...) you should use preposition *od* before a noun, except for *blizu*. All nouns are, of course, in genitive:

Bio sām blizu mora. "I was close to the sea." (without *od* !)

More je daleko od kuće. "The sea is far from the house."

Izlaz je lijēvo od kuhinje. "The exit is to the left of the kitchen."

Examples of adjective use:

On je blizāk prijatelj. "He's a close friend."

Putovali smo u daleke zemlje. "We traveled to far countries." (note *u* + acc. = "to")

The last two adverbs have no associated adjectives and start with *iz-* and end on *-a*, similar to *izvana* and *iznutra*, but imply only *points*, either of origin or of action. For example:

Putujem izdaleka. "I'm traveling from afar."

Moram to pogledati izbliza. "I have to take a look at it closely."

Time

There are several adverbs and adjectives for absolute time relations, and relative to some other event:

adverb	adjective	meaning
<i>nekad</i>	<i>nekadašnji</i>	"some time ago" (but also "sometimes")
<i>rano</i>	<i>rani</i>	"early"
<i>käsno</i>	<i>käsni</i>	"late"
<i>davno</i>	<i>davni</i>	"a long time ago, ancient"
<i>nedavno</i>	<i>nedavni</i>	"recent"
<i>uskoro</i>	—	"soon, in immediate future"
—	<i>prošli</i>	"last, previous"
—	<i>sljedeći</i>	"next, following"
<i>prijë</i>	—	"before"
<i>nakon</i>	—	"after"
<i>poslijë</i>	—	"later"

Some examples:

Vratili smo se käsno. "We came back late."

Bio sam davno u Splitu. "I've been to Split a long time ago." (lit. "I was in...")

Sunce izlazi rano. "The sun comes out early."

There is an adjective *skorašnji* and adverb *skoro* and but they are not often used in Croatian; they mean both "soon" and "recently", so they are much less precise.

Adverbs *nakon*, *prijë* and *poslijë* can be used with nouns (in gen., of course!)

Nakon noći dolazi dan. "After night, a day comes."

Idemo u kino nakon posla. "We're going to cinema after work."

Moraš oprati ruke prijë jela. "You have to wash hands before meal."

Adjectives *rani* "early" and *käsni* "late" have comparatives *raniji* and *käsniji*, and 3rd pers. neuters (*ranije*, *käsnije*, etc.) are often-used adverbs:

Kasnije ćemo jesti kolač. "We'll eat the cake later."

Next, common adverbs-from-adjectives *dugo* and *kratko* are used in meaning "for a long time" and "for a short time".

Dugo sam te čekao. "I was waiting for you for a long time."

Quantity and Intensity

There are adverbs that indicate quantity of nouns ("a lot of sand"), intensity of adjectives ("quite green"), and quantity of comparatives ("a lot faster"), intensity of verbs ("work a lot") or duration with some verbs ("wait a lot"), but some of them can be used in all such uses, others only in some of them...

Most of them are derived from adjectives (that is, they have the same form as the neuter sg. nom. of adjectives), but have meanings which are quite divorced from meanings of adjectives. For instance, adverb *puno* "a lot" is actually derived from adjective *pun*, meaning "full". Also, *jako* "very" is derived from *jak* "strong"!

For instance, this constructions look paradoxical if you don't take into account that adverbs have their own meanings:

jako jak "very strong"
jako slabo "very poorly, very weakly"

Frankly, I don't know how to explain them simply, and when I don't know how to explain, I make a table:

adverb	verb intensity or duration	adjective intensity	noun quantity	comparative quantity
<i>jako malo</i>	"very little"		"very few"	—
<i>premalo</i>	"too little"			
<i>nedovoljno</i>	"not enough"			
<i>malo</i>	"a bit"		"few"	"a bit"
<i>dovoljno</i>	"enough"			
<i>dosta</i>	"quite, more than enough"			
<i>prilično</i>	"considerably"			
<i>mnogo</i>	("a lot") *		"a lot"	
<i>puno</i>	"a lot"		"many" *	"much"
<i>vrlo</i>		"very"		
<i>jako</i>	"much, strongly"*	"very"		("very")
<i>jako puno</i>	"very much"		"very many"	
<i>previše</i>	"too much"			

In each cell there's the corresponding English meaning, or it's shaded if it's not applicable. Use of *jako* with comparatives is a bit colloquial, and any use of *vrlo* sounds a bit bookish.

For instance:

Dosta sām te čekao. "I was waiting for you quite long."
Imam dosta knjiga. "I have quite many books."
Novi auto je dosta brži. "The new car is quite faster."
Auti su dosta skupi. "Cars are quite expensive."
Jako pada kiša. "Rain falls heavily."
Novi auto je mnogo brži. "The new car is much faster."

Croatian and Serbian

Here are some differences between Croatian and Serbian (indicated by * in tables above).

You **cannot** say in Croatian:

Auto je mnogo brz. (adjective in positive)

But it's perfectly OK in Serbian! That's a subtle difference. However, you can say in Croatian:

Auto je mnogo brži. (adjective in comparative)

Likewise, you can say in Croatian only — but not in Serbian:

Jako sām umorna. "I'm very tired." (Croatian only!)

In Serbian (and very seldom in Croatian) you would say:

Mnogo sām umorna. "I'm very tired."

You see, it's quite fine point.

There are different adverbs and adjectives for "out" and "outside" that prevail in Serbian (they are also used in Bosnia):

adverb (Serbian)	adjective	meaning (adv. / adj.)
<i>napolju</i> (static) <i>napolje</i> (direction)	<i>spoljni</i>	"out(side)" / "outer"

Likewise for "on the outside", Serbian chiefly uses:

adverb (Serbian)	meaning
<i>spolja</i>	"on the outside", "from outside"

You will hear *napolju* in some regions of Croatia as well; however, it's not standard. I personally don't use any of *napolju*, *napolje*, etc.

Updated 2013-11-07

39 Verbs 'dajem', 'imam', 'uzimam', 'kidam'

The three verbs *dajem* "give", *imam* "have" and *uzimam* "take" are quite important; verbs derived from *dajem* are important as well.

These verbs simply mean "give":

Dala sām ti jabuku. (dat. acc.) "I gave you an apple".

The derived follow the symmetric pattern: ones derived from *dajem* are impf. and ones from *dam* perf. Some verbs have two meanings: literal and symbolic:

prefix	grammar	meaning
—	N (A) (D) N (D) <i>da...</i> Ø D INF	N gives (A) (to D) N allows (D) to... (see below) D feels like INF (to be explained later)
<i>do-</i>	N (A) (D)	1. N passes (A) on to (D) 2. N adds (A) (to D)
<i>iz-</i>	N (A)	1. N publishes (A) 2. N betrays (A)
<i>o-</i>	N (A) (D)	N reveals (A) (to D)
<i>pre-</i>	N (A) (D)	1. N hands over (A) (to D) 2. N gives lecture (to D) (on A)
<i>pro-</i>	N (A) (D) (<i>za</i> A1)	N sells (A) (to D) (for A1)
<i>raspro-</i>	N (A) (D) (<i>za</i> A1)	N sells off (A) (to D) (for A1)
<i>u-</i>	N (A) (<i>za</i> A1)	N marries (A) (to A1)
<i>za-</i>	N (A) (D)	1. N sets a task (A) (to D) 2. N inflicts (A) (to D)

Another use of the unprefixed verbs, with *da*, will be explained shortly. The third use of the unprefixed verbs, the *impersonal dative*, will be explained in a following chapter, it's included here of completeness.

The verb *dam* has an alternative form in present only: *dadem*, sounding a bit archaic nowadays.

The verb *udajem*, *udavao* ~ *udam* has a very special meaning: "to make someone female marry". If it's used with reflexive *se*, it means just "marry", but it's used for female persons only: males use another verb *ženim*. Some examples:

Udao sām kćer. lit. "I made my daughter marry".
Udajem se za Ivana. "I'm marrying Ivan". (female speaking)

The verb *prodajem*, *prodavao* ~ *prodam* means just "sell", and selling at discount prices use special verb *rasprodajem*, *rasprodao* ~ *rasprodam* "sell off", "sell out".

Prodajem jabuke. "I'm selling apples."
Prodat ću kuću. "I will sell (the) house."

There are some derived nouns:

prodaja "sale"
rasprodaja "discount sale"
udaja "marriage" (from a female perspective)

zadaća "duty, homework"
zadatäk "task"

This verb group is one of just two common verb groups that have endings *-ajem*, *-avao* (ones derived from *-znajem*, *-znavao* make the other group).

Permissions (*dajem*, *davao* ~ *dam* + *da...*)

The verbs *dajem*, *davao* ~ *dam* can be used with *dat.* + *da...*, meaning "let, allow someone to...". Consequently, *ne dam dat. da...* meaning "I don't let...".

Here *dam* is used in present as well, despite being perf. The one who could do the action is in dative (as a "recipient" of "give").

Somehow songs I used to illustrate features tend to be a bit traditional, and even performed by a bit traditional-looking people, so [here are two guys that balance it a bit...](#)

<i>Ne dam vjäturu, ne dam nikom</i> [<i>da te prati, s tobom diše</i>] [<i>da se kiti tvojom slikom</i>] <i>tjëräm vjätar, tjëräm kiše.</i>	"I don't allow the wind, don't allow anyone to follow you, breathe with you to display your picture I'm chasing away wind, chasing away rains
--	--

<i>Svatko nosi svoje brëme</i> <i>i u srcu ljubav sklanja</i> <i>pođi spati, već je vrijeme:</i> <i>'Budi dobra, lijepo sanjaj.'</i>	Everyone carries own burden And shelters love in heart Go to sleep, it's time already: 'Be good, sleep well.'" (lit. "dream nice")
---	---

(Jakša Fiamengo)

Forms *pođi* and *budi* are *imperatives* (command forms, to be explained a bit later) of *pođem* "go, start moving", and *säm* "be". The verb *spim*, *spao* is an alternative and a bit archaic form of *spavam* "sleep" (and it's common in some regions). In this context, *kitim se* does not mean exactly "display", but I can't find the better word at the moment.

Beware, the 3rd pers. sg. of *dam* is also spelled *da*, but it of course means "he/she gives", so you will find sentences like:

Mama mi ne da da jedem sladoled. "Mom doesn't let me eat ice-cream".

Here, the first *da* is just the verb, and the second is the conjunction introducing sub-sentence (i.e. clause)! Don't get confused. In past, it would be:

Mama mi nije dala da jedem sladoled. "Mom didn't allow me to eat ice-cream".

imam

This verb has only impf. aspect. It's used more restrictive than in English; for instance, some English sentences cannot be translated literally:

"I have a house." *Imam kuću.*
 "I had a headache." *Imala sam glavobolju.*
 "I had a lunch." *Imala sam ručak.*

If there's a special verb meaning an action, people use it, instead of "have something": there's a verb *ručam* "have a lunch", so it's used. Remember that *imam* is not an auxiliary verb in Croatian, but a plain and regular verb with a full meaning. In fact, it's in the group of most regular and simple verbs, a-verbs.

There's only one derived verb, *primam* ~ *primim* "accept, receive, take hold". Both verbs use only an subject in nom. and an object in acc. Some examples for *primam* ~ *primim*:

Primila sâm pismo. "I received a letter."
Jesi li primio poruku? "Did you receive (the) message?"

uzimam ~ uzmem, uzeo

This verb means "take", a meaning related to "give". However, it does not have all metaphorical meanings as "take" in English: in Croatian, you don't "take" photos (except a printed one in hand!), don't "take" opportunities, notes, etc. but you do "take" a car, money etc.

The verbs (and ones derived from them) have a very strange change in the perf. member of the pair: *m* is changed to *e*. They are only a handful of verbs that behave like that. As for the derived verbs, there are only few, all following the symmetric pattern:

prefix	grammar	meaning
—	N (A) (D)	N takes (A) (from D)
<i>ob-</i>	N (A)	N overwhelms (A)
<i>od-</i>	N (A) (D)	N takes away (A) (from D)
<i>pod-</i>	N (A)	N undertakes (A)
<i>pre-</i>	N (A) (<i>od</i> G)	N takes over (A) (from G)
<i>za-</i>	N (A)	N occupies (A)

It's interesting how Croatian prefixes are similar to English prepositions and prefixes: *od-* vs. "away", *pod-* vs. "under-" and "pre-" vs. "over". Some examples:

Uzeo sâm auto. "I took (the) car."
Preuzimam posão. "I'm taking over (the) job."

kidam ~ (-kinem)

This verb is not frequently used nowadays: it means "break apart, rip"; however, the few verbs derived from it are quite important. It uses a broken symmetric aspect pattern; it's impf., and prefixing gives imperfective verbs; one produces perf. verbs from them by changing verb to *-kinem*, a verb that's not used unprefixing:

	impf.		perf.
basic	<i>kid-a-m</i>		
	prefix		
derived	<i>x-kid-a-m</i>	→	<i>x-ki-ne-m</i>

For some verbs, one prefix is reserved to make the perf. counterpart of the basic verb; no such counterpart exists for *kidam*.

The verbs are:

prefix	grammar	meaning
—	N (A)	N breaks, rips apart (A)
<i>pre-</i>	N (A)	N interrupts, stops (A)
<i>s-</i>	N A N <i>se</i>	N removes, strips A N undresses

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>u-</i>	N (A) (<i>od</i> G)	N cancels (A) (from G)
<i>za-</i>	N (A) (<i>za</i> A1)	N deprives A (of A1)

The verb *skidam* ~ *skinem* serves as an opposite of *stavljam* ~ *stavim*, but also means "undress". It's the most often used verb from this family, but others are used frequently as well.

Updated 2013-03-08

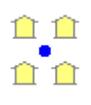
40 More Prepositions

• • • Review: [20 Basic Prepositions and Government](#)

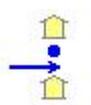
Now, let me introduce more prepositions, dealing with space and time relations. Compared to *u*, *iz*, *na*, *od*, *do*, *s* these prepositions are more complex and use various cases. Some distinguish "motion to" from static position ("at"), some don't. Sometimes there's more than one preposition meaning the same thing.

However, there's an important thing: all prepositions starting on *iz*- take nouns in gen.

Let's take a look at preposition-case combinations that meaning either motion or location (if the same preposition is used, cases are always ins-acc):

prep. + case	meaning	example
<i>kroz</i> + acc.	 Moving through something, to another side	<i>Idem kroz vrata.</i> "I'm going through the door."
<i>među</i> + acc.	 Moving towards a group of object "among"	<i>Idem među ljude.</i> "I'm going among men."
<i>pod</i> + acc.	 Destination under something, to get below something	<i>Idem pod krevet.</i> "I'm going under the bed."
<i>pred</i> + acc.	 Motion up to front of something	<i>Došao sam pred ulaz.</i> "I came to the entrance."
<i>među</i> + ins.	 Being among a group of object "in midst of"	<i>Sjedim među ljudima.</i> "I'm sitting among men."
<i>pod</i> + ins.	 Location under something, "under"	<i>Mačka je pod krevetom.</i> "The cat is under the bed."
<i>nad</i> + ins.	 Location above something, (seldom used, see <i>iznad</i> below)	<i>Slika visi nad krevetom.</i> "The picture hangs above the bed."
<i>pred</i> + ins.	 Location in front of something, "in front of"	<i>Čekam pred ulazom.</i> "I'm waiting in front of the entrance."

Preposition *među* is normally used with nouns in plural, or collective nouns, e.g. *među djecom*, *među prstima*. There's a special preposition for two things only, like "between". It's needs genitive, and is used for both direction and location:

prep. + case	meaning	example
<i>između</i> + gen.	 Between (two things)	<i>Slovenija je između Hrvatske i Austrije.</i> "Slovenia is between Croatia and Austria."

The following preposition-case combinations mean both static locations and motion directions,

meaning closeness to something (*do* I have already explained, but it's listed again for completeness):

prep. + case	meaning		example
<i>po</i> + dat. (!)		Being/moving on surface of something, or over all its interior, always in contact with something	<i>Hodam po cesti.</i> "I'm walking on the road." <i>Ruže rastu po kući.</i> "Roses grow all over the house."
<i>uz</i> + acc. (!)		Being/moving very close to something, possibly touching it	<i>Ruže rastu uz kuću.</i> "Roses grow by the house."
<i>do</i> + gen.		Being/moving beside, next to something, <u>not touching</u> it	<i>Ruže rastu do kuće.</i> "Roses grow next to the house."
<i>pored</i> + gen.		Similar to <i>do</i> , but slightly farther	<i>Ruže rastu pored kuće.</i> "Roses grow beside the house."
<i>oko(lo)</i> + gen.		Being/moving around something	<i>Idem oko kuće.</i> "I'm going around the house." <i>Ruže rastu oko kuće.</i> "Roses grow around the house."
<i>blizu</i> + gen.		Being/moving "near" something	<i>Ruže rastu blizu kuće.</i> "Roses grow near the house."

There's no clear mark where *pored* ends, and *blizu* starts, so I wouldn't worry too much about it. Very similar to *pored* is the preposition *pokraj*.

The preposition *uz* has another meaning, "up"; its opposite is *niz*:

prep. + case	meaning		example
<i>uz</i> + acc.		"Up" path, opposite to preferred direction	...
<i>niz</i> + acc.		"Down" path, in preferred direction, "along"	...

The preposition *niz* also means "along" something long and path-like (road, river, street)...

The following combinations also stand for both static locations and directions:

prep. + case	meaning		example
<i>preko</i> + gen.		Being over top of something, going to another side	<i>Idem preko mosta.</i> "I'm going over the bridge."
<i>ispod</i> + gen.		Location under something, "under"	<i>Mačka spava ispod kreveta.</i> "The cat sleeps under the bed."

prep. + case		meaning	example
<i>iznad</i> + gen.		Location above something, "above"	<i>Slika visi iznad kreveta.</i> "The picture hangs above the bed."
<i>iza</i> + gen.		Location behind something, "behind"	<i>Ruže rastu iza kuće.</i> "Roses grow behind the house."

Remember: all prepositions that start with *iz-* use only the genitive case.

Prepositions *pred* + dat. and *iza* + gen. have also meanings "before" and "after".

41 Imperatives, Permissions and Vocative Case

Finally, I'm going to explain how to yell! Or... how to sing an anthem. Here are some parts of the Croatian national anthem *Hrvatska domovina* "Croatian homeland", a song frequently referred to with the two first words *Lijepa naša...*:

*Lijepa naša domovino,
Oj junačka zemljo mila,
Stare slave djedovino,
da bi vazda sretna bila!*

...

*Teci Dravo, Savo teci,
Nit' ti Dunav silu gubi,
Sinje more svijētu reci,
Da svoj narod Hrvat ljubi.*

...

I have underlined imperatives and vocatives.

Imperative

The **imperative** (abbreviation: imper.) is not really a tense, but something like it. We can call it a tense. In English, the imperative is just a verb without a personal pronoun. Croatian has special forms:

Uzmi jabuku. "Take (an) apple."

It's similar to the present tense, but it does not have forms for all persons. It has forms only for the 2nd person sg., and 1st and 2nd person plural, here are examples divided by present classes:

form	e			n	a	i	*v
pres. 1 st sg.	<i>pi-je-m</i>	<i>tres-e-m</i>	<i>peč-e-m</i>	<i>dig-ne-m</i>	<i>im-a-m</i>	<i>drž-i-m</i>	<i>kup-uje-m</i>
pres. 3 rd pl.	<i>pi-j-u</i>	<i>tres-u</i>	<i>pek-u</i>	<i>dig-nu</i>	<i>im-a-ju</i>	<i>drž-e</i>	<i>kup-uju</i>
imp. 2 nd sg.	<i>pi-j</i>	<i>tres-i</i>	<i>peč-i</i>	<i>dig-ni</i>	<i>im-aj</i>	<i>drž-i</i>	<i>kup-uj</i>
imp. 1 st pl.	<i>pi-j-mo</i>	<i>tres-i-mo</i>	<i>peč-i-mo</i>	<i>dig-ni-mo</i>	<i>im-aj-mo</i>	<i>drž-i-mo</i>	<i>kup-uj-mo</i>
imp. 2 nd pl.	<i>pi-j-te</i>	<i>tres-i-te</i>	<i>peč-i-te</i>	<i>dig-ni-te</i>	<i>im-aj-te</i>	<i>drž-i-te</i>	<i>kup-uj-te</i>

We see that plural is completely predictably derived from the singular, and singular is made by modifying the present extension. However, *i* added is similar to the plural of nouns — it changes *k*, *g*, *h* (of the past base) to *c*, *z*, *s*, so I added the 1st pers. sg. and 3rd of the present for comparison purposes.

It's quite normal to use imperatives of perf. verbs, even ones with seldom used present like *rečem* - imp. *reci*; it an action that takes a very short time:

skoči! ← *skačem* ~ *skočim* "jump"
stani! ← *stajem* ~ *stanem* "stop, halt"
dođi! ← *dolazim* ~ *dođem* "come"

Of course, perf. verbs also imply completion of an action:

pojedi juhu! ← *jedem* ~ *po-* "eat the (whole) soup"

When an action that will take longer (or a state) is required, impf. verbs are usually used:

čekaj! ← *čekati* ~ *pri-* "wait"

slušaj! ← *slušam* "listen"

spavaj! ← *spavam* "sleep"

Imperatives are often inserted in sentences, or start sentences in direct communication:

Reci mi... "Tell me..."

Gledaj, ovo sam kupila. "Look, I bought this."

Dođi ovamo. "Come here."

Pazi, nož je oštar. "Take care, (the) knife is sharp."

Imperative *gledaj* "look" is frequently shortened to *gle*.

There is *negative imperative*, like English "don't come". In Croatian, it can be constructed in two ways:

1. by adding a *ne* in front of the imperative
2. with a special verb (we could call it "negative imperative verb") that has only imperative forms and the infinitive of a verb.

For example:

ne + imper.	spec. verb + inf.	meaning
<i>Ne reci...</i>	<i>Nemoj reći...</i>	"Don't tell..."
<i>Ne gledajte!</i>	<i>Nemojte gledati!</i>	"Don't look!" (speaking to a group)
<i>Ne čekajmo!</i>	<i>Nemojmo čekati!</i>	"Let's not wait!" (speaking to a group including the speaker)

The first form is a slightly stronger prohibition than the second, in my point of view, but they are used interchangeably.

Additionally, there is another verb that is used to "encourage", similar to English "c'mon", that has only imperative forms; it's used on its own or together with an imperative of some other verb.

Hajde! "C'mon!"

Hajde, idi! "C'mon, go!"

Both special verbs are listed here:

	negative imperative	encouraging imperative
imper. 2nd sg.	<i>nemoj</i>	<i>hajde</i>
imper. 1st pl.	<i>nemoj-mo</i>	<i>hajde-mo, haj-mo (!)</i>
imper. 2nd pl.	<i>nemoj-te</i>	<i>hajde (!)</i>

One more imperative is used for encouraging: *daj* "give!", the imperative form of verb *dam* perf. "give".

With this verb there's a very frequent construct *daj da* + inf. meaning "let", "allow", and *ne daj* + inf. meaning "don't let". Of course both can be in plural (*ne dajmo da...*).

For an example of imperatives, including *daj da* + inf, check the song *Ne daj* performed by Natali Dizdar:

*Vozi me po cijelom gradu
dok se ne digne sunce
sviraj mi onu pjesmu
što sam tražila jučer*

"Drive me over the whole city
Until the Sun rises
Play me the song
That I asked for yesterday

*Ljubi me tamo gdje
najmanje ne volim
štipaj mi obraze
dok ne porumenim*

Kiss me where
I dislike the least
Pinch my cheeks
Until I blush

*Ne daj da nestanem
ne daj da propustim
dok se gase svjetla
jedno za drugim*

Don't let me disappear
Don't let me miss
Lights going out (lit. "while lights go off")
One after another"

(Marin Ostojić i Marta Muždalo)

Here we have also a preposion *za* used in meaning "after" ("one after another").

Let's summarize the important facts:

Making imperatives

The 2nd pers. sg. imperative is made in the following way:

1. Discard the final vowel of 3rd pers. present, whatever it is;
2. If the remainder ends on a *-j* — you have the 2nd pers. sg. imperative;
3. If the remainder ends on a *-k*, *-g*, or *-h*, change it to a *-c*, *-z*, or *-s* respectively;
4. Add an *-i* to the remainder and you have the 2nd pers. sg. imperative.

To form a 1st pers. pl., add **-mo** to the 2nd pers. sg. imperative.

To form a 2nd pers. pl., add **-te** to the 2nd pers. sg. imperative.

Negative imperatives

To form a negative imperative (that is, a prohibition), use either *ne* + imperative, or forms of the special "negative imperative verb" *nemoj*, *nemojmo*, *nemojte* + infinitive of the verb

Permissions

There's a word that means a permission, indifference, resignation: *neka*. It's simply put in front of the verb in present, past, or future and can be roughly translated as "let". However, the verb is usually in 3rd pers. present (either singular or plural):

Neka ode. "Let him/her go."

Ivan neka bude golman. "Ivan should be the goalkeeper."

Neka Ivan bude golman. (the same meaning)

Neka odu. "Let them go."

Neka su otišli. (rarely used) "It's ok that they went."

It does not have to be directly in front, it can be shuffled around a bit, but cannot come after the verb.

The verb *puštam, pustio ~ pustim* "release, let go" is also frequently used to indicate permission:

Pusti me u sobu. "Let me in the room." (*pusti* = imperative)

Vocative Case

As verbs have imperatives, so nouns have the **vocative case** (abbreviation: *voc.*). It's much less often used than the imperative, since:

- For all adjectives and pronouns, it's the same as nominative
- For all nouns, *voc.pl.* = *nom. pl.*
- For neuter nouns, *voc.sg.* = *nom. sg.*
- Furthermore, many people use nominative instead of vocative.

Let's take a look at the endings:

case	m ^a -nouns	m ⁱ -nouns	n-nouns	a-nouns	i-nouns
nom.sg.	-			-a	
acc.sg.	-a	-	-æ	-u	-
dat.sg.		-u		(+)i	-i
gen.sg. / dual		-a		-e	-i
ins.sg.		-æm		-om	-i, -ju
voc.sg.	-#e, -u		-æ	-o (-e)	-i
nom. / voc.pl.	-[æv]+i				
acc.pl.	-[æv]e		-a	-e	-i
dat. / ins.pl.	-[æv]+ima		-ima	-ama	-ima
gen.pl.	-[æv]a		-a	-a	-i

This is the final table, there are no more cases left in the Standard Croatian.

For masculine nouns ending on *š, ž, nj* or *lj* -u is usually added, but also for some other nouns. Before *e, k/c* change to *č, g/z* to *ž*, and *h/s* to *š* (indicated by a # sign):

puž "snail" → *pužu*
konj "horse" → *konju*
päs "dog" → *psu*
brat → *brate*
doktor → *doktore*
čovjek "man" → *čovjěče*
vuk "wolf" → *vuče*
bog "god" → *bože*
otac "father" → *oče*
djed "grandfather" → *djěde*
stric "father's brother" → *striče*
Ivan → *Ivane*
Goran → *Gorane*

With persons names, vocative is usually used, except for male names that end on a consonant (regardless of their noun class):

Luka → *Luka*
Ivo → *Ivo*

Marko → *Marko*

Affectionate a-nouns, *mama* and *tata*, used by children, have voc. same as their nom. For *baka* "granny" and *teta* "aunt" both forms are used:

mama → *mama*

tata → *tata*

baka → *baka*, *bako*

teta → *teta*, *teto*

Feminine a-nouns, regularly use vocative on *-o*, except those ending on *-ica*: they have their vocative on *-ice*. Names use sometimes vocative, especially if they end on *-ica*:

žena "woman, wife" → *ženo*

majka "mother" → *majko*

sestra "sister" → *sestro*

krava "cow" → *kravo*

mačka "cat" → *mačko*

kuća "house" → *kućo*

domovina "homeland" → *domovino*

djedovina "things inherited from grandfathers, ancestry" → *djedovino*

zemlja "earth, ground, soil, land" → *zemljo*

Sava (name of a river) → *Savo*

Ivana → *Ivano* or *Ivana*

sestrica "little sister" → ***sestrice***

Janica → ***Janice***

So, you know now how to say "come here, cow!" And words in the anthem.

Again, a lot of people use just nominatives in everyday communication.

Adjective Inversion

If you carefully examined the anthem, you could see phrases like *zemljo mila* where adjective *mila* comes after the noun *zemlja* "ground, earth, land, country" (in voc. *zemljo*). It's often so in vocatives, but also in poetry and in older Croatian literature, especially medieval.

Updated 2013-03-18

42 Posture/Main Verb Complex

• • • Review: **31 Verbs 'stavim', 'tvorim'; More on Aspect**

Verbs such as *stojim* "stand", *stajem* "come to stand", and *padam* "fall" are important verbs indicating basic placement of things. However, verbs derived from them have *really* diverse and important meanings.

Stand, Exist, Consist, etc.

The verb *stojim*, *stajao* has a "stationary" meaning: just "stand", non-metaphorically (not "tolerate"!). There's no perf. counterpart: verbs derived from it are also imperfect. Unfortunately, this verb is irregular: compare its present and past: it's *sto-* vs. *sta-*!

The verb itself is boring: it has only subject (in nom.) and of course you can specify a location, how long you are standing, and optional company:

Stojim na ulici. "I'm standing on (the) street."

Derived verbs are regular i/a-verbs, e.g. *po-stojim*, *po-stajao*, unlike the base verb. That's strange, but that's the way it is. The derived verbs are summarized in the table by just listing prefixes:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>na-</i>	N (INF)	N strives (to INF)
<i>po-</i>	N	N exists
<i>sa-</i>	N se od G	N consists of G

The verb *postojim* is the only way to say "exist". Some examples:

Mislim, dakle postojim. "I think, therefore I exist."

Nastojim naučiti hrvatski. "I strive to learn Croatian."

Atom se sastoji od elektrona i jezgre. "Atom consists of electrons and a nucleus."

Stop, Become, Stay, etc.

Verb *stajem*, *stajao* ~ *stanem*, *stao* means "stand", but in a "dynamic" sense: "come to stand, halt". I'm sorry, you could have chosen a simpler language than Croatian! It's really important, and the derived verbs are paramount. I have decided to call the derived verbs "the main verb complex" since they express some of basic meanings.

Take a notice that this verb (impf.) shares past and infinitive forms with the previous one (*stojim*, *stajao*)!

The impf. verb is not really often used: it means "be in process of coming to stand", "be halting".

The aspect pattern is "symmetric" — verbs derived from it don't change aspect: all of form *x-stajem* are impf. and *x-stanem* are perf. The meanings are quite different than ones derived from otherwise similar *stojim*, *stajao*:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>izo-</i>	N (s G)	N is absent (from G)
<i>na-</i>	N	N comes into being, gets created

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>ne-</i>	N	N disappears
<i>nedo-</i>	N (D)	D misses A (!)
<i>o-</i>	N1 N2 (!) N ADJ N INF	N1 stays, remains N2 N remains ADJ N remains to INF
<i>odu-</i>	N (<i>od</i> G)	N gives up (on G)
<i>po-</i>	N1 N2 (!)	N1 becomes N2, turns into N2
<i>pre-</i>	N (<i>s</i> I) N INF	N ceases, stops (with I) N ceases INF-ing
<i>pri-</i>	N (<i>na</i> A)	a. N complies, consents (to A); b. N lands (on A)
<i>ra-</i>	N <i>se</i> (<i>od</i> G)	N separates, divorces (from G)
<i>sa-</i>	N <i>se s</i> I	N meets I
<i>u-</i>	N	N stands up
<i>za-</i>	N	N stops briefly

Of course, both impf. and perf. derived verbs are used a lot.

Some examples of use:

Postao sam otac. (*otac* nom.!) "I became a father."

Prestajem pušiti. "I'm quitting smoking." (lit. "to smoke")

Ostajemo ovdje. "We're staying here."

Nastali su problemi. "Problems came into being."

Postajem star. "I'm getting old." (lit. "becoming")

Ključevi su nestali. "(The) keys disappeared."

Odustat ću od utrke. "I'll give up on (the) race."

Stani! (imper.) "Stop!" (moving)

Ostani tamo! (imper.) "Stay there!"

Prestani! (imper.) "Stop!" (what you are doing)

Ne pristajem na uvjete. "I'm not complying with (the) terms." (lit. "on terms")

Verbs *ostajem* ~ *ostanem*, *postajem* ~ *postanem* behave as *sam*, *bio*: they can have an adjective as object, or another noun in nominative! These are the only with object in nominative, or two subjects, if you prefer! Since there are two arguments (subject, object are commonly called arguments) in nom. the order gets important:

Profesor je postao otac. "The professor became father."

Otac je postao profesor. "The father became professor."

Occasionally, one can read these verbs with objects in instrumental: it's slightly archaic nowadays.

Other Posture Verbs

There are two more *posture verbs* and they have a pattern very similar to "stand": one verb for "state" and two (impf. ~ perf.) for "come to state". They mean "sit" and "lie":

meaning	state	come to state	
	impf.	impf.	perf.
stand	<i>stojim, stajao</i>	<i>stajem, stajao</i>	<i>stanem, stao</i>
sit	<i>sjedim</i>	<i>sjedam</i>	<i>sjednem, sjëo, sjëla, sjësti</i>
lie	<i>ležim</i>	<i>lijëžem, lijëgao</i>	<i>legnem, legäo, legla, leći</i>

Verbs derived from these two posture verbs are not important so much.

Fall

Verb *padam* ~ *padnem, pao, pala, pasti* means "fall". It also follows the "symmetric" pattern: verbs derived from its impf. form are impf., likewise for the perf. So only prefixes will be listed. Some verbs have double meaning, literal and highly metaphorical.

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N se D	D likes N (!)
<i>is-</i>	N (iz G)	N falls out (of G)
<i>na-</i>	a. N A b. N na A	a. N attacks A; b. N falls onto A in great quantity
<i>ot-</i>	N (od G)	N falls (off G), comes off G
<i>pri-</i>	N D	N belongs to D
<i>pro-</i>	N	N breaks down
	N (<i>kroz</i> A)	N falls through (A)
<i>ras-</i>	N se (<i>na</i> A)	N falls apart, decays (to A)
<i>u-</i>	N u A	N falls in(to) A

Some examples of use:

Moj auto se raspada. "My car is falling apart."

Meni pripada sto kuna. "One hundred kuna belongs to me." (*meni* = dat.)

The verb *dopadam* ~ *dopadnem, dopao, dopala, dopasti* with *se* uses a strange combination of cases we have already explored:

Ivanu se dopada Ana. "Ivan likes Ana." (*Ivanu* = dat., *Ana* = nom.)

Ivanu se dopadaju Ana i Ivana. "Ivan likes Ana and Ivana."

Don't forget that form of the verb follows the subject, that is *Ana* and *Ana i Ivana*, therefore the verb is in the plural in the second sentence!

43 Passive Adjectives; Verbal Nouns (Gerunds)

• • • Review: [34 Degrees of Adjectives and J-Softening](#)

Passive Adjectives

Take a look at the following sentences:

John has eaten the cake.
The cake is eaten.

English uses word "eaten" in two contexts — to make a past tense ("present perfect"), but also as an adjective, in the second sentence. Such adjective can be used before the noun:

The eaten cake was delicious.

Such word is called a "passive participle". Croatian has it too, but Croatian makes its past tense with another word — the *past participle*. I decided to call this one **passive adjective** (abbreviation: pass. adj.), since it's a true adjective, one can use it as any other adjective. It's not used to construct any tense in Croatian, it's a completely separate word I didn't explain yet.

Some people call it "passive participle", but I opted for the "adjective", to remind you it behaves as any adjective!

Not all verbs have it. Only verbs that have an object in acc. or dat. can have it, and not even all of them do. Verbs that have an obligatory *se*, e.g. *divim se* "admire" cannot have a passive adjective, so there's no real counterpart of "admired" in Croatian:

John was admired by Jane. — Sorry! Cannot say it in Croatian, you must rephrase it.

Even worse, ways to produce it are not really straightforward. One adds *-(e)n* or *-(e)t* the past (= infinitive) base, but there are some twists...

class	present	past participle (m, f)	passive adj.
e/o	<i>tres-e-m</i>	<i>tres--äo, tres--la</i>	<i>tres--en</i>
	<i>jed-e-m</i>	<i>je--o, je--la</i>	<i>jed--en</i>
	<i>plet-e-m</i>	<i>ple--o, ple--la</i>	<i>plet--en</i>
	<i>zarast-e-m</i>	<i>zarast--äo, zaras--la</i>	<i>zarašt--en</i>
	<i>peč-e-m</i>	<i>pek--äo, pek--la</i>	<i>peč--en</i>
	<i>pi-je-m</i>	<i>pi--o, pi--la</i>	<i>pi--jen</i>
	<i>zov-e-m</i>	<i>zva--o, zva--la</i>	<i>zva--n</i>
n	<i>to-ne-m</i>	<i>to-nu-o, to-nu-la</i>	<i>to-nu-t (!)</i>
a	<i>pit-a-m</i>	<i>pit-a-o, pit-a-la</i>	<i>pit-a-n</i>
i	<i>misl-i-m</i>	<i>misl-i-o, misl-i-la</i>	<i>mišlj-e-n</i> (see below!)
*v	<i>d-aje-m</i>	<i>d-ava-o, d-ava-la</i>	<i>d-ava-n</i>
	<i>kup-uje-m</i>	<i>kup-ova-o, kup-ova-la</i>	<i>kup-ova-n</i>
	<i>pokaz-uje-m</i>	<i>pokaz-iva-o, pokaz-iva-la</i>	<i>pokaz-iva-n</i>
	<i>plj-uje-m</i>	<i>plj-uva-o, plj-uva-la</i>	<i>plj-uva-n</i>

class	present	past participle (m, f)	passive adj.
'je/a	<i>der-e-m</i>	<i>der-a-o, der-a-la</i>	<i>der-a-n</i>
	<i>piš-e-m</i>	<i>pis-a-o, pis-a-la</i>	<i>pis-a-n</i>
	<i>vež-e-m</i>	<i>vez-a-o, vez-a-la</i>	<i>vez-a-n</i>
i/a	<i>drž-i-m</i>	<i>drž-a-o, drž-a-la</i>	<i>drž-a-n</i>
i/jë	<i>žel-i-m</i>	<i>žel-i-o, žel-jë-la</i>	<i>želj-e-n</i> (see below)

Forms of the adjective are same as of any other adjective, so it is the use:

Ivan je napisao pismo. "Ivan has written a letter."
Napisano pismo je poslao Ani. "He sent (the) written letter to Ana."

To form it, with most of verbs, you just discard *-la* of the past part. f, restore *d* or *t* that was possibly discarded, and add a *-n*. However, in the *nu* past bases you add *-t*, and in 0-past base, add *-en* or *-jen* if the base ends on a vowel.

An awkward thing is making passive adj. from *i-* and *jë-*verbs and some others, since the final consonant cluster undergoes "j-softening", for example:

vid-jen → *viđ-jen* → *viđ-en* "seen"
spas-jen → *spaš-jen* → *spaš-en* "saved"
voz-jen → *vož-jen* → *vož-en* "driven"
prat-jen → *prać-jen* → *prać-en* "followed"
sol-jen → *solj-jen* → *solj-en* "salted"
čist-jen → *čišć-jen* → *čišć-en* "cleaned"
lup-jen → *lup-jen* → *lup-ljen* "smacked"
prim-jen → *prim-jen* → *prim-ljen* "accepted, fetched"
uč-jen → *uč-jen* → *uč-en* "learned"
otvor-jen → *otvor-jen* → *otvor-en* "opened"

Unfortunately, some passive adjectives depart from the j-softening rule, and don't change all sounds, but keep a *t*:

pustila → *pušten*
zarsla → *zarašten*

When a passive adjective has an unexpected form, I'll list it.

Verbal Nouns (Gerunds)

Gerunds are nouns derived from verbs that stand for *action*. In English, *-ing* forms are used as gerunds, as in a sentence "Swimming is healthy". However, English reuses *-ing* forms to make continuous tenses ("I was swimming") and participles.

Croatian has a special word, and it's derived from the passive adjective, by adding *-je*, implying yet another j-softening!

However, all passive adjectives end either in *-n* (most of them) or *-t*, and the result is, by the softening rules:

-n + 'je → *-nje*
-t + 'je → *-će*

A gerund is always a neuter noun. In some books you can read that they always end on *-nje*. This is really an over-simplification. Let's see how gerunds in various verb classes look:

class	present	passive adj.	gerund
e/0	<i>tres-e-m</i>	<i>tres--en</i>	<i>tres--enje</i>
	<i>jed-e-m</i>	<i>jed--en</i>	<i>jed--enje</i>
	<i>plet-e-m</i>	<i>plet--en</i>	<i>plet--enje</i>
	<i>zarast-e-m</i>	<i>zarašt--en</i>	<i>zarašt--enje</i>
	<i>peč-e-m</i>	<i>peč--en</i>	<i>peč--enje</i>
	<i>pi-je-m</i>	<i>pi--jen</i>	<i>pi--jenje</i>
	<i>zov-e-m</i>	<i>zva--n</i>	<i>zva--nje</i>
n	<i>to-ne-m</i>	<i>to-nu-t (!)</i>	<i>to-nu-će</i>
a	<i>pit-a-m</i>	<i>pit-a-n</i>	<i>pit-a-nje</i>
i	<i>misl-i-m</i>	<i>mišlj-e-n</i>	<i>mišlj-e-nje</i>
*v	<i>d-aje-m</i>	<i>d-ava-n</i>	<i>d-ava-nje</i>
	<i>kup-uje-m</i>	<i>kup-ova-n</i>	<i>kup-ova-nje</i>
	<i>pokaz-uje-m</i>	<i>pokaz-iva-n</i>	<i>pokaz-iva-nje</i>
	<i>plj-uje-m</i>	<i>plj-uva-n</i>	<i>plj-uva-nje</i>
'je/a	<i>der-e-m</i>	<i>der-a-n</i>	<i>der-a-nje</i>
	<i>piš-e-m</i>	<i>pis-a-n</i>	<i>pis-a-nje</i>
	<i>vež-e-m</i>	<i>vez-a-n</i>	<i>vez-a-nje</i>
i/a	<i>drž-i-m</i>	<i>drž-a-n</i>	<i>drž-a-nje</i>
i/jë	<i>žel-i-m</i>	<i>želj-e-n</i>	<i>želj-e-nje</i>

Unfortunately, for a word that's quite hard to derive (since passive adjectives are really complicated!), gerunds are quite often used words. Similar to participles, some gerunds acquired a special meaning and are used as general nouns, without reference to an action (but still can be used meaning an action, if one really wants). For instance:

mišljenje "opinion"
pečenje "roast, a piece of baked or roasted meat"
pitanje "question"
predavanje "lecture"
znanje "knowledge"
zvanje "occupation, profession"

There is no other word for "question" in Croatian except the gerund-with-a-shifted-meaning *pitanje*.

Since gerunds indicate action, they are almost exclusively derived from impf. verbs. Words like *piće* "drink" were also once gerunds. One use of gerunds is in sentences like (remember: all gerunds are plain neuter nouns like *more*, since they end on -e):

Plivanje je zdravo. "Swimming is healthy."
Volim plivanje. "I like swimming."
Pušenje je zabranjeno. "Smoking is prohibited."

Phrase *zabranjeno pušenje* is very often seen everywhere. It's an interesting combination of a passive adjective (*zabranjen* from *zabranim* "ban") and a gerund (*pušenje* from *pušim* "smoke"). A famous Bosnian rock band is named after the phrase.



Another use of gerunds is to describe "purpose" of things, with preposition *za* "for":

Imam knjigu za čitanje lit. "I have a book for reading." = "I have a book to read."
Ovo je štap za pećanje. lit. "This is a rod for fishing." = "This is a fishing rod."

There's overlap with infinitives, and one can sometimes hear:

Imam knjigu za čitati.
Zabranjeno je pušiti.

However, gerunds are normally preferred to infinitives in standing for "action". Infinitives are really used in verb-verb constructs, like *želim pušiti* "I want to smoke".

We need to examine one more thing: since a gerund stands for action, one may attach other nouns or prepositional phrases to it as to a verb, but there is a fine point I'm going to illustrate by examples:

Pušim duhan. "I'm smoking tobacco" (*duhan* acc.)
 → *Pušenje duhana je...* "Smoking of tobacco is..." (*duhana* **gen.**)
Vozim se vlakom. "I'm traveling by train." (*vlakom* ins.)
 → *Vožnje vlakom je...* "Traveling by train is..." (*vlakom* ins.)
Šećem šumom. "I'm walking through forest." (*šumom* ins.)
 → *Šetanje šumom je...* "Walking through forest is..." (*šumom* ins.)
Pomažem ocu. "I'm helping (my) father." (*ocu* dat.)
 → *Pomaganje ocu je...* "Helping (my) father is..." (*ocu* dat.)
Spavam u šatoru. "I'm sleeping in (a/the) tent." (*šatoru* dat.)
 → *Spavanje u šatoru je...* "Sleeping in (a/the) tent is..." (*šatoru* dat.)

I hope you get it. Direct objects (that is, nouns in acc.) are always put to gen. when appended to gerunds, and everything else stays the same! *This is yet another use of the genitive case.*

44 Feelings, Emotions, Strange Case Uses

• • • Review: **5 Basic Sentences**, **16 Past Tense**

Verbs usually have one or more "arguments", i.e. a "subject", an "object", etc. In Croatian, a subject is in nom., an object in acc. In plain vanilla verbs, subject = person who does something, object = thing or person affected. So,

Ana čisti kuću. "Ana is cleaning (the) house."

Ana works, the house will get clean. However, in the next sentence, object is not really affected:

Ana čeka vlak. "Ana is waiting for (the) train." (*vlak* = acc.)

Nothing that Ana does really changes the train. Really, subject, object, and indirect objects are just "slots" that verb use in diverse ways. And it's not the same in all languages.

Impersonal-Dative Emotional Expressions

Regarding the case use, the biggest difference between Croatian and English is with expressions for feelings and emotions. Recall the following expression:

Hladno je. "It's cold."

It just states there's a feeling of coldness experienced by someone, maybe all, or it waits to be experienced. If you want to say that Ivan feels it, add him in the dative:

Ivanu je hladno. lit. "It's cold to Ivan." = "Ivan is cold.", "Ivan feels cold."

Several feelings are expressed in the same way, with *sām* "I am" in 3rd pers. sg. and an adverb:

Ivanu je žao. "Ivan is sorry."

Žao mi je. "I'm sorry." (*mi* = dat.)

Ivanu je drago. "Ivan is glad."

Dobro mi je. "I'm fine."

Dosadno mi je. "I'm bored."

Loše mi je. "I'm sick."

Ivanu je vruće. "Ivan is hot."

Vruće mi je. "I'm hot."

Vruće je. "It's hot."

Toplo mi je. "I feel warm."

Lijepo je. "It's nice."

Lijepo mi je. "I feel nice."

Drago mi je. "I'm pleased." (e.g. to meet someone)

Strašno mi je. "I feel terrible." (can be good or bad.)

Grozno mi je. "I feel awful."

Jasno je. "It's clear." (= "obvious.")

Jasno mi je. "It's clear to me."

In the past, the neuter form of past participle *bilo* is used — this is an impersonal use:

Bilo mi je žao. "I was sorry."

All feelings that can be expressed with an impersonal statement in Croatian, can get an indirect object in dat.

With most of these expressions you can add "reason" using *zbog* + gen., and with *žao je*, also "source" in gen.:

Žao mi je Ane. "I'm sorry for Ana." (*Ane* = gen.)
Hladno mi je zbog vjētra. "I'm cold because of the wind." (*vjētra* = gen.)
Vruće je zbog sunca. "It's hot because of the sun."
Strašno mi je zbog nesreće. "I feel terrible because of (the) accident."

An infinitive can be added, similar to verbs like *znam*:

Dosadno mi je. "I'm bored."
Dosadno mi je čekati. "I'm bored of waiting."
Bilo mi je dosadno čekati. "I was bored of waiting."
Dosadno mi je čekati ovdje. "I'm bored waiting here."

Nominative-Adjective Emotional Expressions

However, some feelings are not expressed in the way I just described. Some examples:

Ivan je gladān. "Ivan is hungry."
Ivan je Źedān. "Ivan is thirsty."
Ivan je umorān. "Ivan is tired."
Ivan je pospān. "Ivan is sleepy."
Ivan je bolestān. "Ivan is ill."
Ivan je ponosān. "Ivan is proud."

These sentences have a completely different structure. In the former ones, *hladno*, *toplo*, *Źao*... are either adverbs, but in the latter type, they are adjectives that agree with the subject.

Unfortunately, there's no logic why "bored" is expressed with an adverb in Croatia, and "hungry" with an adjective. You will have to memorize it "as is".

With a lot of such expressions one can also say who feels it, using the dative:

Knjiga je dosadna. "(The) book is boring."
Knjiga mi je dosadna. "(The) book is boring for me." (lit. "to me") = "I find (the) book boring."

See, "boring" is expressed with an adjective! The story with such use of dative goes on and on, but I'll leave it for now.

Verbs Using Strange Cases

Now, onto the most often used verbs that use unexpected case assignments! For instance, there are verbs like *bolim* "cause pain". The verb is almost always used in the 3rd person: it's always some body part that causes pain (the verb is not used when one person hurts or injures another), and one who feels it is the object (in acc.):

Boli. "It hurts." (impers.)
Ruka boli. "(The) arm hurts."
Boli me. "It hurts me." (impers.)
Boli me ruka. "(The) arm hurts me." = "My arm hurts."

The subject in the sentences above is only *ruka*: if not impersonal, the verb agrees with it:

Boljela me je ruka. "My arm was hurting." (subject is *ruka*, the verb and participle agree with it!)
Bole me ruke. "(The) arms hurt me." = "My arms hurt."
Boli me zub. "My tooth hurts."

Similar verb is *mućim* "torture"; when its subject is not a person, it gets much a weaker meaning "bother":

Muće me dugovi. "(The) debts bother me."
Mući me škola. "(the) school bothers me."

There are some expressions that use *je* and an experiencer in acc.:

Strah me je. "I'm scared."
Anu je strah. "Ana is scared." (*Anu* = acc.)

If you want to say what are you scared of, add it in the gen.:

Strah me je visine. "I'm scared of height." = "Height scares me."
Anu je strah bolesti. "Ana is scared of disease." (*Anu* = acc., *bolesti* = gen.)

It means almost the same thing as *bojim se*, where a thing you're afraid of is in the gen. too.

Few verbs don't have an object in accusative, but in the dative.

Among them are certain reflexives:

svidam se ~ svidim se

This verb means "cause sympathy, appeal to", it's the Croatian counterpart of "like". So if you want to say "I like Ana" in Croatian, the *only* way is:

Ana mi se sviđa. "Ana appeals to me. = "I like Ana."

This permits Croatian to make sentences as:

Ana je zgodna i sviđa mi se. "Ana is pretty and I like her."
Zgodna si i sviđaš mi se. "You are pretty and I like you." (talking to a female)

Ana is the subject of both sub-sentences in the first sentence, and "you" in the second!

dopadam se ~ dopadnem se, dopao se

This verb is very like *svidim se/svidam se*, but a slightly weaker emotion. All said about grammar is identical. Forms of the imperfect verb are the simple a/a type so I decided listing them is really wasting of time. Another verb:

gadim se "disgust"

This is a completely opposite meaning of *dopadnem se*, but the same syntax:

Meso mi se gadi. "Meat digusts me."

More complex verbs are:

veselim (se)
radujem (se), radovao (se)

These two verbs have a similar meaning and use, but can be used in two ways:

N ¹ A ²	"N ¹ gives joy to A ² "
N ² se D ¹	"N ² enjoys D ¹ "

For example, both lines mean more or less the same:

Raduje me Ana. Vesele me praznici. (*me* = acc., *Ana, praznici* = nom.)
Radujem se Ani. Veselim se praznicima. (*Ani, praznicima* = dat.)

One more verb uses the same system:

čudim (se) "wonder"

For example:

Čudi me pitanje. "(The) question wonders me."
Čudim se pitanju. "I wonder about the question." (more or less the same meaning as the first sentence!)

There are few verbs where person who does the action is only in the nom., and an object in the dat. They always have a *se*:

nadam se "hope"
divim se "admire, marvel"
smijem se, smijao se "laugh"
rugam se "mock"
smilujem se, smilovao se perf. "have mercy"
osvećujem se, osvećivao se ~ osvetim se "revenge"

For instance:

Nadam se pobjedi. "I hope for a victory." (*pobjedi* = dat.)
Divim ti se. "I admire you." (*ti* = dat.)
Rugala mu se. "She mocked him."
Ivan se osvetio Ani. "Ivan took revenge on Ana."

Then, there's a group of "helping/not helping" verbs, they don't have a *se*:

lažem, lagao ~ s- "lie"
pripadam ~ pripadnem, pripao, pripala, pripasti "belong" *služim* "serve"
sudim ~ pre- "judge"
udovoljavam ~ udovoljim "satisfy", "fulfill a wish"
ugađam ~ ugodim "please"
vjêrujem "believe"

The affected party is always in the dative:

Ivan je lagao Ani. "Ivan lied to Ana."
Auto je pripadao Ani. "(The) car belonged to Ana."
Ana je vjêrovala Ivanu. "Ana believed in Ivan."

This group is as the previous one, but can also include an additional "instrument" object in ins.:

odgovaram ~ odgovorim "answer"
prijêtim "threaten"
smetam "interfere, obstruct, be in the way, hamper"
pomažem, pomagao ~ pomognem, pomogao, pomogla, pomoći "help"

For example:

Ivan je pomogao Ani. "Ivan has helped Ana."
Ivan je pomagao Ani. "Ivan was helping Ana." (aspect difference! don't forget it!)
Auto je smetao Ani. "(The) car hampered Ana."
Ana je prijêtila Ivanu. "Ana threatened Ivan."
Ivan je pomogao Ani novcem. "Ivan has helped Ana with money." (*novcem* = ins.)
Auto je smetao Ani bukom. "(The) car hampered Ana with noise." (*bukom* = ins.; *buka* "noise")
Ana je prijêtila Ivanu policijom. "Ana threatened Ivan with the police." (*policijom* = ins.)

These were major exceptions to the rule "X eats Y" → Y = acc. There are some verbs that have objects in genitive, but most of other verbs have an object in accusative, if any. But recall, reflexive verbs have never objects in accusative, since the object-in-acc. position is filled by *se*.

45 Nouns for Small and Dear

Diminutives

Croatian (as many other languages do) has mechanisms for creating nouns standing for miniature versions of things. Those words are often applied to babies, children, and parts of them, and therefore stand for "cute" and "dear" things as well. For instance, in Croatian you can say that a baby has a *nos* "nose", but people mostly say that it has a *nosić* "little nose". Likewise, it has a *glava* "head", but people prefer *glavica* "small head". Such words are called [diminutives](#) and usually have a different emotional content.

The main device to make diminutives is adding *-ić* (sometimes *-čić*) to m-nouns, *-#ica* to a-nouns, and *-ce* or *-ešce* to n-nouns (for the a- and n- nouns the final vowel of nom.sg. is to be thrown away first; the symbol # in *-#ica* should suggest that before it sounds change: *k, c* → *č*, *g, z* → *ž*, *h, s* → *š*, but that' does not always happen). Some examples:

<i>brod</i> "ship" → <i>brodić</i>	<i>vlak</i> "train" → <i>vlakić</i>
<i>ključ</i> "key" → <i>ključić</i>	<i>zec</i> "rabbit" → <i>zečić</i>
<i>kruh</i> "bread" → <i>kruščić</i>	<i>zub</i> "tooth" → <i>zubić</i>
<i>prst</i> "finger" → <i>prstić</i>	<i>novčić</i> "money" → <i>novčić</i> "small money = coin"
<i>nos</i> "nose" → <i>nosić</i>	<i>put</i> "way, path" → <i>putić</i> "small, narrow path"

For a-nouns:

<i>glava</i> "head" → <i>glavica</i>	<i>torba</i> "bag" → <i>torbica</i> "purse"
<i>pčela</i> "bee" → <i>pčelica</i>	<i>ruka</i> "hand" → <i>ručica</i> "small hand", "handle"
<i>krava</i> "cow" → <i>kravica</i>	<i>vreća</i> "sack" → <i>vrećica</i> "small, shopping bag"
<i>žena</i> "woman, wife" → <i>ženica</i>	<i>djèvojka</i> "girl (formal)" → <i>djèvojčica</i>
<i>tata m</i> "dad" → <i>tatica m</i>	<i>cura</i> "girl (informal)" → <i>curica</i>

For n-nouns, some diminutives are:

<i>jezero</i> "lake" → <i>jezerce</i>	<i>selo</i> "village" → <i>seoce</i>
<i>sunce</i> "sun" → <i>sunašce</i>	<i>pivo</i> "beer" → <i>pivce</i>

Although this seems kind of regular, not every word makes use of a diminutive. In that aspect, there are many similarities to making possessives.

Diminutives are frequent in family names: *Jurić* originally meant "small Jure" = "son of Jure", *Tomić* "small Tomo", *Nikolić* "small Nikola" etc. Hence all the family names ending on *-ić*, a well known feature of Croatia and neighboring countries.

Another use of *-ica*

The suffix *-#ica* is also used to create feminine nouns from male ones, mostly for animals, some roles and professions; for example:

	male	female		male	female
"pidgeon"	<i>golub</i>	<i>golubica</i>	"king", "queen"	<i>kralj</i>	<i>kraljica</i>
"lion"	<i>lav</i>	<i>lavica</i>	"friend"	<i>prijatelj</i>	<i>prijateljica</i>
"bear"	<i>medvjed</i>	<i>medvjedica</i>	"professor"	<i>profesor</i>	<i>profesorica</i>
"wolf"	<i>vuk</i>	<i>vučica</i>	"univ. student"	<i>student</i>	<i>studentica</i>
"rabbit"	<i>zec</i>	<i>zečica</i>	"teacher"	<i>učitelj</i>	<i>učiteljica</i>

It's not so simple, unfortunately: first, for professions and roles on *-ik*, this ending is just replaced with *-ica*:

	male	female
"physician"	<i>lijčnik</i>	<i>lijčnica</i>
"president"	<i>predsjednik</i>	<i>predsjednica</i>
"worker, employee"	<i>radnik</i>	<i>radnica</i>
"pupil, student"	<i>učenik</i>	<i>učenica</i>

Second, this method is not universal, for some weird reasons it does not work for some words, e.g. you cannot add do this with *pisac* "writer", *vojniki* "soldier" or *svjedok* "witness". More about such words is explained later in 54 [Appositions, Roles and Family Relations](#).

Important: such nouns, despite ending on *-ica*, do not mean something small, just something female.

Hypocorisms

Similar to diminutives are [hypocorisms](#). Those are simply affectionate, intimate, and sometimes shortened versions of people names, like in English "Tony" from "Anthony", "Mike" from "Michael", etc. Sometimes people have such names as their real names, but often one name is "official" and a hypocorism is always used except in the most formal situations. For example, everyone called a former US president "Bill Clinton", although his official name was [William Jefferson Clinton](#). Likewise, everyone (in media, among people) calls the former Croatian president *Stipe Mesić*, but in his documents (and on a ballot paper) he is actually [Stjepan Mesić](#).

There's no regular way to derive hypocorisms for male names, they are fixed in language but also depend on local traditions. Some often used are:

<i>Ante</i> (← <i>Antun</i> "Anthony")	<i>Krešo</i> (← <i>Krešimir</i>)
<i>Braco</i>	<i>Kruno</i> (← <i>Krunoslav</i>)
<i>Dado</i>	<i>Lovro</i>
<i>Drago</i>	<i>Ljubo</i>
<i>Duje</i>	<i>Mate, Mato</i> (← <i>Matej</i> "Matthew")
<i>Edo</i> (← <i>Eduard</i>)	<i>Mišo</i> (← <i>Mihovil</i>)
<i>Franjo, Frano</i>	<i>Pero</i> (← <i>Petar</i> "Peter")
<i>Ivo, Ive</i> (← <i>Ivan</i> "John")	<i>Stipe</i> (← <i>Stjepan</i> "Stephen")
<i>Jure, Đuro, Jura</i> (← <i>Juraj</i> "George")	<i>Tomo</i> (← <i>Tomislav</i>)

Some of these hypocorisms are used as real, official names.

All these male hypocorisms end on a vowel. Together with some male names that end on *-a* but are not hypocorisms (most often are: *Borna, Luka, Matija*) they all belong to a-nouns, and have all other endings like them, but they are of course masculine.

Diminutives that are used by children also fall into this group: *medo* "teddy bear", *zeko* "bunny".

nom.sg.	<i>Mate</i>	<i>Ivo</i>	<i>Luka</i>
acc.sg.	<i>Matu</i>	<i>Ivu</i>	<i>Luku</i>
dat.sg.	<i>Mati</i>	<i>Ivi</i>	<i>Luki</i>
gen.sg.	<i>Mate</i>	<i>Ive</i>	<i>Luke</i>
ins.sg.	<i>Matom</i>	<i>Ivom</i>	<i>Lukom</i>

For female names, the diminutive mechanism is used. The hypocorisms are again sometimes used as true names.

Ana → *Anica* *Jana* → *Janica* *Vera* → *Verica*
Draga → *Dragica* *Mara* → *Marica* *Željka* → *Željka*

Ivica, contrary to what you could expect, is a often used male name, and goes with *Mate* and the rest of masculine a-nouns; it's derived from *Ivo*, since it's an a-noun so *-ica* can be added to it! The same holds for *Jurica*, *Perica* and *Tomica*...

It's interesting to note that there are 4 words for "rabbit": *zec* "rabbit" (m^a, m^a-noun), *zečica* "she-rabbit" (f, a-noun), *zečić* "little rabbit" (m^a, m^a-noun), *zeko* "bunny" (m^a, a-noun, child's word)! Yes, Croatian has many words.

Weird m-nouns

Some masculine nouns that end on vowels are not a-nouns but m-nouns! They are:

- loanwords for things like *auto* "car", *kakao* "cocoa", *kanu* "canoe"
- some nouns that end on an *-o* in nom.sg. but have *-l* in other cases (e.g. *pepeo* mⁱ "ash")
- male names (including some hypocorisms) that end on *-ko*, *-lo* or *-je*
- nouns *dečko* "boy", "boyfriend" and *snježsko* "snowman".

Most of them just drop the *-o* from nominative and change like any other m-nouns. For example:

nom.sg.	<i>Marko</i>	<i>auto</i>	<i>kanu</i>	<i>pepeo</i>
acc.sg.	<i>Marka</i>			
dat.sg.	<i>Marku</i>	<i>autu</i>	<i>kanuu</i>	<i>pepe<u>l</u></i>
gen.sg.	<i>Marka</i>	<i>auta</i>	<i>kanua</i>	<i>pepe<u>l</u>a</i>
ins.sg.	<i>Markom</i>	<i>autom</i>	<i>kanuom</i>	<i>pepe<u>l</u>om</i>
nom.pl.	—	<i>auti</i>	<i>kanui</i>	<i>pepe<u>l</u>i</i>
acc.pl.		<i>aute</i>	<i>kanue</i>	<i>pepe<u>l</u>e</i>
dat./ins.pl.		<i>autima</i>	<i>kanuima</i>	<i>pepe<u>l</u>ima</i>
gen.pl.		<i>auta</i>	<i>kanua</i>	<i>pepe<u>l</u>a</i>

Masculine nouns that have *o/l* alternation (e.g. *pepeo*) is covered in 66 [Final L Lost; Sound Assimilations](#), together with nouns that end on *-io* (e.g. *radio*).

Most often used male names that end on *-ko*, *-lo* or *-je* (and so behave as any m-nouns) are:

Darko *Karlo* *Mirko* *Zdravko*
Hrvoje *Marko* *Slavko* *Zlatko*
Jadranko *Matko* *Srećko* *Žarko*

So, now you know how to decline all male names.

46 Mediopassive

• • • Review: **30 Reflexive Pronoun**, **44 Feelings, Emotions, Strange Case Uses**

We are now deep into strange waters of Croatian, and we're going to explore a controversial topic, the "passive" or "middle" construct, different people call it by different names (and it has more than one purpose). I'll use a compromise name; names are not that important! We'll start by emphasizing that English has passive adjectives, for instance:

"A bird is watched."

"A bird is watched by the cat."

"The watched bird has flown away."

"A song is heard." etc.

Croatian *has* passive adjectives, but there's another construct as well, twisting nouns and cases in a very unexpected way (for an English speaker, that is).

First, why would one use a passive at all? One reason is that you are not that interested in subjects, that subjects are irrelevant or unknown, or there are too many of them; maybe you want to say:

"The song was performed and heard in every village."

If you wouldn't use passives, you should have said:

"People performed the song, and people heard it in every village."

But it is actually saying something that you don't actually know, since maybe only men were performing the song? Or the traveling minstrels? So, a passive is required.

However, Croatian has a passive adjective *izvođen* "performed", but misses a passive adjective meaning "heard"; instead, Croatian performs the following trick:

First, *pjesma* "song" is made the subject of verbs, as if the song *itself* was performing and hearing. Second, to emphasize that *pjesma* is really an object (or, to "kill" the verb), a reflexive *se* is used:

Pjesma se izvodila. "The song was performed." (lit. "song performed itself.")

Recall that the auxiliary verb *je* is mostly dropped when a *se* is used. Now we can translate the English sentence:

Pjesma se izvodila i slušala u svakom selu.

Two past participles can always be linked together with *i* "and". This is the exact translation of the English sentence!

However, this is not a true passive; in Croatian construct you cannot say *who was performing or hearing*, there's no "by..." in Croatian in this case! English has, actually some very similar examples (so-called "[ergative verbs](#)"):

"Boys broke the window."

"The window broke." (but you cannot say "The window broke by children.")

Prozor se razbio.

"The soup is cooking."

Juha se kuha.

"The book reads well. The trousers wash easily."

Again, subjects of these sentences are *pjesma*, *juha*, *prozor* and all of them are in the nominative! The literal translation is "song performed itself", "soup is cooking itself", etc. but it actually means "song was performed", "soup was cooked". Some more examples, showing how Croatian extends it

to many verbs:

Vide se šavovi. "Stitches are showing."
Piše se ispit. "An exam is being written."

Other use is when something, what can be sometimes done by someone, but it happens on its own, for example things cool down, get spoiled, etc. (so-called *middle*, "on its own")

Juha se ohladila. "(The) soup has cooled."
Juha se zgrijala. "(The) soup has warmed."
Juha se pokvarila. "(The) soup has spoiled."

All this can be done regardless of tense:

Juha će se skuhati. "(The) soup will cook."
Juha se skuhalo. "(The) soup has cooked."
Vidjeli su se šavovi. "Stitches were showing."

In fact, we might say that, for example, the form *vraćam se* is really a mediopassive: it's *the subject* who changes position, who moves to the old one (= returns), but it's caused by the subject itself, the same as the soup that cools "on its own". If one says *Ana vraća knjigu* it's the *knjiga* "book" that changes position, Ana is doing something, but she does not have to move at all. There's a very blurred line between reflexives and mediopassives, and they both use the *se*.

However, a former object made subject is not that important; without it, one gets an *impersonal mediopassive* construct, and as with all impersonals in Croatian, missing (and unpronounceable) subject is in the neuter gender, and the verb and adjectives (including the past participle) agree with it:

Ljudi puše. "People are smoking."
Puši se. Impersonal, "there's smoking", but not really translatable!
Pušilo se. "There was smoking." (the past participle must be in the neuter gender!)

In English, impersonal sentences would such as "one says...", or "you should..." when not talking to anyone particularly.

One can summarize various options of transitive verbs in a neat table. "Agreement" means that the past participle and the verb (if any) has the form of gender and number according to the subject of the sentence:

	cook unknown / irrelevant	cook known (<i>Ivan m</i>)
food unknown / irrelevant	<i>Kuhalo se.</i> p.p. in sg.n, <u>no agreement</u> "There was cooking."	<i>Ivan je kuhao.</i> agreement with <i>Ivan</i> nom.sg.m "Ivan was cooking."
food known (<i>juha f</i>)	<i>Juha se kuhala.</i> agreement with <i>juha</i> nom.sg.f "The soup was cooking."	<i>Ivan je kuhao juhu.</i> agreement with <i>Ivan</i> nom.sg.m "Ivan was cooking a soup."

In the above table, the left, shaded column are "mediopassive constructions", but otherwise the table is really symmetrical. In all mediopassive constructions, there's always *se*, never *sebe*: it is a "filler", as in the "permanently reflexive verbs" *smijem se*, *bojim se*, *nadam se*. Oh, yes: some people don't call this feature "mediopassive", but it's actually the same feature as in Spanish (and elsewhere), and they do call it a "mediopassive", even the reflexive pronoun sounds familiar:

Spanish: *El libro se vende.* "The book sells."
 French: *Le livre se vend.* "The book sells."
 Croatian: *Knjiga se prodaje.* "(The) book sells."

German: *Das Buch verkauft sich*. "The book sells."

All meaning, literally, "(the) book sells itself." English uses just "sells" for both "The bookstore sells the book" and "The book sells". Some other languages do not. You see again, English has a quite different grammar from many other languages, really a pity, when trying to explain things.

If you know some Spanish or Italian, you'll realize that some phrases correspond really word-to-word, with same verb forms and same meaning:

Spanish: *¿Cómo se dice "perro" en inglés?*
 Croatian: *Kako se kaže "pas" na engleskom?*
 both lit. "How is it said "dog" on English?"

Intransitive (= no object) verbs have less options:

sleeper unknown / irrelevant	sleeper known (<i>Ivan m</i>)
<i>Spavalo se u krevetu.</i> p.p. in sg.n, <u>no agreement</u> "There was sleeping in (the) bed."	<i>Ivan je spavao u krevetu.</i> agreement with <i>Ivan</i> nom.sg.m "Ivan was sleeping in (the) bed."

However, some verbs can make forms without a *se*; this is really exceptional, object stays in the accusative. This is *not* a mediopassive, just a normal ("active") impersonal:

	about general situation	about what <i>Ivan m</i> has
thing unknown / irrelevant	—	<i>Ivan ima.</i> agreement with <i>Ivan</i> nom.sg.m "Ivan has (things)."
thing known (<i>juha f</i>)	<i>Bilo je juhe.</i> p.p. in sg.n, <u>no agreement</u> "There was (some) soup." (existence) <i>Imalo se juhe.</i> p.p. in sg.n, <u>no agreement</u> "'They' had (some) soup." (possession)	<i>Ivan je imao juhe.</i> agreement with <i>Ivan</i> nom.sg.m "Ivan had (some) soup."

Of course, there are verbs that are always impersonal, like *kiši* "it rains", etc. And there are active impersonal constructs like *hladno je* "it's cold" and so on.

An important thing: a dative used with *se*-impersonals and mediopassives (quite unexpectedly, I admit) most often means that one "feels like" doing something:

Pije se. (impersonal; roughly, "there's drinking.")
Pije mu se. "He feels like drinking."
Pilo mu se. "He felt like drinking." (*pilo* = nom.sg.n = impersonal)
Pije se voda. (mediopassive) "Water is drunk"
Pila se voda. (mediopassive) "Water was drunk" (observe: *pila* = nom.sg.f == *voda* nom.sg.f)
Pila mu se voda. "He felt like drinking water."
Ide se na posao. (impersonal) "There's going to work."
Ne ide mu se na posao. "He feels like not going to work."
Spava mi se. "I'm sleepy."
Spavalo mi se. "I was sleepy." (observe: *spavalo* = nom.sg.n = impersonal)

So, you finally know how to say in Croatian "I am sleepy." This is very similar to other impersonal and similar "strange constructs" for emotions and experiences. This does not imply a "wish", but rather an involuntary desire, urge, something that "comes on its own".

For an illustration, there's a pop song that uses such expression:

<i>Nosi mi se bijela boja</i>	"I feel like wearing white color
<i>Te je boje radost moja</i>	That is the color of my joy
<i>Tvoje lice, duša, tijelo</i>	Your face, soul, body
<i>Sve je bijelo, bijelo</i>	All is white, white"

Some expressions:

Nosi mi se — impers., lit. "It's carried to me." = "I feel like wearing"
radost moja — poetic lit. "joy my." = "my joy"
te boje — lit. "of that color", a phrase in gen.

Exercise

Put these sentences in the mediopassive:

Ana je čitala knjigu. "Ana was reading the book."
Mačka je jela meso. "The cat was eating meat."
Ivan je napisao i poslao pismo. "Ivan has written and sent the letter."

Next, put these sentences in the impersonal form (except for the last sentence), and then into the need-to-form ("Ana felt like reading the book").

47 Relational and Similar Subclauses

• • • Review: [23 Questions, Part 1](#), [24 Questions, Part 2](#)

Warning. This is a difficult but important part of Croatian.

koji: Relational (Adjective) Subclauses

There's a way to turn any sentence into a clause appended to a noun. To see what I'm talking about, let's see how we can describe a book:

Čitam dobru knjigu. "I'm reading a good book."
Čitam tu knjigu. "I'm reading that book."
Čitam tvoju knjigu. "I'm reading your book."

But maybe you want to say something else, that "you wrote that book." and now "I'm reading a book." English uses a simple modification of sentence:

"I'm reading a book (which) you wrote."

"A book you wrote" is a kind of book, similar to "my book", but not described using a simple attribute, but a whole sentence. Now, how to say it in Croatian? First, start with the sentence:

Napisala si tu knjigu. "You wrote that book."

Second, transform it by inserting the same case/number/gender of *koji* instead of the words (*tu knjigu*) you are going to replace, and move it to the front:

Koju si napisala "that/which you wrote"

Then, use it after the noun in the main sentence:

Čitam knjigu [koju si napisala]. "I'm reading a book (which) you wrote."

The word *koju* cannot be left out. It doesn't change, it's locked in its case, together with the rest of the clause:

pročitao sām u knjizi [koju si napisala]... (*knjizi* = dat.)
iz knjige [koju si napisala]... "from the book [you wrote]" (*knjige* = gen.)
s knjigom [koju si napisala]... "with the book [you wrote]" (*knjigom* = ins.)

However, if you read "books", then she wrote "books", so *koju* must go in plural:

Čitam knjige [koje si napisala]. "I'm reading (the) books [you wrote]."

One could say that *koji* agrees with the noun it follows in its number and in gender, but its case (here: acc.) is defined by its role in the inserted sentence (= clause). We can use any role in the sentence:

Probudio sām ženu [koja je spavala u autu]. "I woke up a woman [who was sleeping in the car]."

As in questions, English demands "who" in properties of a subject, but Croatian uses always the same pattern. In the above example, *koja* is in the nom.sg.f.

If the word in the inserted sentence is a part of a prepositional phrase, the preposition comes to the first place before *koji* (it sticks to it, as in questions):

Čistim sobu [u kojoj si spavala]. "I'm cleaning the room [you were sleeping in]."

From:

U toj sobi si spavala.

There's another, possibly a simpler way to understand this. You want to insert a sentence about the "book" in the main sentence that also has to do with the same "book". Rearrange two sentences so that both "books" come as close as possible:

*Čitam knjigu. Tu knjigu si napisala.
Čistim sobu. U toj sobi si spavala.*

You must respect constraints of word order, and this is as close as it gets. Now, replace phrase *ta knjiga* "that book" (adjusted for case) with an appropriate gender/case/number of *koji* "what/which", and just join the sentences:

*Čitam knjigu koju si napisala.
Čistim sobu u kojoj si spavala.*

It is now glued to a noun, the clause cannot be separated:

U sobi [u kojoj si spavala] je hladno. "It's cold in the room [you slept in]."

Such clauses are often called relative clauses, and *koji* serves as a "relative pronoun", "relative conjunction" etc. Names are not that important.

Other Relational (Adjective) Subclauses

There are three other ways to make adjective-clauses, similar to three other types of questions about adjectives. But the main confusion is with quality-clauses made with *kakav*. Such questions and clauses are only regarding what some things are *like*. Straightforward:

Čitam knjigu [kakvu si napisala].

This sentence looks slightly awkward to a Croatian speaker, but it's regular. It means:

"I'm reading a book like (the) one you wrote."

It's just a "similar book". But with *koji*, it's really determining — exactly the same "book", one of them, etc. Everything said about *koji*-clauses applies to *kakav*-clauses applies to this type as well, but it's likeness. They are much less often used, so I'm not going to write about such sentences much more.

The third type of determining is by *possession*. Creating them follows the same rules, just replace with *čiji* "whose":

Došao je čovjek [čiji auto sâm vozio] "A man [whose car I drove] came"

From:

došao je čovjek + njegov auto sâm vozio

Adverb Subclauses

All these types were just appended to a *noun*. But similar clauses can be appended to *adverbs* such as *tako*, *ovdje*, *tamo*, *tada*, etc. making them more specific:

Idemo tamo. "We're going there."
Ondjě/tamo je toplo. "It's warm there."

To insert a clause, use question-words *gdjě*, *kako*, *kamo*, *kad(a)*, *koliko*, etc. The word *tamo* (or *ondjě*) from the second sentence is replaced by *gdjě*:

Idemo tamo [gdjē je toplo]. "We're going where it's warm."

Since adverbs are predictable, they can be removed:

Idemo [gdjē je toplo]. Vratit ću se [kad nađem posao]. "I'll return when I find a job."
Nisam jēo od [kada sam se probudio]. "I didn't eat since I had woken up." (lit. "from when")
Platit ću [koliko sam dužan]. "I'll pay as much as I owe."
Napravio sam [kako si mi rekla]. "I did how you had told me."

As with questions, there are fused variants *otkad(a)* etc.

Another word used to make relational subclauses is *dok* "while"; it's not used to pose questions:

Pojeli smo ručak [dok si gledao televiziju]. "We ate lunch [while you were watching TV]."

Such clauses can be used with verbs like *znam* "know", *vidim* "see", *čujem* "hear" etc., to represent information, same as in English:

Znam [gdjē su ključevi]. "I know [where the keys are]"
Vidjela si [kad sam došao]. "You saw [when I came]."

Noun Subclauses

A completely different type of compound sentences are replacements for nouns. The clauses above were just attachments to nouns, but we can make a sentences like:

"I took what was in the box."

One can, of course, rephrase it as "I took things that were in the box", but it's now less generic, maybe there was just one thing. Nevertheless, because of such rephrasing, these constructs are much less used. In Croatian, you start with sentences:

Uzeo sam nešto. "I took something."
Što je bilo u kutiji. "What was in the box."

You then replace *nešto* "something" from the first sentence with the entire second one:

Uzeo sam [što je bilo u kutiji].

The inserted sentence is identical to a question. A *tko* (for persons) or *što* (for everything else) must be put in the appropriate case.

Što je u kutiji? (što = acc.)
Što jede? (što = acc.) "What is (he/she) eating?"
S kim šeće? (kim = ins.) "Who is (he/she) walking with?"
Na čemu su ključevi? "What are the keys on?"

To create:

Vidim [što je u kutiji]. "I see what is in the box."
Vidim [što jede]. "I see what he/she is eating."
Znam [s kim šeće]. "I know who he/she is walking with."
Znam [na čemu su ključevi]. "I know what the keys are on."

More examples:

Znam [tko je pred vratima]. "I know [who is in front of the door]."
Ne znam [kome si poslao pismo]. "I don't know [who you sent the letter to]."

Sometimes, people leave pronouns in front of *tko/što*, so it could be:

Vidim nešto što je u kutiji. Znam nekog s kim šeće.

It has a slightly different meaning — you see "something that's in the box", "somebody he walks with", etc. But possibly not all. Without *netko/nešto*, you see/know all that's in.

Some other pronouns can be used in front of *tko/što*:

Vidim ono [što je u kutiji]. "I see what is in the box."
Vidim to [što jede]. "I see what he/she is eating."
Znam onoga [s kim šće]. "I know who he/she is walking with."
Znam ono [na čemu su ključevi]. "I know what the keys are on."

With such pronouns there's no change of meaning, *ono što* is really the same as *ono*. So, *tko/što* can be used on its own, or attached to pronouns, or as a replacement for pronouns and nouns.

Again, the case of *tko/što* is fully determined by the inserted clause, it nothing to do with the whole sentence. The inserted clause starts with the question-word, so it's at the first place, short words follow it immediately, according to the placement rule. Also, regarding the tenses, there are no problems really, just put one sentence into another, nothing needs to be adjusted, contrary to English.

Summary

Of all types, *koji*-clauses are the most often used.

Summary		
Clauses talking more about a noun — come after the noun:		
"which"	<i>knjiga koju si napisala</i>	← <i>tu knjigu si napisala</i>
"what like"	<i>knjiga kakvu si napisala</i>	← <i>takvu knjigu si napisala</i>
"as much as"	<i>novca koliko si imala</i>	← <i>toliko novca si imala</i>
"whose"	<i>žena čiju knjigu čitam</i>	← <i>njegovu/njenu knjigu čitam</i> (don't remove <i>knjigu</i>)
Turning a whole sentence into a time, location, manner, etc. clause, or to an addition to an adverb:		
"how"	<i>(tako/ovako...) kako si rekla</i>	← <i>tako si rekla</i>
"where"	<i>(tu/ovdje...) gdje si spavala</i>	← <i>tu si spavala</i>
"when"	<i>(tada/onda...) kad(a) si došla</i>	← <i>tada si došla</i>
...
All question-words for adverb-type sentences can be used. Replacing noun or talking more about a pronoun:		
	"exactly"	"some"
"who"	<i>(onaj) tko je napisao</i>	<i>netko tko je napisao</i>
"what"	<i>(ono) što si napisala</i>	<i>nešto što si napisala</i>

Relative clauses are really often used, one account says when translating from Russian, their amount triples in the Croatian text compared to the Russian one. Croatian really likes them since they replace some constructs common in other languages.

48 Few Special Words

• • • Review: [36 'da' and Similar Clauses](#)

Using *nego*

The word *nego* mainly means "than". It's used with comparatives, either adjectives or adverbs. It can come before nouns, prepositional phrases, or can turn nouns in any case into an adjective phrase or adverbial phrase:

Hladnije je nego na Sjevernom polu. "It's colder than on the North Pole."
Volim ga više nego mog brata. "I like him more than my brother."

In this use, it can be replaced by *od* if it stands before a simple noun phrase:

Volim ga više od mog brata. "I like him more than my brother."

However, if you want to compare against a *clause*, you cannot use *nego* but *nego što*:

Hladnije je nego što sam mislio. "It's colder than I thought."

As you can see, *što* restarts word counting and occupies the first position: short forms come immediately after it.

There's a special rule with words *prijē* and *poslijē*. They are comparatives but can be put before nouns (or noun phrases) without *od* or *nego*:

Otišao sam prije kiše. "I left before rain."

However, when used with clauses, *nego što* must be used:

Otišao sam prije nego što je kiša počela. "I left before the rain started."

Another use of *nego* is to connect two opposite sentences. The first sentence is always in negation, and the second one "corrects" it:

Ne spavam, nego čitam knjigu. "I'm not sleeping, I'm reading a book."

The verb can be left out in the second part if it's the same verb (that is, the same verb but not negated!):

Ne pijem pivo, nego pijem vino. "I'm not drinking beer, I'm drinking wine."
Ne pijem pivo, nego vino. "I'm not drinking beer, I'm drinking wine."
Nisam na poslu, nego sam na odmoru. "I'm not at work, I'm on vacation."
Nisam na poslu, nego na odmoru. "I'm not at work, I'm on vacation."

Using *samo*

The word *samo* "only" can stand before any phrase, indicating that action applies only to such circumstances, that it did not happen to anyone else or to any other way. Used freely, it says that only that happened, no other action took place. It's all very similar to English "only". Nouns can be in any case after *samo*: it's inserted without any effect on forms of other words:

[I need better English sentences]

Pojeo sam juhu. "I ate (the) soup." → *Pojeo sam samo juhu.* "I ate only (the) soup." (*juhu* acc.)
Bojim se zmija. "I'm afraid of snakes." → *Bojim se samo zmija.* "I'm afraid of only snakes." (*zmija* gen.pl.)
Bila sam u gradu. "I was in (the) city." → *Bila sam samo u gradu.* "I was only in (the) city."

Ja sām otišāo. "I left." → *Samo ja sām otišāo.* "I alone left."
Kašljem. "I'm coughing." → *Samo kašljem.* "I'm only coughing."

This word is used in several phrases where it corresponds to English "just":

Samo malo! "Just a bit!" "Just a minute!"
Samo trenutak! "Just a moment!"

It's also used with imperatives, indicating that one should do action without hesitation:

Samo jēdi! "Just eat!"
Samo dođi! "Just come!"

The word is an "adverb" derived from the adjective *sam* "alone"; neuter form of the adjective is exactly the same as the adverb:

Dijēte samo sjēdi. "The child sits alone." (*samo* = adjective)

This can lead to occasional confusion, when it's not clear if it's the adjective or the adverb, the previous sentence could be also understood as:

Dijēte samo sjēdi. "The child just sits." (*samo* = adverb)

However, if you place *samo* after the verb, it's normally understood as "alone". This confusion of course happens only for neuter nouns...

Using *osim*

The word *osim* "except" excludes some phrase, so a wider context (where it is excluded from) must be also present or at least implied (often *svi* "all", *svugdje* "everywhere" etc.). If *osim* is put before a noun (or noun phrase) in nominative, it must be transformed to genitive:

Bilo je lijēpo, osim kad je padala kiša. "It was nice, except when it rained."
Svi su došli, osim Ane. "Everybody came, except Ana." (*Ane* gen.)
Svi su došli, osim mene. "Everybody came, except me." (*mene* gen.)
Bili smo svugdjē, osim u muzeju. "We were everywhere, except in the museum."
Pišem svima, osim Ani. "I write to everyone came, except Ana." (*Ani* dat. = *Pišem Ani.*)

Using *kao*

The word *kao* means "as". It can come before nouns, prepositional phrases, or can turn nouns in any case into an adjective phrase or adverbial phrase:

Hladno je kao na Sjevernom polu. "It's cold like on the North Pole."
Volim ga kao brata. "I like him as a brother."

49 Other Prepositions

There are prepositions that have meanings other than spatial or temporal. There's no systematic way to list them. Some prepositions that have also spatial/temporal meaning demand other cases.

Company: **s + ins.**

We have already encountered this use, when describing the instrumental case. It's also used by some verbs, like *razgovaram* "talk, chat". Some examples:

Pijem kavu s Anom. "I'm drinking coffee with Ana."
Razgovarao sam s Anom. "I was talking to Ana." or "I had a chat with Ana."

Lack: **bez + gen.**

This combination has exactly the opposite meaning, "without". For example:

Otišli su bez mene. "They left without me."

Reason: **zbog + gen., radi + gen.**

This preposition is used when reason for some action is a noun (with possible adjectives and subordinate clauses, of course). For instance, you are late due to fog:

Kasnim zbog magle. "I'm late because of the fog."
Cesta je zatvorena zbog radova. "The road is closed due to works."

Preposition *radi* has exactly the same meaning and can be used interchangeably:

Kasnim radi magle.
Cesta je zatvorena radi radova.

In poetic works, proverbs and literature, *radi* comes sometimes *after* the noun phrase it's attached to, especially after pronouns. This is considered archaic today.

Don't confuse this preposition with the 3rd pers. present *radi* "he/she/it works/functions" from *radim* "work". They have no connection whatsoever.

With pronouns *sve*, *to*, *zbog* and *radi* are frequently used to specify that something is "because of" something said before, a "consequence":

Netko će zbog toga imati probleme. "Someone will have problems because of that."
Zbog svega moramo biti oprezniji. "We must be careful, because of everything (known, said before)."

As with any *to*, a whole *što*-clause can be attached to it; it's often used instead of *jer*, which also inserts a "reason" clause:

Otišao sam zbog toga što je bilo kasno. "I left because it was late."
Otišao sam jer je bilo kasno. "I left because it was late."

Recipient: **za + acc.**

This preposition is used when something is "for" someone, for instance:

Stiglo je pismo za Anu. "A letter for Ana has arrived."
Ovo je za mene. "This is for me."

"About": o + dat.

This preposition has a rather abstract meaning, very like English "about":

Razgovarali smo o Ani. "We were talking about Ana"

Mode: na + acc.

Preposition *na* together with a noun in acc. can mean "how is something done"; English uses mostly adjectives in such circumstances -- but nouns cannot be used as adjectives in Croatian without some transformation. Examples are:

učenje na daljinu "distance learning" (lit. "learning on distance") *daljina* "distance"
kupujem auto na kredit "I'm buying a car using a loan" (lit. "on loan")
igračka radi na baterije "The toy runs on batteries" (lit. "works")
bušilica radi na struju "The drill runs on electricity" (lit. "works")

This is used only with some verbs, none of them implying motion. Don't confuse this with direction (*na posao, na more*), which uses the same combination of preposition and case.

"Of": od + gen.

This combination usually corresponding to English "of", e.g. something is "made of", or something "belongs to":

Ova je kuća od kamena. lit. "This house is of stone."

"To get": po + acc.

This very strange combination is used with motion verbs, indicating intention to "pick up", "get" something. For instance, you returned to take the key. That would be translated as:

Vratio sam se po ključ. "I returned to pick up the key."

This combination is often used, more examples:

Otišla je do doktora po lijek. "She went to the doctor to get a medicine."

[to be expanded]

"While": po + dat.

This combination implies "during", "while", in sentences like "We walked in rain", "I drove at night", "We sleep at day", "The lake freezes in winter," etc.:

Šetali smo po kiši. "We walked in rain."
Vozio sam po noći. "I drove at night."
Spavamo po danu. "We sleep at day."
Jezero se smrzava po zimi. "The lake freezes in winter." (lit. "gets frozen" — a mediopassive)

For some often used "times" there are specific adverbs, e.g. *noću* (= *po noći*), *danju* (= *po danu*), etc., already mentioned in **29 Telling When and How Long**.

"According to": po/prema + dat.

Both prepositions with dative can mean "according to", "following":

U evanđelju po Marku piše.... "It's written in the gospel according to Mark..."
Prema ugovoru, moram platiti 1000 kuna. "According to the contract, I have to pay 1000 kuna."

On ne igra po pravilima. "He's not playing by the rules."

Po zakonu, moraš platiti kaznu. "According to the law, you have to pay a fine."

Iteration, distribution: *po* + acc.

This is yet another strange use of this multi-purpose preposition. It implies distribution in a sense of distributed fixed amount of something countable, usually expressed with a number. It's actually simpler than it sounds, it's better understood through examples:

Dobili su po 100 kuna. "They got 100 kuna each."

U svaku kutiju ću staviti po dva poklona. "I'll put two gifts in each box."

It also implies iteration, corresponding to English "x by x":

Dolaze jedan po jedan. "They're arriving one by one."

Tražio sam ga ulicu po ulicu. "I was looking for him street by street."

Summary

Unfortunately, I cannot represent meanings with fancy icons.

prep. + case	meaning	example
s + ins.	company	<i>Pijem kavu s Anom.</i> "I'm drinking coffee with Ana."
bez + gen.	lack, opp. to company	<i>Otišli su bez mene.</i> "They left without me."
zbog + gen. radi + gen.	reason	<i>Kasnim zbog magle.</i> "I'm late because of the fog."
o + dat.	"about"	<i>Razgovaramo o Ani.</i> "We're talking <u>about</u> Ana."
za + acc.	recipient	<i>Ovo je za mene.</i> "This is <u>for</u> me."
na + acc.	mode, "how" (with static verbs)	<i>Igračka radi na baterije</i> "The toy runs on batteries"
od + gen.	made of, "of"	<i>Kuća je od kamena</i> "The house is of stone"
po + dat.	situation, "while"	<i>Šetali smo po kiši.</i> "We walked in rain."
po + dat. prema + dat.	"according to"	<i>On ne igra po pravilima.</i> "He's not playing by the rules."
po + acc.	"to pick up", reason (with motion verbs)	<i>Vratio sam se po ključ.</i> "I returned <u>to pick up</u> the key."
po + acc.	distribution	<i>Dobili su po 100 kuna.</i> "They got 100 kuna each."
acc + <i>po</i> + acc.	iteration	<i>Dolaze jedan po jedan.</i> "They're arriving one by one."

Bear in mind that *došli su po 100 kuna* means "they came to get 100 kuna", while *dobili su po 100 kuna* means "they received 100 kuna each" — the difference is only the verb used.

This concludes discussion of prepositions in Croatian. There are a few more, but they are all seldom used and always require genitive.

50 Connectors

• • • Review: [36 'da' and Similar Clauses](#), [48 Few Special Words](#)

Prepositions vs. Conjunctions

There's a difference between relating things to nouns and to whole sentences. To illustrate the issue, compare two English sentences:

A "I woke up after rain."

B "I woke up after rain stopped."

Despite looking quite similar, their structure is completely different: the sentence B contains a *sub-clause* "rain stopped" and "after" relates to the whole event described; in the sentence A, "before" relates just to the noun "rain".

In Croatian, words that can be freely used before nouns (such as *u* "in", *nakon* "after", etc.) cannot be used freely before sub-clauses. These two sentences translated to Croatian look like this:

A *Probudio sam se nakon kiše.*

B *Probudio sam se nakon što je kiša prestala.*

We can see that we have *nakon* "after" in both sentences, but before the sub-clause a word is inserted: *što*.

There's a similar thing in English, but the other way round: one can use "because" before a sub-clause ("because a heavy rain started") but must use "because of" before a noun ("because of a heavy rain"). In English grammar, "because of" is a "preposition" (or a phrase that acts as an preposition) and "because" is a "conjunction". The important thing is that one stands before a noun, and another before a sub-clause. In English, they don't differ often; in Croatian, they are always different.

Using prepositions or adverbs to connect sentences in Croatian means inserting several words/phrases, chiefly *to što*, or just *što*.

Remember that *što* re-starts word counting and occupies the first position: any short forms come right after it!

Duration and Change Clauses

These two sub-clauses express time when something was happening ("while") or something happened ("when").

The conjunction *dok* is used with impf. verbs, meaning "while":

Kuham dok su djeca u školi. "I cook while children are at school."

This implies: the action lasts until the action in sub-clause lasts (which is a period of time, since it's a impf. verb)

The same conjunction is often used with negated perf. verbs, meaning "until":

Kuham meso dok ne postane mekano. "I cook meat until it gets soft."

This implies: the action lasts until the action in sub-clause happens (which is an instant, since it's a perf. verb).

This is another use of perf. verbs in all tenses, including the present tense.

Another conjunction is *čim*, meaning that action in the main sentence starts "as soon" the action in the sub-clause happens (this uses perf. verbs again):

Idemo spavati čim padne noć. "We are going to sleep as soon the night falls."

Instead of *dok* and *čim*, generic *kad(a)* "when" is used sometimes.

Using *zato*

Simply said, *zato* and *zato što* have completely opposite meanings: *zato* means "therefore", and *zato što* means "because":

Stao sam zato što moram kupiti kruh. "I stopped because I must buy bread."

Instead of *zato što*, *zato jer* is sometimes used, and just *jer* is usually used:

Stao sam jer moram kupiti kruh. (the same meaning)

The word *zato* on its own is not joining sentences, but it can be used as an adverb meaning "for that reason".

Trebam kruh. Zato sam stao. "I need bread. Therefore I stopped."
Stao sam zato. "I stopped for that reason."

Children (and grown-ups sometimes!) use *zato* on its own when they don't want to tell "why":

Zato. "Because."

Connections with *osim* and *samo*

Words *osim* and *samo* cannot connect two sentences. However, a contrast between sentences similar to English "except" can be constructed with *osim što* and *samo što*:

Bilo je lijepo, osim što je padala kiša. "It was nice except that it rained."
Bilo je lijepo, samo što je padala kiša. (the same meaning)

Using *da* to Make Connections

It's possible to use *da* instead of *što* in several constructs.

The construct *nego da* compares to something imagined, unreal:

Toplije je nego da smo u Sahari. "It's warmer than if we were in Sahara."

Note how Croatian clause is in the present, while English one is in past (or subjunctive) due to "if"!

The construct *zato da* stands before *reason*, answering "why". However, *zato* is normally left out, leaving only *da*:

Stao sam zato da kupim kruh. "I stopped to buy bread."
Stao sam da kupim kruh. "I stopped to buy bread."

Connectors *kao što* and *kao da* can be put in front of a whole sub-clause, comparing everything to a real or potential "situation":

Gledaju me kao da sam lopov. "They are looking at me as if I were a thief." (lit. "like I'm a thief")
Gledaju me kao što su gledali Ivana. "They are looking at me like they were looking at Ivan."

Connector *samo da* expresses a wish, "if only":

Toplo je, samo da ne pada kiša. "It's warm, if only the rain weren't falling."

With *samo da* one can express also a wish about future events, using perf. verbs:

Toplo je, samo da ne padne kiša.

Right now I don't know a good English translation...

One can start sentences with *samo da*, it's a stronger version of *da*.

Here's a summary of possible *što/da* complex constructs used with sub-clauses:

	... što	... da
<i>kao...</i>	likeness to something real	likeness to something unreal
<i>nego...</i>	comparison against something real	comparison against something unreal
<i>osim...</i>	regret about something	—
<i>samo...</i>		desire
<i>zato...</i>	"because"	reason, why you do something

Sometimes *samo da* and *osim da* have other meanings.

Other Uses of *samo* and *osim*

There are few other constructs with *samo* and *osim*, summarized in this table:

phrase	meaning	example
<i>samo zato</i>	the only reason, "only because"	
<i>samo ako</i>	necessary condition, "only if"	
<i>osim ako</i>	exception, "unless"	

51 Verbs 'krećem' and 'padam'

Fall

Verb *padam* ~ *padnem*, *pao*, *pala*, *pasti* means "fall". It also follows the "symmetric" pattern: verbs derived from its impf. form are impf., likewise for the perf. So only prefixes will be listed. Some verbs have double meaning, literal and highly metaphorical.

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N se D	D likes N (!)
<i>is-</i>	N (iz G)	N falls out (of G)
<i>na-</i>	a. N A b. N na A	a. N attacks A; b. N falls onto A in great quantity
<i>ot-</i>	N (od G)	N falls (off G), comes off G
<i>pri-</i>	N D	N belongs to D
<i>pro-</i>	N	N breaks down
	N (kroz A)	N falls through (A)
<i>ras-</i>	N se (na A)	N falls apart, decays (to A)
<i>u-</i>	N u A	N falls in(to) A

Some examples of use:

Moj auto se raspada. "My car is falling apart."

Meni pripada sto kuna. "One hundred kuna belongs to me." (*meni* = dat.)

The verb *dopadam* ~ *dopadnem*, *dopao*, *dopala*, *dopasti* with *se* uses a strange combination of cases we have already explored:

Ivanu se dopada Ana. "Ivan likes Ana." (*Ivanu* = dat., *Ana* = nom.)

Ivanu se dopadaju Ana i Ivana. "Ivan likes Ana and Ivana."

Don't forget that form of the verb follows the subject, that is *Ana* and *Ana i Ivana*, therefore the verb is in the plural in the second sentence!

Updated 2013-16-15

52 More Verb Forms

There are more verb forms to learn: another participle, another form of verb "to be", and another future tense. Yes, they are all used in real life.

Present Participle

What is this?! This is a word that corresponds to English "-ing" forms. It's really constructed easily. One just adds *-ći* to the 3rd pers. pl. of the present tense of impf. verbs:

pišem (pišu) "write" → *pišući* "writing"
padam (padaju) "fall" → *padajući* "falling"
pečem (peku) "bake" → *pekući* "baking"
idem (idu) "go" → *idući* "going"
tečem (teku) "flow" → *tekući* "flowing"

It's a *participle*, so it's something between an adjective, an adverb, and a verbal form. It can be used in various ways. First, all pres. part. can be used freely in sentences as adverbs, meaning "while x-ing":

Idući ulicom, ugledao sam nju. "While walking the street, I spotted her"
Zaspao sam gledajući televiziju. "I fell asleep while I was watching TV."

The case of nouns appended to the participle is the same used with the verb:

idem ulicom (ins.) → *idući ulicom*
gledam televiziju (acc.) → *gledajući televiziju*

Another use is indicating a manner, how you did something, but it's really again the same thing, you were doing something at the same time:

Vozili smo se pjevajući. lit. "We were driving singing." = "We sang while driving."
Učim prepisujući iz knjige. lit. "I'm learning copying from the book." = "I'm learning by copying from the book."

The third use is as a real adjective. Not all pres. participles allow that. Moreover, some of them developed special meanings when used as an adjective:

idući "following, next"
tekući "liquid"
budući (from *budem*) "future", as in "future tense"
 etc.

An example:

Vidjela je leteće tanjure. "She saw flying saucers."

However, their most often use is in fixed phrases, like *leteći tanjuri* or *tekući sapun* "liquid soap", since it can be phrased using relative clauses:

tekuća voda "flowing water" (opp. to "still") = *voda koja teče*
leteći kukci "flying insects" = *kukci koji lete*

Word *idući* means "following" or "next" but the more frequent one is *sljedeći* which means only "next", and it's the main way to express that meaning in Croatian. If used as an adverb (not as an adjective) it's spelled slightly differently: *slijedeći*.

The opposite meaning, "previous", is expressed by *prošao*, *prošla*, simply the past participle of *prođem*, used as an adjective:

Prošle godine smo išli u Francusku. "Last year we went to France."
Sljedeće godine idemo u Italiju. "Next year we go to Italy."
 etc.

Both time phrases are in genitive singular.

The Verb *budem* and Another Future Tense

The verb *budem*, -, -, - is very curious one: it's the only verb that has only forms for present, no past, and no infinitive. It's the perfective counterpart of *sām*, *bio*, *bila*, *biti* - "to be", the most important (imperfective) verb.

It means something like "start being", "get to be", "become" (and German "werden"). For instance:

Ako budem gladan... "If I get hungry..."

It's meaning and aspect, in a way, imply future events. Therefore, it's used to make another form of future tense - with the same past participle used for the past tense:

Spavao sām. "I was sleeping."
Budem spavao. "I'll be sleeping."

In some parts of Croatia (we will discuss dialects later) this is the only form of future tense.

This verb is completely regular, but lacks all forms but the present tense.

So this tense comes cheap: the past participle you already know, and there's just a peculiar verb with present only and all forms of it regular. It could have been much worse.

Now, we have two future tenses, which one should we use and when? Answer: in Standard Croatian, you use *budem*-future only in sentences "if I go...", and it's optional. In Colloquial Croatian, you can mix them as you want.

Budem is not a clitic — it can go to any position in the sentence, but it normally precedes a past participle. Questions can be formed with and without *li*, and it alters the meaning:

Budeš li išla... = *ako budeš išla*
Budeš išla..? = *hoćeš li ići..?*

Since *hoću* has two meanings: "want" and "auxiliary verb to create future", sentences with *hoću* imply intentions, but sentences with *budem* imply certain future events. Just *ću* is neutral, it's a pure auxiliary, but it normally not used in questions.

You might think about short-cutting, using *sām* for the past, *budem* for the future tense, but you still need infinitives to produce forms like *trebam spavati* "I need to sleep".

That much about the "exact future tense".

These are all tenses and verb forms used in everyday speech. There are few others, but nowadays they are just fancy stuff and for poetry.

Exercises

Put verbs *imam*, *vičem* and *pušim* in all forms.

53 Strange Nouns and Collectives

- • • Review: **15 Numbers and Time**, **34 Degrees of Adjectives and J-Softening**

Ime and Other Strange n-Nouns

There are some n-nouns that are not irregular, but really form a set of small sub-classes within n-nouns. Some common nouns are among them. A prototype of such nouns is *ime* n "name".

In nom.sg. and all cases without endings (well, just acc.sg.) it has this form, but in other cases, *-en-* is inserted before regular ending. For some other nouns, *-et-* is inserted; for some *-ev-*; for a really small group, *-es-* is inserted, but in plural only, and it's optional for them. The patterns are:

nom.sg.	<i>im-e</i>	<i>už-e</i>	<i>podn-e</i>	<i>čud-o</i>
acc.sg.				
dat.sg.	<i>im-en-u</i>	<i>už-et-u</i>	<i>podn-ev-u</i>	<i>čud-u</i>
gen.sg./ dual	<i>im-en-a</i>	<i>už-et-a</i>	<i>podn-ev-a</i>	<i>čud-a</i>
ins.sg.	<i>im-en-om</i>	<i>už-et-om</i>	<i>podn-ev-om</i>	<i>čud-om</i>
<hr/>				
nom.pl.	<i>im-en-a</i>	<i>už-et-a</i>	<i>podn-ev-a</i>	<i>čud-es-a / čud-a</i>
acc.pl.				
dat./ ins.pl.	<i>im-en-ima</i>	<i>už-et-ima</i>	<i>podn-ev-ima</i>	<i>čud-es-ima / čud-ima</i>
gen.pl.	<i>im-en-a</i>	<i>už-et-a</i>	<i>podn-ev-a</i>	<i>čud-es-a / čud-a</i>

Here is a list of frequent nouns that insert *-en-*. There are not too many of them:

<i>ime</i> "name"	<i>brēme</i> "burden"
<i>rame</i> "shoulder"	<i>tjēme</i> "scalp"
<i>pleme</i> "tribe"	<i>sljēme</i> "ridge" (of roof, mountain)
<i>vime</i> "udder"	<i>prezime</i> "family name"
<i>sjēme</i> "seed"	<i>vrijēme</i> "time", "weather"

The noun *vrijēme* means both "time" and "weather". Its forms in other cases are *vrēmenu*, *vrēmena*, etc. For example, this is a very frequently used question:

Imaš (li) vrēmena? "Do you have any time?"

The genitive is used instead of acc. as "partitive" implying "some amount of". In the next example noun is used in the other meaning (recall that *kakāv* means "what like" and changes as an adjective):

Kakvo je vrijeme? "What is the weather like?"

Only five nouns insert *-ev-*:

<i>podne</i> "noon"	<i>dopodne</i> "before noon"
<i>prijēpodne</i> "before noon"	<i>popodne</i> "afternoon"
<i>poslijēpodne</i> "afternoon"	

There are only three nouns that insert *-es-*, but they have also forms without *-es-*; when extended, they shift meaning a bit, and stand for "big bodies", "great wonders", "wide skies":

čudo "miracle" *nebo* "sky" *tijelo* "body"

The following often used nouns insert *-et-*:

<i>dijēte</i> "child"	<i>mače</i> "kitten"	<i>lane</i> "baby deer"	<i>pače</i> "duckling"
<i>siroče</i> "orphan"	<i>janje</i> "lamb"	<i>tele</i> "calf"	<i>jaje</i> "egg"
<i>štene</i> "puppy"	<i>pile</i> "chick"	<i>jare</i> "baby goat"	<i>uže</i> "rope"

Noun *drvo* means "wood" as a material, but also a single "tree". When it means a tree, it also has an *-et-* inserted: nom. *drvo*, dat. *drvetu*, nom.pl. *drveta*, etc.

Many nouns with *-et-* have similar meanings: they are young ones, of people, other animals, or "egg". *Jaje* "egg" has also more usual forms *jaju*, *jaja*, etc.

But the weirdest aspect is that such nouns for young animals (except *jaje* when not inserting *-et-*) have no regular plural — another noun must be used instead, a so-called **collective noun** (abbreviation: coll.). All collective nouns are oddballs, either they don't have singular or don't have plural.

All the above listed *-et-* nouns — except for *dijēte* and *drvo* — use collective nouns on *-ad* (*janjad*, *telad*, *jarad*, *lanad*, *užad*...). They are **i-nouns in singular** and of course, they have f gender; they exist only in the singular, and are uncountable (but their meaning is multitude, plurality).

Telad je u štali. "Calves are in (the) barn." (lit. "is...")
Tele je u štali. "(The) calf is in (the) barn."

Recall that there are also diminutives, words for small things. For some animals, they are preferred to the words above for young animals. For instance *mačić* "small, baby cat" is preferred in most of Croatia, while *mače* "kitten" is preferred in Bosnia and Serbia. The same goes for *pačić* (more frequent in Croatia) vs. *pače* (common elsewhere). There's also a word *pilić* meaning "small chick" which is used often instead of *pile*. You see, Croatian has a rather large vocabulary...

The Strangest Noun: *dijēte*

However, *dijēte* "child" uses as its plural form a collective noun *djēca*, a noun that behaves as a regular a-noun having singular only. The complicated part is that it demands adjectives for f.sg., but when verbs come into play, it behaves as if it were in the plural:

Moja djēca su došla. "My children came." (*moja* = nom.sg.f but *su* = pl.!)
Razgovaram s mojom djecom. "I'm talking to my children." (*mojom* = ins.sg.f!)

I call the behavior of *djēca* the **mixed gender**, and it's the last and smallest (by number) gender in Croatian (and of course the weirdest — so I called it the "x" gender).

Another noun behaving like this is a collective *braća* "brethren". Yet another one is *gospoda* "gentlemen" (from *gospodin* m^a "gentleman"). There are few other nouns in this group that will be introduced immediately.

Mixed gender

Nouns in the mixed gender get their case endings as a-nouns in singular, agree with adjectives for feminine singular, but demand plural verbs.

Examples are *braća* "brethren", *gospoda* "gentlemen", and *djēca* "children". The corresponding nouns *brat* m^a "brother", *gospodin* m^a "gentleman", and *dijēte* n "child" have forms for singular only.

Another weird feature of *djěca*, *braća* and similar nouns is how they use numbers. They use a special construct, involving collective numbers.

Collective Numbers

There are two types of nouns that are generally derived from numbers. The first one have the same form in all cases, and are used to stand for people of mixed or unknown gender. The second one means "x men", and stands for groups of all-male persons only.

#	"n people"	"n men"
2	<i>dvoje</i>	<i>dvojica</i>
1+1	<i>oboje</i>	<i>obojica</i>
3	<i>troje</i>	<i>trojica</i>
4	<i>četvero</i>	<i>četvorica</i>
5	<i>petero</i>	<i>petorica</i>
6	<i>šestero</i>	<i>šestorica</i>

The nouns in the first column are actually permanently in acc. pl. and have n gender; you will hear:

Nas dvoje je došlo. "We two came."

Besides these forms, forms with *-oro* are used sometimes: *četvoro*, *šestero*, etc. Neither of them change forms in various cases.

The nouns in the second column mean "so many men, all of them male". These nouns behave as nouns *braća* and *djěca* — they belong to the mixed collective gender and have forms like a-nouns in the singular:

Vidio sam ovu dvojicu. "I have seen these two (men)." (*ovu* = acc.sg.f)
Dvojica su došla. (*su* = pl.)

Note that these nouns do change case, unlike the nouns of the first type. We can call these nouns "people-collective" and "men-collective" (I have invented those names!)

Now we finally get the answer how to count children! We use collective nouns of the first (people) type! Therefore, counting will have (as you likely expect) form noun + noun-in-genitive, but for the noun *djěca* we must use people-collective numbers:

Imamo dvoje djěce. "We have two children."
Šestero djěce je došlo. (*došlo* = sg. n !) "Six children came."

The same applies to *braća* "brethren":

Imam dvoje braće. "I have two brothers."
Imao je sedmero braće. "He had seven brothers."

Of course, for 2-4 children and brothers you can use singular nouns in dual form, e.g.:

Imam dva brata. "I have two brothers."
Imamo tri djeteta. "We have three children."

But you cannot use them for 5 and more — you must use plural nouns, and these two nouns demand people-collective numbers.

For numbers 2-4 you can use both options; however, you will notice that people slightly prefer *dva*

brata to dvoje braće, and for "child" exactly the opposite, *dvoje djece* is more common than *dva djéteta!*

Sometimes people use people-collective nouns even for groups of men. That's considered colloquial, not Standard, but it can be heard.

You can use collective nouns to count other nouns as well; it's common to use people-collective nouns with the noun *ljudi* "people" (e.g. *troje ljudi*) and men-collective ones with nouns for men in plural (e.g. *petero radnika*).

I'm sure you've never dreamed that such complications exist. I'm really sorry.

n-Nouns Without Singular and With Double Plural

Some n-nouns have only plural; the common ones are:

<i>kola</i> "cart, coach"	<i>pluća</i> "lung" (lit. "lungs")
<i>jetra</i> "liver" (lit. "livers")	<i>usta</i> "mouth"
<i>leđa</i> "back"	<i>vrata</i> "door, gate" (lit. "gates")

They look as if they are feminine, but really it's neuter plural! They are used in plural even when you mean just one item, similar to English "trousers":

Moja usta su zatvorena. "My mouth is closed."
Iza velikih vrata. "Behind the big door."

Two n-nouns have two types of plural: one regular, and another as i-nouns in plural; in the second plural the gender is changed accordingly to the feminine. They are *oko* "eye", and *uho* "ear". Their second plurals are *oči* and *uši* as i-nouns in plural, but with an optional *-ju* in gen.pl:

nom.pl.	<i>oči</i>	<i>uši</i>
acc.pl.		
dat./ins.pl.	<i>očima</i>	<i>ušima</i>
gen.pl.	<i>oči, očiju</i>	<i>uši, ušiju</i>

Regarding the agreement with adjectives and verbs, they behave as expected: i-nouns are feminine nouns:

Tvoje oko je plavo. "Your eye is blue." (*tvoje, plavo* = nom.sg.n)
Tvoja oka su plava. "Your eyes are blue." (*tvoja, plava* = nom.pl.n)
Tvoje oči su plave. "Your eyes are blue." (*tvoje, plave* = nom.pl.f — this is normally used)

Forms *oka* and *uha* are used only in poetry, when talking with in a very emotional context, and metaphorically, when e.g. about "eyes" of a fishing net, for example.

Nouns *mati* and *kći*

Noun *kći* "daughter" has peculiar forms: all except nom.sg. are made from *kćer-*. A similar noun is *mati*; both are odd i-nouns:

nom.sg.	<i>kći</i>	<i>mati</i>
acc.sg.	<i>kćer</i>	<i>mater</i>
dat.sg.	<i>kćeri</i>	<i>materi</i>

gen.sg.		<i>matere (!)</i>
ins.sg.		<i>materi</i>
nom.pl.	<i>kćeri</i>	<i>matere (!)</i>
acc.pl.	<i>kćeri</i>	<i>matere (!)</i>
dat./ ins.pl.	<i>kćerima</i>	<i>materima</i>
gen.pl.	<i>kćeri</i>	<i>matera (!)</i>

Many people use *kćer* as nom.sg., to horror of the language police. Also, it's a frequently used as a trick-question in quiz shows, etc. However, there's another word — *kćerka*, a regular a-noun of the same meaning, and much easier to use. You can use either one.

The word *mati* is not often used nowadays; *majka*, a perfectly regular a-noun, is more often used instead.

Common Collective Nouns

Furthermore, there are some n-nouns that are collectives of other nouns. They behave just as any other n-nouns, but don't have plural. They are used in meaning "all such things", "a bunch of such things", etc., and are really often used. Once again, they are just plain n-nouns, having n gender, but have singular only and take verbs in singular. Here is a list of often used ones with corresponding nouns for a single object (all single-thing nouns have a plural, but I listed only for m-nouns, to show if they insert -*ev*-):

cvijěće coll. "flowers" ← *cvijět* mⁱ "flower" pl. *cvjětovi*
drveće coll. "trees" ← *drvo* n "tree, wood"
granje coll. "branches" ← *grana* f "branch"
grmlje coll. "bushes" ← *grm* mⁱ "bush" pl. *grmovi*
grožđe coll. "grapes" ← *grozd* mⁱ "cluster, grape" pl. *grozdovi*
kamenje coll. "rocks" ← *kamen* mⁱ "rock, stone" pl. *kameni*
lišće coll. "leaves" ← *list* mⁱ "leaf" pl. *listovi*
smeće coll. "trash" (no single noun exist)
trnje coll. "thorns" ← *trn* mⁱ "thorn" pl. *trnovi*

As you can see, the -*je* suffix is added after the nominative ending is discarded, causing j-softening!

I must say again, collective is not a special gender, it's just some nouns with a special meaning. They are really often used, so many people never use *cvjětovi* "flowers", but only the collective. However, when counting, you must use the single-thing nouns, since collectives are uncountable (like English "salt", "flour"):

Dobila sam jedan cvijět. "I got one flower." (*cvijět* = acc.sg.; female speaker)
Dobila sam dva cvijěta. "I got two flowers." (*cvijěta* = dual = gen.sg.)
Dobila sam četiri cvijěta. "I got four flowers." (*cvijěta* = dual = gen.sg.)
Dobila sam pet cvjětova. "I got five flowers." (*cvjětova* = gen.pl.)
Dobila sam cvijěće. "I got flowers." (*cvijěće* = acc.sg., uncountable!)

People most often use the last sentence, meaning they got "some number of flowers". So collectives are really often used, who is going to count all the trees, rocks and thorns...

54 Appositions, Roles and Family Relations

Appositions

English can just chain nouns, where all nouns but the last one serve as adjectives. For instance, a "car engine tuning service" is a kind of a "service".

Croatian *cannot do that*. Nouns cannot be used as adjectives, but genitive and prepositional phrases must be used:

Servis za podešavanje motora automobila lit. "service for tuning of engines of cars"

This is illustrated by a bilingual sign for a "dog beach" (dogs are forbidden from most beaches) with a Croatian inscription literally saying "beach for dogs":



However, there's a construct in Croatian where one noun can describe another, but has a very restricted use. One noun must stand for a member of a group (for instance *učitelj* "teacher") and another must be a name (*Ivan*):

Učitelj Ivan "teacher Ivan"

The first noun ("role") can have attributes; both nouns are in the same case:

Moj učitelj Ivan "my teacher Ivan"

Pišem mom učitelju Ivanu. (dat.) "I'm writing to my teacher Ivan."

Order role-name can be reversed, then it means "x, who is y"; again everything is in the same case:

Pišem Ivanu, mom učitelju. (dat.) "I'm writing to Ivan, my teacher."

This is all very similar to English, except for the cases. This construct is not limited to people: as in English, the first noun may be *mačka* "cat", *tvornica* "factory", *mjesec* "moon", and the second the name of a cat, factory or moon.

Relatives

Let's introduce now words for family members. Croatian has a much more words in this area than e.g. English. For instance, in English, "uncle" can mean either "father's brother", "mother's brother" or "aunt's husband". Croatian is much more precise. Some words don't distinguish sex, but most do:

roditelj m^a "parent"

rođak m^a "(male) relative" : *rođakinja* f "(female) relative"

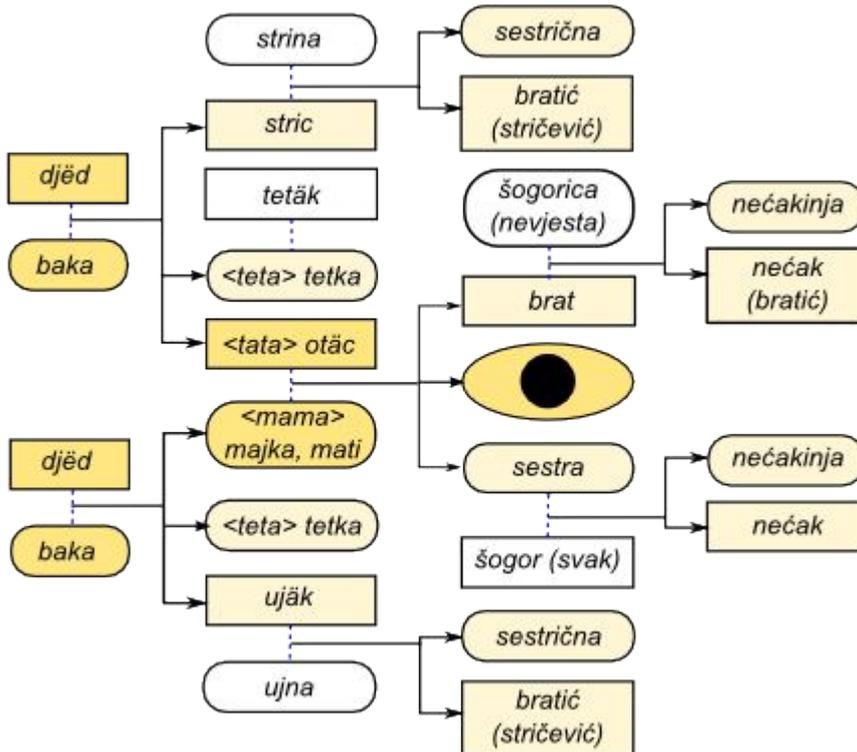
brat m^a (sg. only) "brother" : *sestra* f "sister"

ujäk m^a "mother's brother" : *ujna* f "wife of mother's brother"

etc.

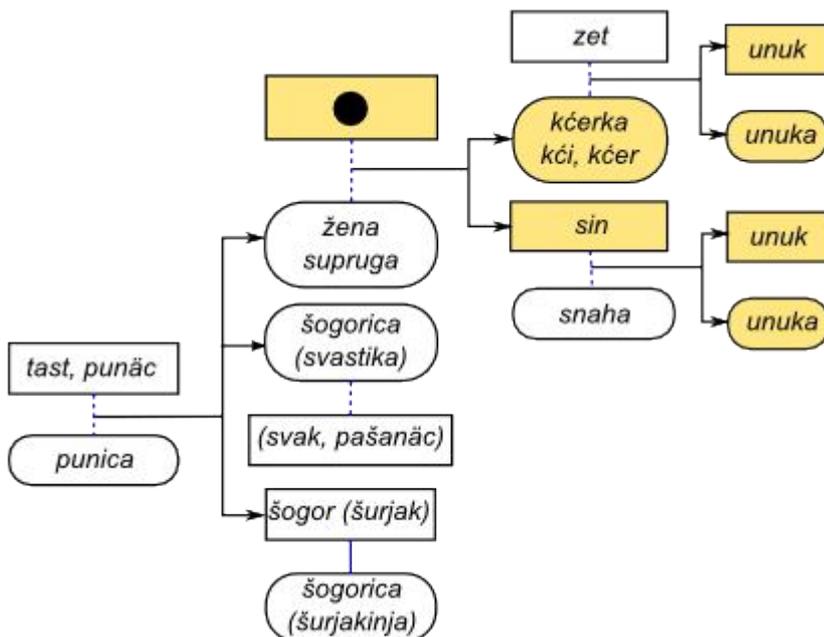
This diagram lists relations of a person (represented by a black square), younger generations are on the right, marriages are represented by hatched lines, and descent is yellow. Round rectangles are

women, names in parentheses are somewhat archaic and seldom used nowadays:

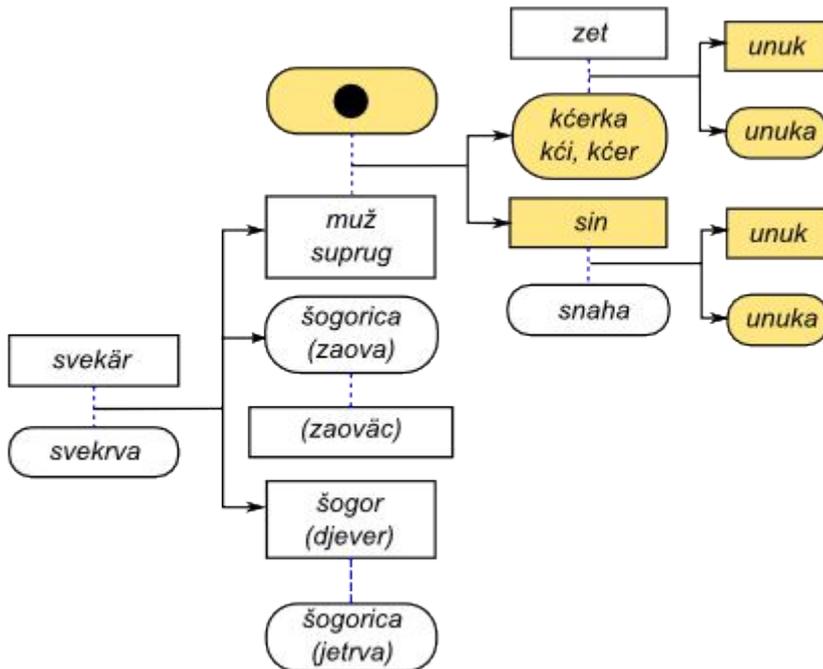


Names in square brackets <...> represent informal words, similar to English "Mom", "Dad". If you want to talk about great grandmothers (or fathers) you prefix *pra-*: e.g. *prabaka* "great grandmother".

The following diagram represents *additional* relations for a married man:



And for a woman:



If there is more than one word in the above diagrams (e.g. *muž* and *suprug*) the first one is the most common, and the second one is formal, rare, etc. You would say *suprug* only in very formal occasions.

Again, for children of grandchildren, you prefix *pre-*: *praunuk* "great grandson".

There's a lot of regional variations, but not in the most basic relations. I will explain them later.

Words *tata* "dad" and *mama* "mom" are informal words used mostly by children, but adults use them too sometimes. Both are a-nouns, despite *tata* having m^a gender — this is another exception, and quite a common one:

Tražim tatu. "I'm looking for (my) dad."
Tražim mamu. "I'm looking for (my) mum."

Another very frequent informal word is *teta* for *tetka* (similar to "auntie"). As sometimes in English, the informal word for *stric* (which unfortunately vary by region) and *teta* are used by children when addressing older non-related men and women.

Roles

This is a suitable moment to meet some words for roles. One group of them are a-nouns with masculine (animate, of course) gender. They are *the* exception of the approximate rule that all a-nouns are feminine. They are:

sluga m^a "servant"
gazda m^a "master" (colloquial)
vođa m^a "leader"
vojvoda m^a "duke"
vojskovođa m^a "warlord"
varalica m^a "crook, cheat"
lovokradica m^a "poacher"
ubojica m^a "murderer"
izdajica m^a "traitor"

And some others, less frequently used. These words can be used for females as well - there are no feminine counterparts. Some of them can even be understood as feminine, in other words, they can switch gender:

Ubojica je došao. (m^a)

Ubojica je došla. (f)

Other nouns for roles are mostly masculine.

Names for some professions (male : female):

profesor : profesorica "professor"

predsjednik : predsjednica "president"

učenik : učenica "pupil, student"

prijatelj : prijateljica "friend"

kralj : kraljica "king"

slikar : slikarica "painter"

vozač : vozačica "driver"

The default way is to add *-ica*, discarding *-ik* if the male noun ends on it. Nouns ending on *-čar* usually add *-ka* to it:

matematičar : matematičarka "mathematician"

atletičar : atletičarka "athlete (track and field)"

However, for roles ending on *-ac*, there's no easy way to make a female role noun! One would expect discarding the ending and substituting *-ica*, as in *punac:punica*, but for some strange reasons it's not so:

pisac : spisateljica "writer"

sudac : sutkinja "judge"

krivac : ? "culprit, perpetrator"

policajac : policajka "policeman/woman"

Some people don't like it (for ideological reasons) but masculine role-words *can* be applied to women. Recall that there's only one word for "parent" (*roditelj*, only m^a) or "person" (*osoba*, only f), and no one objects to that. It's just so that Croatian uses preferably masculine nouns for various roles. For some worlds there's no way to construct a feminine noun, so people invent new nouns.

Croatian is everything but gender-neutral: *zrak* "air" is masculine inanimate; *voda* "water", *vatra* "fire" and *zemlja* "earth, ground" are feminine. *Život* "life" is masculine inanimate, and *smrt* "death" feminine!

55 Expressing Right and Wrong

I will show you how to express meanings like "right/wrong", "true/false", "correct/incorrect", "truth/lie", etc. They are all black-and-white opposites.

Somebody is Right

First, how to express that **someone is "right" or "wrong"**, that is, what someone thinks or says is correct or incorrect? Croatian uses two phrases to express this meaning with verb *sām*:

phrase	meaning
<i>P je u pravu</i>	"P is right" (in his/her opinion)
<i>P je u krivu</i>	"P is wrong"

For instance:

Ana je u pravu. "Ana is right."

Ivan i Josip su bili u krivu. "Ivan and Josip were wrong."

Mislim da si u pravu. "I think you're right."

These two phrases (*u pravu* and *u krivu*) do not change with number, gender, case etc. Beware, they are used only to express that what a person thinks/says is right or wrong!

Something is Right

However, if you want to express that some **thing is "right" or "wrong"** (e.g. you took the "right keys", you wrote "wrong answers"), you must use another set or adjectives — Croatian considers this meaning completely unrelated to the previous meaning! They are:

adjective	meaning
<i>pravi, ispravan</i>	"right", "correct" (thing)
<i>krivi, pogrešan</i>	"wrong", "incorrect" (thing)

Since they are adjectives, they adapt to gender, number and case. For instance:

Uzeo sām krive ključeve. "I took wrong keys."

Našla sām pravi odgovor. "I found the right answer." (female speaking)

Stavila si papire u krivu ladicu. "You have put the papers into a wrong drawer."

Even some person can be "right" or "wrong", it doesn't refer to their opinions, but to qualities, e.g. someone is "right for the job". For instance:

Zaposlili smo pravu osobu. "We have employed the right person."

Adjective *ispravan* has another meaning: "functional", "working", "not broken"; when used in that meaning, its opposite is *neispravan* "not functional", "broken"; adjective *pokvaren* "spoiled, foul" can be used in the meaning "not functional" as well:

Frižider je pokvaren. "The fridge is broken."

Motor je ispravan. "The engine is functional."

Something is Accurate

Next, you might want to express that something is "accurate" or "not accurate": use adjectives

točan and *netočan*. They also mean "exact" and "not exact". Since "accurate" is quite similar to "correct", the adjective *točan* is used to express "correct" as well:

Prognoza je bila točna. "The forecast was accurate."

Sat je netočan. "The clock is not accurate."

Našla sam točan odgovor. "I found the correct answer." (female speaking)

In Serbian, those adverbs have forms *tačan* and *netačan* (e.g. *našla sam tačan odgovor*)!

Adverbs derived from them — *točno* and *netočno* mean "exactly, correctly" and "not exactly, not correctly": they are used very frequently:

Točno je podne. "It's exactly noon."

To je točno. "That's correct." "That's right."

Točno. "Correct."

The opposite is often expressed with negation of verb *sam*:

To nije točno. "That isn't correct."

[under construction]

Updated 2013-10-01

56 Indeclinable Nouns and Adjectives

We have seen a long ago how Croatian treats all nouns and adjectives — squeezes them into a scheme of *case endings*; all adjectives additionally adapt to the *gender* of the noun they describe. The scheme of endings is far from obvious and logical and not easy to learn at all.

However, there are exceptions, so-called **indeclinables** (that is, nouns and adjectives that don't change case and gender, don't "decline").

Indeclinable nouns

All names must be declined, except feminine names that don't end on *-a*. This applies to both first names and last names. To illustrate this:

Ana Ivković (woman) → *Vidio sam Anu Ivković.* (*Ivković* can't change here)
Ivan Ivković (man) → *Vidio sam Ivana Ivkovića.* (*Ivković* can change now)
Ines Ivković (woman) → *Vidio sam Ines Ivković.* (neither can change now)
Ana Kournikova (woman) → *Vidio sam Anu Kournikovu.* (both can change)
Ivković (woman) → *Vidio sam Ivković.* (*Ivković* can't change here)
Ivković (man) → *Vidio sam Ivkovića.* (*Ivković* can change now)

Sometimes you will hear people adapting last names of women to be able to decline them, especially when talking about someone using the last name only. This is a strange practice, and looks like this:

Ivković (woman) → *Vidio sam Ivkovićevu.* (*Ivković* changed to *Ivkovićeva* and then declined; please don't do this)
Ivković (man) → *Vidio sam Ivkovića.* (*Ivković* can change)

It's a fact that in Croatia, both men and women have same last names. Therefore for the majority of women, their last name is not declinable. Occasionally, for some women both names are indeclinable: one example is *Natali Dizdar*, a singer. Since neither of her names ends on *-a*, both are indeclinable.

Then, there are some feminine nouns that don't end on *-a* (I don't mean i-nouns!) and they are indeclinable as well — all of them are recent loans:

ledi f ind. "lady (a title)"
mis f ind. "beauty queen, miss something"

Since such words cannot be declined, there's no way to express plural. So you will hear people adapting *mis* to *misica*, a completely normal a-noun.

Indeclinable adjectives

There's a group of adjectives, used only colloquially, that don't change at all — they have the same form for all genders, numbers and cases! They are all loanwords. Often used ones are:

super adj. ind. "great, awesome"
lila adj. ind. "violet"
mini adj. ind. "mini, very small"
roza adj. ind. "pink"
reš adj. ind. "crispy (meat)"
kul adj. ind. "cool"
seksi adj. ind. "sexy"

For instance (this is a colloquial talk, also found in commercials):

Imamo super cijëne. "We have awesome prices."

Knjiga mi je super. "I find the book awesome." (lit. "The book is awesome to me")

Ona je jako seksi. "She is very sexy."

Kupila sam roza majicu. "I bought a pink shirt." (I = female)

All such words have "official" counterparts (*odličan, ljubičast, ružičast*), but these words are longer and less cool.

Super is used as an adverb as well, as many adjectives are, but its neuter form is — of course — same as all the other forms! For example, a song by Ivana Kindl is called *Super jaka* "super strong" (here *super* modifies an adjective, "how strong", so it's used as an adverb, and of course the adjective is in nom. sg. f, since she is singing about herself).

57 Dative of Whom It Matters

In this chapter, I venture a bit into the spoken Croatian, but such features are a part of the Standard too. There's a feature normally called *ethical dative*, but it has nothing to do with ethics. Actually, the name comes from Latin, and the feature there is really not the same as in Croatian, just a similar one.

Recall impersonal constructs with *je* describing situation, similar to English constructs:

Hladno je. "It's cold." (the whole sentence is in neuter in both languages!)
Kasno je. "It's late."

Now if we want to say who is experiencing this, English put the person in place of the subject:

"He's cold."
 "He's late." (but look below)

Croatian takes a different road. First, it seems that it can be cold *to everyone* or cold *to someone*, in the same way that a letter can be *to someone*, and in all those cases Croatian uses the dative, to note who "gets" it:

Hladno mu je. lit. "It's cold to him." = "he's cold." (but not his body, he just feels the cold!)
Kasno mu je. lit. "It's late to him." = "He feels it's late."

Other people maybe think it's not late: *it happens to him*. This notion "things happen to someone" is then extended all over the place:

Ti si prijatelj. "You're a friend." (a general statement)
Ti si prijatelj Ani. "You're a friend to Ana." (a statement about what goes on with Ana) =
 "you're Ana's friend."

Škola je počela. "(The) school has started."
Škola mi je počela. "(The) school, I have something to do with, has started." = "My school has started."

Sestra mi se vratila. "My sister came back."
Juha mu je hladna. "(the) soup is cold for him." (but someone else would maybe think it's ok)

Dijete mi se razboljelo. "My child got sick."
Hlače su joj preuske. "(The) trousers are too tight for her." (but may be ok for someone else)

Don't ever think that *dijete mi* always implies "my child": it just means that the whole action happened "to me", it happened in "my" house, "my" family, "my" life, and "my" child is just a consequence. Since people talk about things that matter, and since *mi* "to me" is shorter than the possessive *moj* "my", people use dative like this a lot! It's similar to colloquial English "The school started on me."

Some more examples:

Vlak joj je kasnio. "her train was late."
Ivanu se brat zaposlio. "Ivan's brother got employed."

Sometimes, it can have ambiguous meanings:

Žena mi je pripremila ručak.

Does it mean "(The) woman prepared (a) lunch for me" or "My wife prepared (a) lunch."?

It depends on the context. *Žena* can be someone unrelated to you (meaning both "woman" and "wife") - but it's sure that you have something to do with the whole thing! Likely, you will eat...

More ambiguous sentences:

Djeca su mi razbila prozor.

It could mean:

"My children broke (a) window."

"Children broke my window."

"My children broke my window."

Furthermore:

Knjiga je zanimljiva. "(The) book is interesting."

Knjiga mu je zanimljiva. "He considers (the) book interesting." (the usual meaning) or "(The) book he wrote is interesting." (seldom)

Sometimes, usually in the spoken Croatian, one can add the dative *ti* or *vam*, trying to say that what is said *should matter to the listener*, it's just asking for attention, or trying to produce compassion (hence the 'ethical' in the name of a similar use of the dative in Latin):

Ja sam ti umorän. "You know, I'm tired." (only a rough translation!)

Is this all "gramatically correct"? English has a similar feature: "on me", "on him", that's considered non-standard. Well, I'll just cite an article:

The Dativus Ethicus (henceforth DE) is a grammatical construction with an ancient lineage. Strict grammarians point out that it is colloquial and from the point of view of the written language always appears as a structurally superfluous element (Hofmann & Szantyr, 93). Nevertheless they cite examples from Sophocles (o: teknon, e: veve:ken e:min o ksenos), Cicero (Hic tibi rostra Cato advolat) the New Testament (Schwyzer, 149).

([Veronica DuFeu: The Dativus Ethicus \(DE\) in the Slavonic Languages](#))

One last remark: Spanish and some other languages have exactly the same construct (only the word *no* is moved left in the Spanish example):

El computador no me funciona. (Spanish) = *Računalo mi ne radi.* (Croatian)

"It happens to me, the computer is not working."

58 'Nosim' and Derived Verbs

The three verbs, *nosim* "carry", *vodim* "lead", and *vozim* "drive" share many similarities, mostly in their forms, so it's useful to cover them together. The derived meanings are important and a bit unexpected.

Verb *nosim*

The verb *nosim* has a basic meaning "carry" (impf.), but with a lot of derived verbs and meanings. The verb itself is often used, having an object in accusative:

Ana nosi knjigu. "Ana is carrying (a) book."

Ana nosi knjigu Ivanu. "Ana is carrying (a) book to Ivan." (added a recipient)

Ana nosi knjigu u školu. "Ana is carrying (a) book to school." (added a destination)

Ana nosi naušnice. "Ana carries earrings." (= "wears", metaphorical)

Ana nosi naušnice u školu. "Ana is carrying earrings to school." (meaning, "she will leave them there")

Ana je nosila naušnice u školi. "Ana was carrying earrings at school." (meaning, "she was wearing them at school")

To refer to an actual act of putting earrings on or off, you should use verbs *stavljam* ~ *stavim* and *skidam* ~ *skinem*.

The usual distinction *u* + dat. = place vs. *u* + acc. = destination is important. The verb is main way to say one is wearing something:

Ana nosi kaput. "Ana is wearing (a) coat."

All the above verbs were imperfective. Since carrying is something that naturally takes a time, there are two versions of perfective, meaning "take away" and "bring". Take care, all perfective verbs derived from *nosim* have strange forms.

The derived verbs have diverse meanings and follow the "broken symmetric aspect pattern" where verbs that consist of a suffix + *nosim* are impf., and the perf. ones are derived from an irregular base not used on its own:

-nosim ~ *-nešem*, *-nio*, *-nijela*

Unfortunately, some verbs have different, unrelated meanings in their "impf./perf." pair (such meanings are shown separately) and some others act as a normal pair:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N A (DEST) (D)	N brings A (DEST) (to D)
<i>dopri-</i>	N (D) (I)	N contributes (to D) (with I)
<i>iz-</i>	N A (<i>iz</i> G)	N brings out A (from G)
<i>na-</i>	N A (<i>na</i> A1)	N puts, coats A (on A1)
	N (A) (D)	N inflicts (A) (to D)
<i>od-</i>	N A	N carries away A
<i>po-</i>	impf. N <i>se</i> (I)	N is proud (of I)
	perf. N (A)	N takes, carries (A)
<i>pod-</i>	N A	N withstands, tolerates A
<i>prë-</i>	N (A) (<i>prëko</i> G)	N carries, transmits (A) (over G)

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>pri-</i>	N A (D)	N brings A close (to D)
	N (D) (I)	N contributes (to D) (with I)
<i>raz-</i>	N A (DEST)	N scatters, distributes A (DEST)
	N A (<i>na</i> A1)	N explodes, blows A (to A1)
<i>u-</i>	N A (DEST)	N brings A in (DEST)

The verbs derived with *od-* and *do-* mean "take things away" or "bring things". All other uses of *nosim* apply. The verb *odnesem* also has a generic perf. meaning sometimes:

Ana je odnijela knjigu. "Ana took away (the) book."

Ana je odnijela knjigu Ivanu. "Ana took (the) book to Ivan." (added a recipient, meaning "taking away" is weakened)

Ana je odnijela knjigu u školu. "Ana took (the) book to school." (added a destination)

Ana je donijela knjigu. "Ana brought (the) book."

Ana je donijela knjigu Ivanu. "Ana brought (the) book to Ivan." (added a recipient)

Ana je donijela knjigu u školu. "Ana brought (the) book to school." (added a destination)

Verbs derived with *u-* and *iz-* are opposites as well, meaning "bring in"/"bring out", but as usual, the prepositions are used again:

Ivan je unio knjige u kuću. "Ivan brought books into (the) house."

Ivan je iznio knjige iz kuće. "Ivan brought books out of (the) house."

Ivan je odnio knjige u kuću. "Ivan took books into (the) house."

Ivan je odnio knjige iz kuće. "Ivan took books out of (the) house."

Since *nosim* is just impf., and has no true perf. pair, such verbs are always used. You can use *odnesem* as meaning almost the same, but *unesem/iznesem* emphasize that "in"/"out". *iznesem* can mean also "wear out", "wear until no longer wearable".

Verb *prenosim* means things were taken from one place to another:

Ivan je prenio knjige iz kuće u stan. "Ivan moved books from (the) house to (the) apartment."

Verb *prinosim* means "bring to", but also "contribute", and *doprinesem* only "contribute". In both verbs thing you are contributing to must be in dat. *doprinesem* usually does not have an object in acc.:

Ivan je prinio knjigu prozoru. "Ivan brought (the) book to (the) window." (*prozoru* = dat.)

Ivan je dioprinio pobjedi. "Ivan contibuted to victory." (*pobjedi* = dat.)

Verb derived with *raz-* means taking things to multiple places (e.g. mail) but also "blown up" by a bomb or so:

Ivan je raznio pisma. "Ivan delivered letters."

Bomba je raznijela kuću. "(A) bomb has blown up (the) house."

Verb *nanosim* is used with a special meaning and a even more interesting derived meaning "inflict", used only with "wounds", "defeat" and similar "damages" with the damaged things or persons in dat.:

Ivan je nanio boju na ogradu. "Ivan put (a layer of) paint on (the) fence."

Bomba je nanijela štetu kući. "(A) bomb has inflicted damage on the house." (*kući* = dat.)

The verb *podnosim* is the main way to say "tolerate":

Ivan ne podnosi vrućinu. "Ivan does not withstand heat." (*vrućinu* = acc.)

The verb *ponesem, ponio, ponijela, ponijeti* perf-s. "take, carry" means that one took something to carry, but not emphasizing that it was "away".

Ivan je ponio knjige. "Ivan carried books." (helped carrying, emphasize is on action, not on "from" or "to")

With a *se*, verbs are derived from that verb, with interesting meaning based on "carrying oneself" = "acting" = "behaving"

ponosim se impf. "be proud" (+ ins.)
odnosim se impf. "treat" (+ *prema* dat.)
ponašam se ~ *ponesem se, ponio se, ponijela se, ponijeti se* "behave"

Verbs *ponosim se* and *odnosim se* have no perf. pair; the other verb is the main way of expressing "behave":

Ivan se ponosio uspjehom. "Ivan was proud of (the) success." (*uspjehom* = ins.)
Ivan se odnosio loše prema psu. "Ivan treated (the) dog badly." (*psu* = dat.)
Ivan se ponašao čudno. "Ivan was behaving strangely." (*čudan* adj. "strange")

At the first look, *ponašam* has no link with *nosim*, but there are seldom used verbs derived from *nosim*:

unašam ~ *unesem, unesao, unesla, unesti* "bring in for a long time; bring in without purpose"
iznašam ~ *iznesem, iznesao, iznesla, iznesti* "bring out for a long time; bring out without purpose"
 etc.

These stand for action that took really a long, long time, much more than expected. But they are really seldom used.

What is not seldom used are nouns derived from such verbs. Often they have a very derived meaning (their gender follows the default pattern, and they all have plural just on an *odnos* — *odnosi*, etc.):

doprinos "contribution"
odnos "relationship"
iznos "final sum in a calculation", "sum on a bill"
prijenos "transmission, broadcast"
ponos "pride"
prinos "yield" (of grain, etc.)
unos "entry" (in a book, computer, etc.)

Start and Stop

We have seen above how *nosim* can mean "wear", like "often, every day". We can use generic expressions with verbs *počnem* "start" and *prestanem* "quit, stop" + infinitive:

Ana je počela nositi naušnice. "Ana has started wearing earrings."
Ana je počela nositi naušnice u školi. "Ana has started wearing earrings at school."
Ana je prestala nositi naušnice. "Ana has stopped wearing earrings."
Ana je prestala nositi naušnice u školi. "Ana has stopped wearing earrings at school."

This is maybe the right place to introduce these two verbs. They are most often used with other verbs in infinitive, in a familiar use of infinitive. They are both perfective, and can refer to starting and stopping of any impf. verb (= action taking a while), but mostly in a meaning that someone started or stopped habit of doing it, and not really the moment of actual start of action. For instance the sentence:

Ana je prestala jesti meso. "Ana has stopped eating meat."

Would usually mean that she is going to be a vegetarian, and not that she has finished a steak. The verbs are:

počinjem, počinjao ~ počnem, počeo (!) "start, begin"
prestajem ~ prestanem, prestao "stop, quit"

Verbs *vodim* and *vozim*

These verbs are alike *nosim*: they have "broken symmetric patterns", and their perf. verbs are unlike their impf. verbs. The verb *vodim* means "lead" and *vozim* means "drive". There's another problem — the perf. verbs for these two families are alike and can be confused, since infinitives have the same form:

-vodim ~ -vedem, -veo, -vela, -vesti
-vozim ~ -vezem, -vezao, -vezla, -vesti

The verb *vodim* has a couple of derived meanings: "carry" (electricity), "lead" (in a game), and "take" (somebody somewhere, e.g. children to school):

[under construction]

The prefixed verbs for *vodim* have diverse meanings, some of them quite metaphorical. They are:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N A-pers (DEST)	N brings A-pers (DEST)
<i>iz-</i>	N A-pers (<i>iz</i> G) (DEST)	N takes A-pers out (from G) (DEST)
<i>na-</i>	N A-pers <i>na</i> A1 N A-pers <i>da</i> ...	N leads, induces A-pers to A1 N leads, induces A-pers to ...
	N A-imp	N leads, guides A-imp
	N <i>da</i> ... N A	N states, cites that ... N states, cites A
<i>od-</i>	N A-pers (DEST)	N brings A-pers (DEST)
<i>prë-</i>	N (A) (<i>s</i> G) (<i>na</i> A1)	N translates (A) (from G) (to A1)
	N A <i>prëko</i> G	N leads A over G
<i>po-</i> (perf.)	N A-pers (DEST)	N takes A-pers (DEST)
<i>prëd-</i> (impf.)	N (A)	N heads (A)
<i>pro-</i>	N A	N spends A (time)
	N A (<i>kroz</i> A1)	N leads, carries A (through A1)
<i>raz-</i>	N-pl <i>se</i> N <i>se</i> (<i>od</i> G)	N-pl divorce N divorces (G)
	N A (<i>kroz</i> A1)	N distributes (around, through A1)
<i>s-</i>	N A (<i>na</i> A1) N <i>se na</i> A	N reduces A (to A1) N reduces to A
	N A (DEST)	N introduces A (DEST)
<i>za-</i>	N A	N seduces A

The main difference between *nosim* and its derivatives and *vodim* is that you use *vodim* for persons (sometimes animals) that move on their own, and they you just "lead" them. English can use "take" for both meanings: you can "take someone to movies", in Croatian, you must use *vodim*.

There are two similar verbs derived from *nosim*, using prefixes *od-* and *do-*; similar verbs are derived from *vodim*. The verbs with *od-* have emphasis on "removing", and ones with *do-* the emphasis is on "bringing/taking home", where "home" can be relative to the speaker, or relative to the subject of a sentence:

Ana je dovela djecu. "Ana brought the children."
Ana je odvela djecu u kino. "Ana took the children to cinema."
Ana je donijela pismo. "Ana brought the letter."
Ana je odnijela pismo Ivanu. "Ana took the letter to Ivan."

The verb *prëvodim* ~ *prëvedem*, *prëveo*, *prëvela*, *prëvesti* is mainly used in its derived meaning "translate":

Ana je prëvela pismo na engleski. "Ana has translated the letter to English."

The verb *provodim* ~ *provedem*, *proveo*, *provela*, *provesti* is sometimes used in basic meaning, "lead through", for example, a wire through a pipe. The verb *uvodim* ~ *uvedem*, *uveo*, *uvela*, *uvesti* is similar, but just meaning "lead into". They can be used for e.g. installing wires and pipes:

Ana je uvela vodu u kuću. "Ana has brought water supply to the house."
Ana je provela vodu kroz kuću. "Ana has installed water supply to the entire house."

Another often used derived meaning is "spend (time)":

Ana je provela ljeto u Dubrovniku. "Ana spent the summer in Dubrovnik."

There's another derived meaning. Verbs derived with *u-* and *pro-* mean also "introduce" and "carry though, complete":

The derived nouns are as follows:

<i>dovod</i> "intake"	<i>provod</i> "party, celebration"
<i>odvod</i> "drain"	<i>razvod</i> "divorce"
<i>povod</i> "cause, incentive"	<i>uvod</i> "introduction"
<i>prijëvod</i> "translation"	<i>zavod</i> "institute" (!)

The verb *vozim* means just "drive" and the derived verbs have just meanings derived from it:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>		
<i>iz-</i>	N A	N exports A
<i>na-</i>		
<i>od-</i>		
<i>prë-</i>	N A	N transports A
<i>raz-</i>	N A	N distributes A
<i>u-</i>	N A (ORIG)	N imports A (ORIG)

[under construction]

59 Word Stress (Accent)

Introducing Stress

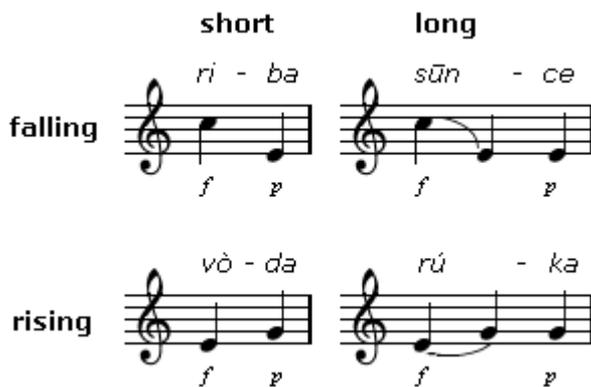
Accent or stress is emphasizing one syllable in a word. For example, I have highlighted stressed syllables in few English words:

together, **American**, **consequence**, **insist**

It's not seen from the spelling, one must just remember the stress for each word. English vowels also differ by their length: e.g. "keen" vs "kin". In English, it's an important feature, so it's featured in spelling. In Croatian, it's not seen in spelling, we'll see why.

Standard Croatian states that every vowel can be either **short** or **long**, and there are two types of stress: **rising** and **falling**. The main difference is that the syllable, after one stressed with the rising stress, is pronounced with a higher tone. Such feature is called the "[pitch accent](#)": Croatian is similar to Swedish, Slovenian, Japanese and some other languages; it does not go all the way of tonal languages like Mandarin Chinese, but it makes Standard Croatian sound like "singing".

To further clarify what two tones mean, they have been described like this since the 19th century:



We can mark some words to illustrate how Croatian words should be pronounced according to the Standard. We can use the following marks:

- a = a short vowel
- ā = a long vowel
- à = a short vowel with the rising stress
- á = a long vowel with the rising stress

There's no need to mark the falling stresses since if there's no rising stress marked, normally, the word is stressed on the first syllable with the falling stress, therefore in *riba* there's a falling stress on *i*. (Note: I have simplified marks for various stresses a bit, the Standard system has two additional marks, and one of them is hard to reproduce on some computers...)

There's an additional restriction: a rising stress cannot appear on the last syllable; therefore, in an one-syllable word, there are only falling stresses, and if a word has more than one syllable, the last one is never stressed.

So, far, so good: we need to remember the stress and the lengths for each word, right? No. Here comes another "catastrophe". Let's examine stress and lengths in nominative and genitive of some common words together with more inconspicuous words like *lonāc* "pot" (I removed by usual marking of the "disappearing a" for clarity), and *izvor* "source":

nom. sg.	<i>lònac</i>	<i>sūnce</i>	<i>vòda</i>	<i>žèna</i>	<i>kòlāč</i>	<i>izvor</i>
gen. sg.	<i>lónca</i>	<i>sūnca</i>	<i>vòde</i>	<i>žène</i>	<i>koláča</i>	<i>izvora</i>
nom. pl.	<i>lōnci</i>	<i>sūnca</i>	<i>vode</i>	<i>žène</i>	<i>koláči</i>	<i>izvori</i>
gen. pl.	<i>lonācā</i>	<i>sūncā</i>	<i>vódā</i>	<i>žénā</i>	<i>koláčā</i>	<i>izvōrā</i>

Yes, there are rising stresses in the singular, and falling in the plural for some words. Vowels change their lengths in some words. Some others don't change stress at all through cases. The truth is: there are many distinctive stress patterns for various words. It's really, really hard. In fact, I don't really know them either — I had to look in a grammar book to write these examples. You really need it if you want to work as a speaker on the Croatian Radio.

Non-standard Stress

If you're not aiming for that job, here's some relief. I have just described the Standard pattern. But the everyday, spoken Croatian does not always follow the rules. The stress rules are not followed in many places. For example, people from Split have stress quite similar to the one I have shown. But some other folks, for example people from Rijeka or Zagreb, do not. And there are whole regions that have completely different patterns of stress. There are two consequences:

- people in Croatia can immediately, after a few sentences, guess where somebody comes from — everyone uses own regional stress patterns in normal communication;
- if you are trying to learn Croatian just to communicate, you can choose any stress/length rules, and likely the simplest stress/length rules will be good for you.

Incidentally, the simplest rules are from city speeches of Zagreb and Rijeka. These are *not* the Standard rules, far from it. These are just the rules most people e.g. in Zagreb follow. The rules (roughly) are:

- there is no difference between short and long vowels: all are somewhere in the middle;
- there are no rising stresses; there's only one type of stress, similar to English; there are no tones or anything similar;
- the stress can be on any syllable, including the last one;
- the place of stress is usually the same in all cases of a noun.

Such rules are really much simpler, but remember, these are not the Standard rules, it's just colloquial, everyday speech. But it is often heard in the Croatian Parliament, on TV, radio; most movies and TV series set in Zagreb use it, etc. To illustrate them, and the difference from the Standard, here are some examples (I have marked all stressed vowels with boldface):

Standard	Zagreb	form	meaning
<i>kòlāč</i>	<i>kolač</i>	nom. sg.	"cake"
<i>koláča</i>	<i>kolača</i>	gen. sg.	
<i>govòriti</i>	<i>govoriti</i>	inf.	"speak"
<i>gòvorim</i>	<i>govorim</i>	pres.	
<i>òdlaziti</i>	<i>odlaziti</i>	inf.	"leave"
<i>òdlazim</i>	<i>odlazim</i>	pres.	

We see some striking differences. Do you see why the stress and length are not marked in the spelling? Because different regions use different stress and length rules, and everyone uses the same spelling.

To give you some information about the stress, I will mark verbs and nouns I will discuss about with

the above system of marks, and also mark the place of stress in the simplified (Zagreb) system with an underscore (except when the first syllable is stressed, then an underscore is implied), e.g.:

riba, sūnce, žèna, kòlāč, pòstavīm, pòstaviti, pòstavljām, pòstavljati

Therefore you can choose to obey the Standard (complex) system using marks above letters, or the simple Zagreb system, with markings below (only an underscore; again, I will not mark it on the first syllable — it's implied then). Of course noone writes like that at all, it's just additional information regarding the pronunciation!

Fixed and Falling-rising Stress

Having said all above, I will nevertheless show you two (simplest) Standard stress patterns for nouns. The simplest one is "fixed" — the stress is always on the same syllable, and is the same for all noun cases. Another one is slightly more complex:

case	fixed			falling-rising		
nom. sg.	<i>riba</i>	<i>žèna</i>	<i>národ</i>	<i>konj</i>	<i>kljūč</i>	<i>pūt</i>
acc. sg.	<i>ribu</i>	<i>žènu</i>		<i>kònja</i>		
dat. sg.	<i>ribi</i>	<i>žèni</i>	<i>národu</i>	<i>kònju</i>	<i>kljūču</i>	<i>pútu</i>
other cases in sg.	(same stress as dat. sg.)					
voc. sg.	<i>ribo</i>	<i>ženo</i>	<i>nārode</i>	<i>konju</i>	<i>kljūču</i>	<i>pūtu</i>
nom. pl.	<i>ribe</i>	<i>žène</i>	<i>národī</i>	<i>kònji</i>	<i>kljūčēvi</i>	<i>pūtevi</i>
other cases in pl.	(same stress as nom. pl.)					
gen. pl.	<i>rībā</i>	<i>žéna</i>	<i>nārōdā</i>	<i>kónjā</i>	<i>kljūčēvā</i>	<i>pútēvā</i>
voc. pl.	<i>ribe</i>	<i>žene</i>	<i>nārodi</i>	<i>konji</i>	<i>kljūčēvi</i>	<i>pūtevi</i>

The fixed pattern is very simple: the same stress is on the same syllable in all cases. The falling-rising pattern, which applies to some one-syllable m-nouns, is a bit more complicated: nouns start with a falling stress, but whenever anything is added to them, it switches to a rising one.

Unfortunately, there's no rule *which* one-syllable m-nouns have the falling-rising stress, they must be learned by heart (others can have fixed stress, and there's one more stress pattern for them that will be discussed much later). The common nouns that fall into this pattern are:

<i>bōr</i> "pine"	<i>krov</i> "roof"	<i>pūž</i> "snail"	<i>šāv</i> "stitch"
<i>čep</i> "plug, cork"	<i>kūt</i> "corner"	<i>slon</i> "elephant"	<i>štāp</i> "rod, stick"
<i>džep</i> "pocket"	<i>mak</i> "poppy"	<i>smijēh</i> "laughter" (*)	<i>top</i> "cannon"
<i>grob</i> "grave"	<i>nōž</i> "knife"	<i>snop</i> "bundle"	<i>trūd</i> "effort"
<i>hrāst</i> "oak"	<i>pod</i> "floor"	<i>strīc</i> "father's brother"	<i>vōl</i> "ox"
<i>konj</i> "horse"	<i>pop</i> "priest"	<i>strop</i> "ceiling"	<i>vrh</i> "top, peak"
<i>kljūč</i> "key"	<i>pūt</i> "path, way"	<i>stūp</i> "column, pillar"	<i>vrt</i> "garden"

The noun *smijēh* is actually pronounced /*smjēh*/ and therefore it's a one-syllable noun.

From the table above you can see that something special happens in gen. pl : the ending *-a* is long, but also the vowel before it gets long if it wasn't. It happens *only* if the gen. pl. ends on *-a*:

Genitive Plural Length Rule

If the gen. pl. of a noun ends on *-a*, then the last two syllables are always long (the last one includes the ending *-a*).

Example: *žèna* – *žénā*, *národ* – *nárōdā*

Of course if the one-but-the-last syllable has a short rising stress, it will have a long rising one in gen. pl: the intonation is not changed, only the length!

Another rule is that vocatives have always a falling stress.

Other case endings are usually short, except for singular of a-nouns, where the *-ē* in genitive and *-ōm* in instrumental are always long (e.g. gen. *ribē*, ins. *ribōm*).

Stress and Prepositions

There's an additional twist. Whenever an preposition (e.g. *na*, *u*, *za*... etc.) is before a noun, both should be pronounced as one word according to the Standard pronunciation. However, if a noun has a fixed falling stress, or a falling stress in the falling-rising pattern, then (in the Standard system) a new rising stress appears on the preposition:

u ribi pronounce as /*ùribi*/

na pūt pronounce as /*nàpūt*/

But, if the noun has a rising stress, the stress does not move:

na pútu pronounce as /*napútu*/ (not a falling stress!)

u grād pronounce as /*ugrād*/ (neither fixed nor falling-rising pattern!)

If a noun does have a falling stress (e.g. *grād*) but does not fall into the two stress patterns described above — something else happens, to be described later.

Let me repeat: *if* a noun uses one of the two stress patterns described above, and *if* it's preceded by a pronoun, and *if* it happens that in the case used it has a falling stress, *then* a rising stress appears on the pronoun preceding it.

That much about stress for now. I hope this was not too stressful to you.

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60 Expressing Knowledge and Meaning

Two verb families, *znam* and *mislim* demonstrate how there's far from a word to word correspondence between English and Croatian. For example, the following sentences use the same English verb, but not when translated to Croatian:

"I know what happened."
"I know him."

Likewise, the following sentences use different verbs in English, but when translated to Croatian, use only one verb:

"I meant it."
"I thought about you."

All three verb families follow the asymmetric aspect pattern.

znam; -znajem, znavao ~ -znam

Verb *znam* "know" is a fully regular impf. verb, with an asymmetric aspect pattern of derived verbs. It's used when you know some fact or skill, but **not** when you know (= are familiar with) a person, city, or like. Since derivation follows the asymmetric pattern, verbs derived from it are perf., and their impf. pairs are made from *-znajem*, *-znavao*. They are:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N (za A)	N becomes aware (of A)
<i>po-</i>	N A	N knows A (person, city, country)
<i>prepo-</i>	N A	N recognizes, identifies A
<i>pri-</i>	N (A)	N acknowledges, confesses (A)
<i>sa-</i>	N A	N comes to know A
<i>upo-</i>	N A	N gets to know A (person, city, country)

The verb *doznam* functions more or less as the perf.-s pair of *znam*; *saznam* has virtually the same meaning.

The verbs are stressed as:

znām, znati
pòznājēm, poznávati ~ pòznām, pòznati

There's an alternative form of only present of *znam*: *znádem*, used in some regions. Prefixed verbs have just one form.

mislim; -mišljam ~ -mislim

The verb *mislim* means "think, have opinion". It uses the asymmetric pattern; *-mišljam* is used for derived impf. verbs. In fact, its verbal noun (gerund) *mišljenje* has additional meaning "opinion". If you thinking about something, you should use preposition *o* + dat. It's also used as translation for "mean" when meaning "intend":

Mislim kupiti kuću. "I intend to buy a house."
Mislim o poslu. "I'm thinking about (the) job."
Mislim o tebi. "I'm thinking about you."

The verbs are:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N (A)	
<i>iz-</i>	N (A)	N invents, makes up (X)
<i>po-</i>	N (A)	N has a thought (about A)
<i>predo-</i>	N <i>se</i> (o D)	N changes mind (about A)
<i>pro-</i>	N (o D)	N thinks thoroughly (about D)
<i>raz-</i>	N (o D)	N considers, ponders (D)
<i>s-</i>	N (A)	N conceives, comes up (with A)
<i>u-</i>	N (A)	
<i>za-</i>	N (A)	

The stress is:

mislīm, misliti
ràzmīšljām, razmīšljati ~ ràzmislīm, ràzmisliti

This verb is often used in meaning "suppose", "reckon", "guess", and inserted even as a standalone verb, or used to fill a pause in speech:

Mislīm, trebamo krenuti... "I guess, we should go..."
Mislīm da nemam dovoljno novaca. "I think I don't have enough money."
Mislīm krenuti rano. "I intend to start/depart early."

Another verb that means only "suppose" is *pretpostavljam ~ pretpostavim*, however, it's less often used in everyday conversation:

Pretpostavljam da nemam dovoljno novaca. "I suppose I don't have enough money."

značim; -značujem, -značivao ~ -značim

The last verb group, *značim*, also follows the asymmetric pattern: derived impf. verbs are derived from *-značujem, -značivao*. Its basic meaning is "mean", "signify", "symbolize", "stand for". It's very often used:

To znači da... "It means that..."
Što znači 'klupa'? "What does 'klupa' mean?"
Božić mi puno znači. "Christmas means a lot to me."

It's not used when someone has an opinion, but when some object, event, or a fact has some "meaning", "stands for" something. There's only one derived verb that's frequently used verb, meaning "mark", "tag":

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>o-</i>	N (A)	N marks, tags (A)

The stress is:

znāčīm, znāčiti
òznāčīm, oznāčiti

It's also sometimes used as a "filler" word in speech, in the 3rd pers. sg. (impersonally, that is), meaning "so", "therefore":

Imam 10 kuna... znači, treba mi još 5. "I have 10 kuna... so, I need 5 more." (lit. "...it means...")

Strong Beliefs and Doubts

The verb *mislim* is usually used to express what you "think" or "believe". If you are sure, then the adjective *siguran* is used:

Siguran sam da nemam dovoljno novaca. "I'm sure I don't have enough money."

It's not a verb, so it cannot be used with infinitives. The related adverb *sigurno* is used to express that something is "certain":

Ana će sigurno položiti ispit. "Ana will pass the exam for sure."

However, if you are worried/afraid of that something will/won't happen, or that something is or isn't, you can, besides *mislim*, use *bojim se*:

Bojim se da nemam dovoljno novaca. "I'm afraid I don't have enough money."

61 More Verbs, Verb Stress

Let me explain more aspect patterns and give you the basic information about verb stress.

Symmetric Pattern with Unused Roots

There are some verbs that follow the symmetric verb pattern, but the verbs are derived from forms that are not used on its own. For instance, there are pairs:

s-pajam ~ *s-pojim* "connect, join"
pri-pajam ~ *pri-pojim* "annex"

But there's no verb *pajam* ~ *pojim*, there is a verb *pojim*, but it's unrelated! There are more such "bases" not used on their own, e.g.:

-premam ~ *-premim*

This pair is quite important; it contains a verb meaning "prepare" and another often used verb. They are used like this:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N A (D)	N brings, delivers A (to D)
<i>o-</i>	N A	N equips, furnishes A
<i>ot-</i>	N A (D)	N ships, sends A (to D)
<i>pos-</i>	N A	N tidies A
<i>pri-</i>	N A (D)	N prepares A (for D)
<i>s-</i>	N A N A (D)	N puts A to its place N makes A ready (for D)

The verb *spremim* ~ *spremam* is often used and quite hard to translate. It means "bringing things into order": putting things where they belong, but also "prepare food", and making prepared for anything, getting "ready":

[under construction]

The adjective *spreman* means "ready"; the noun *oprema* means "equipment".

It's useful to learn all verbs derived from the same base together, since they all follow the same aspect pattern, the same verb type, but also they have the same stress!

Introduction to Verb Stress

For many verbs, there is a difference between the stress in present (and passive adj.) and the stress in past participle and infinitive.

Regarding lengths, some endings (e.g. present) have long vowels, some don't:

pres. class	0	n, 'je/a	a	i
1 st sg.	-em	- <i>ēm</i>	- <i>ām</i>	- <i>īm</i>
2 nd sg.	-eš	- <i>eš</i>	- <i>aš</i>	- <i>iš</i>

pres. class	o	n, 'je/a	a	i
3 rd sg.	-e	-ē	-ā	-ī
1 st pl.	-emo	-ēmo	-āmo	-īmo
2 nd pl.	-ete	-ēte	-āmo	-īmo
3 rd pl.		-ū	-ajū (!)	-ē

The pattern of prefixed verbs depends on the pattern of the base verbs, so it's easier to treat them together, even if the pattern change when an suffix is added. The part of the verb we get when all endings are removed is called **root**. The verb root itself can be either long or short.

Verb Stress Patterns

Many base verbs have always **falling stress** on the root (and short vowel), e.g. *punīm* "fill". All forms have the exactly same stress (*punio*, *puniti*). The common verbs with the falling stress pattern are:

<i>brinēm</i> "worry"	<i>pijēm</i> , <i>pio</i> "drink"
<i>brišēm</i> , <i>brisao</i> "wipe"	<i>pjevām</i> "sing"
<i>crām</i> "draw, sketch"	<i>plačēm</i> , <i>plakao</i> "cry, shed tears"
<i>čekām</i> "wait"	<i>plašīm</i> "scare"
<i>čeznēm</i> "yearn"	<i>plivām</i> "swim"
<i>čistīm</i> "clean"	<i>pljunēm</i> (perf.) "spit"
<i>dām</i> "give" (perf.)	<i>pljusnēm</i> (perf.) "slap"
<i>dižēm</i> , <i>dizao</i> "raise"	<i>pljujēm</i> , <i>pljuvao</i> "spit"
<i>gazīm</i> "trample"	<i>pratīm</i> "follow"
<i>ginēm</i> "perish"	<i>pucām</i> "shoot; crack"
<i>gladīm</i> "pet, smooth"	<i>punīm</i> "fill"
<i>gledām</i> "watch"	<i>pušīm</i> "smoke"
<i>grijēm</i> , <i>grijao</i> "heat"	<i>pužēm</i> , <i>puzao</i> "crawl"
<i>grabīm</i> "grab"	<i>ranīm</i> "injure" (perf.)
<i>grlīm</i> "hug"	<i>rěžēm</i> , <i>rězao</i> "cut"
<i>gurnēm</i> (perf.) "push"	<i>rušīm</i> "demolish"
<i>hvatām</i> "catch"	<i>silīm</i> "force"
<i>igrām</i> "play"	<i>sijēm</i> , <i>sijao</i> "sow"
<i>jamčīm</i> "guarantee"	<i>slavīm</i> "celebrate"
<i>jedēm</i> , <i>jeo</i> , <i>jela</i> , <i>jesti</i> "eat"	<i>slikām</i> "make/paint pictures"
<i>kucām</i> "knock"	<i>slušām</i> "listen"
<i>kuhām</i> "cook"	<i>srečēm</i> , <i>sretao</i> "meet"
<i>kušām</i> "taste, sample"	<i>stanēm</i> , <i>stao</i> (perf.) "stand"
<i>lajēm</i> , <i>lajao</i> "bark"	<i>stižēm</i> , <i>stizao</i> "arrive"
<i>mičēm</i> , <i>micao</i> "move, shift"	<i>svičēm</i> , <i>svitao</i> "dawn"
<i>mislīm</i> "think"	<i>tjērām</i> "chase, drive away"
<i>mjērīm</i> "measure"	<i>tješīm</i> "comfort"
<i>mucām</i> "stammer"	<i>trēbām</i> "need, should"
<i>mučīm</i> "torture"	<i>trgām</i> "tear, pull apart"
<i>ničēm</i> , <i>nicao</i> "sprout"	<i>vadīm</i> "extract"
<i>nudīm</i> "offer"	<i>varām</i> "cheat"
<i>padām</i> "fall"	<i>vračām</i> "return"
<i>padnēm</i> , <i>pao</i> , <i>pala</i> , <i>pasti</i> (perf.) "fall"	<i>vjērujēm</i> , <i>vjērovao</i> "believe"
<i>patīm</i> "suffer"	<i>znām</i> "know"
<i>pazīm</i> "beware"	<i>žalīm</i> "regret"

When verbs with the falling stress pattern get a prefix with a vowel (e.g. *na* + *punīm*) they get a rising stress on the prefix (*nāpunīm*). In the simplified Zagreb stress system, the stress does not move to the prefix (*nāpunīm*). The exception are verbs *d-ām* and *zn-ām* that really don't have a vowel in their root; their stress moves to the prefix even in the Zagreb system, and their passive

adj. ends on *-āt* or *-ān*.

Of course, if the prefix does not contain a vowel (e.g. *s-trgām*) nothing changes. Only vowels in prefixes have any effect. This table summarizes this rather simple pattern:

pattern	falling		<i>dām, znām</i>	
	base	+ prefix	base	+ prefix
present	<i>punīm</i>	<i>nà-punīm</i>	<i>dām</i>	<i>dò-dām</i>
past part.	<i>punio</i>	<i>nà-punio</i>	<i>dao</i>	<i>dò-dao</i>
infinitive	<i>puniti</i>	<i>nà-puniti</i>	<i>dati</i>	<i>dò-dati</i>
pass. adj.	<i>punjen</i>	<i>nà-punjen</i>	<i>dān, dāt</i>	<i>dò-dān, dò-dāt</i>

There are base verbs that always have a **rising stress** on their root which stays the same in all forms; the vowel can be either short or long. The common ones are:

[under construction]

When such verbs get a prefix, the stress moves to the prefix in present and passive adjective, and they get a rising stress on it; however, the stress stays put in the Zagreb system. This table summarizes the patterns:

pattern	rising			
	base	+ prefix	base	+ prefix
present	<i>ùčīm</i>	<i>nà-ùčīm</i>	<i>žúrīm</i>	<i>pò-žūrīm</i>
past part.	<i>ùčio</i>	<i>na-ù-čio</i>	<i>žúrio</i>	<i>po-žúrio</i>
infinitive	<i>ùčiti</i>	<i>na-ù-čiti</i>	<i>žúriti</i>	<i>po-žúriti</i>
pass. adj.	<i>ùčen</i>	<i>nà-ùčen</i>	—	—

You can see that lengths do not change ($\bar{u} + \text{rising stress} = \acute{u}$): only stress type and place do. The stress of prefixed verbs always alternates between present and past/infinitive (but stays put in the Zagreb system).

I have taken few i-verbs, all having vowel *u* in their root, to show that the verb stress pattern is quite independent of their verb type and vowels in the root.

There's another pattern: **falling-rising**. Many verbs a falling stress in present, and rising in past part. and infinitive. Examples are *pītām*, *pítati* and *molīm*, *mòliti*. We see that lengths of the vowel don't change, just the nature of the stress (falling in present, rising in past/infinitive). Common base verbs with this pattern and the short vowel are:

<i>gonīm</i> "chase"	<i>nosīm</i> "carry"
<i>kašljēm</i> , <i>kàšljao</i> "cough"	<i>orēm</i> , <i>òrao</i> "till"
<i>kosīm</i> "mow"	<i>planēm</i> "flare" (perf.)
<i>lažēm</i> , <i>lagao</i> , <i>lagala</i> , <i>làgati</i> "say"	<i>pustīm</i> "let go" (perf.)
<i>lomīm</i> "break"	<i>s-pojīm</i> "connect" (perf.)
<i>ložīm</i> "fuel, feed fire"	<i>s-tvorīm</i> "create, make" (perf.)
<i>metnēm</i> "put" (perf.)	<i>volīm</i> , <i>vòlio</i> , <i>vòljela</i> "like, love"
<i>molīm</i> "pray"	<i>vozīm</i> "drive"

It's worth noting that there are no a-verbs in this group. Some verbs don't exist in their base form nowadays: there's no verb *pojīm*, only prefixed forms exist; however the prefix *s-* does not change the stress since it has no vowel. The same of course holds for *s-ložīm* "put together" (perf.), etc.

The following verbs have this pattern, but with a long vowel:

<i>brūsīm</i> "grind"	<i>nēmām</i> "have not"	<i>snīmīm</i> "record, shoot" (perf.)
<i>būdīm</i> "wake"	<i>njīšēm, njíhao</i> "sway"	<i>snīmām</i> "record, shoot"
<i>būnīm</i> "revolt"	<i>pālīm</i> "burn"	<i>s-nīzīm</i> "lower" (perf.)
<i>būšīm</i> "puncture, drill"	<i>pīšēm, písao</i> "write"	<i>s-pājām</i> "connect"
<i>dāvīm</i> "choke"	<i>pītām</i> "ask"	<i>spāsīm</i> "save"
<i>dīšēm, díhao</i> "breathe"	<i>plācām</i> "pay"	<i>spāvām</i> "sleep"
<i>gāsīm</i> "extinguish; turn off"	<i>plātīm</i> "pay" (perf.)	<i>s-prēmām</i> "prepare, tidy"
<i>grādīm</i> "build"	<i>plēšēm, plésao</i> "dance"	<i>s-prēmīm</i> "prepare, tidy" (perf.)
<i>gūrām</i> "push"	<i>prīmām</i> "receive"	<i>stāvljām</i> "put"
<i>hlādīm</i> "cool, refrigerate"	<i>prūžām</i> "provide, stretch"	<i>strādām</i> "get hurt, suffer"
<i>hōdām</i> "walk, go"	<i>pūšēm, púhao</i> "blow"	<i>s-tvārām</i> "create, make"
<i>hrānīm</i> "feed"	<i>pūštām</i> "let go"	<i>svīrām</i> "play (music)"
<i>hrčēm, h́kao</i> "snore"	<i>rādīm</i> "work"	<i>sūdīm</i> "judge"
<i>hvālīm</i> "praise"	<i>rādām</i> "give birth"	<i>sūmnjām</i> "doubt"
<i>kānīm</i> "intend"	<i>rijēšīm</i> "solve" (perf.)	<i>šēcēm, šétao</i> "stroll, walk"
<i>kāžēm, kázao</i> "say"	<i>rūčām</i> "have lunch"	<i>trāžīm</i> "seek"
<i>krēcēm, krétao</i> "move"	<i>sānjām, sánjao</i> "dream"	<i>tūžīm</i> "accuse, complain"
<i>krūžīm</i> "cycle, rotate"	<i>sīnēm</i> "dawn"	<i>věžēm, vézao</i> "tie"
<i>līžēm, lízao</i> "lick"	<i>skāčēm, skákao</i> "jump"	<i>vīčēm, víkao</i> "yell"
<i>māšēm, máhao</i> "wave"	<i>s-lāmām</i> "break"	<i>vlādām</i> "rule"
<i>māmīm</i> "lure"	<i>s-lāžēm, s-lágao</i> "put together"	<i>vrātīm</i> "return" (perf.)
<i>mijēnjām</i> "change"	<i>slūžīm</i> "serve"	<i>znāčīm</i> "mean, signify"
<i>mijēšām</i> "stir, mix"	<i>smātrām</i> "consider"	<i>zrāčīm</i> "ventilate; radiate"
<i>mlātīm</i> "flail, beat"	<i>s-mētām</i> "interfere"	<i>žārīm</i> "glow, radiate"
<i>mōrām</i> "must"	<i>s-mīrīm</i> "calm" (perf.)	<i>žvāčēm, žvákao</i> "chew"

There are some a-verbs in this group, a verb with a long stressed *r* (*hrčēm*, obviously it imitates the sound of snoring), and again some verbs that are used only with a prefix.

When a prefix with a vowel is added, the accent moves to the beginning of the word in present, and we get a rising stress. This table summarizes this pattern, with and without prefixes:

pattern	rising-falling			
	base	+ prefix	base	+ prefix
present	<i>pustīm</i>	<i>nà-pustīm</i>	<i>hrānīm</i>	<i>nà-hrānīm</i>
past part.	<i>pùstio</i>	<i>na-pùstio</i>	<i>hránio</i>	<i>na-hránio</i>
infinitive	<i>pùstiti</i>	<i>na-pùstiti</i>	<i>hrániti</i>	<i>na-hrániti</i>
pass. adj.	<i>pušten</i>	<i>nà-pušten</i>	<i>hrānjen</i>	<i>nà-hrānjen</i>

You see that there is no real difference between verbs with short and long vowels. The stress does not move in the Zagreb system. It's worth noting that the passive adj. has the stress like the present form. This pattern is really similar to the rising pattern, the only difference is a falling stress in present and passive adjective of base verbs.

All verbs that fall into *uje/ova* and *uje/iva* types have always the stress and lengths as shown here, regardless of any prefixes (that is, *kupujem* and *po-kupujem* have the same stress):

type	uje/ova		uje/iva	
	base	prefixed	base	prefixed
present	<i>kùpujēm</i>	<i>po-kùpujēm</i>	<i>dàrujēm</i>	<i>po-kàzujēm</i>
past part.	<i>kupòvao</i>	<i>po-kupòvao</i>	<i>darívao</i>	<i>po-kazívao</i>
infinitive	<i>kupòvati</i>	<i>po-kupòvati</i>	<i>darívati</i>	<i>po-kazívati</i>
pass. adj.	—	—	—	—

As you can see, the *i* in present *-iva-m* is always stressed with a rising stress and is long. Now stress moves in the Zagreb system too!

62 Verbs 'hvatam', 'držim' and 'puštam'

The three verbs *hvatam*, *držim* and *puštam* mean respectively "catch", "hold", and "release, let go".

Verbs *hvatam* and *držim* are impf. and therefore verbs derived from them follow the asymmetric pattern; *puštam* ~ *pustim* and verbs derived from them follow the symmetric pattern (that is, ones derived from *puštam* are impf., and ones derived from *pustim* are perf.)

The derived verbs are quite important, you'll see the range of their meanings.

hvatam; -hvatim ~ -hvaćam

Unfortunately, the verb *hvatam* impf. has an *irregular* derivation pattern: verbs are actually derived from *-hvaćam* (impf.) and *-hvatim* (perf.) That's one of irregularities in Croatian. It's maybe worth mentioning that this irregularity does not exist in Serbian: the same prefixes there are attached simply to *hvatam* (the meanings are identical, as usual)! Let's check the meanings:

pref.	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N A	N reaches, grasps A
<i>obu-</i>	N A	N encircles, involves A
<i>pri-</i>	N A N <i>da...</i>	N accepts A N accepts that...
<i>s-</i>	N A N <i>da...</i>	N understands A N understands that...
<i>u-</i>	N A	N catches A
<i>za-</i>	N A	N encroaches, gripes A

For example:

Prihvaćam pomoć "I accept help"
Uhvatio sam loptu "I caught the ball"
Ne shvaćam problem "I don't understand the problem"

These verbs are stressed as:

pr̄ihvaćām, pr̄ihvaćati ~ *pr̄ihvatīm, pr̄ihvatiti*

The base verb and the one derived with *s-* are stressed as:

hvatām, hvatati
shvaćām, shvaćati ~ *shvatīm, shvatiti*

Passive participles are formed from *-hvaćen*, e.g. *uhvaćen* "caught", and gerunds as *hvatanje*, *-hvaćanje*.

držim; -državam ~ -držim

The verb *držim*, *držao* "hold" (impf.) does not have a perf. counterpart. Its meaning is physically holding or possessing something; in Croatian, you don't "hold someone responsible" etc. You can just hold things in your hand or possess them. All verbs derived from it are perf., and the impf. ones are made with *-državam*:

pref.	grammar	meaning
<i>iz-</i>	N (A)	N endures (A)
<i>o-</i>	N (A)	N maintains A
<i>po-</i>	N (A)	N supports A
<i>pri-</i>	N (A)	N holds A a bit, for a while
<i>uz-</i>	N <i>se</i> (od G)	N refrains (from G)
	N A	N subsists A
<i>za-</i>	N A	N withholds, keeps A

It's stressed like (*r̂*'s are *r*'s are stressed with the short falling stress due to difficulties of graphic representation):

dř̂im, dř̂ati
zadř̂āvām zadržāvati ~ zadrž̂im, zadrž̂ati

Passive adjectives are formed as *držan*, *-državan*, and gerunds as *držanje*, *-državanje*. *održavanje* means "maintenance", but it's not really a derived meaning.

puštam ~ pustim

The verb *puštam* ~ *pustim* means simply "release, let go". Verbs derived from it are variations of the meaning, and are very often used:

pref.	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N A N D INF N D <i>da</i> ...	N allows A N lets D INF N lets D ...
<i>is-</i>	N A	N emits, releases, drops A
<i>na-</i>	N A	N abandons A
<i>o-</i>	N A N <i>se</i>	N relaxes A N relaxes
<i>ot-</i>	N A	N sacks, fires A (from a job)
<i>po-</i>	N (A) N D	N gives in, N loosens A N yields to D
<i>prě-</i>	N A (D)	N relinquishes, gives over A (to D)
<i>pro-</i>	N A	N misses, overlooks, lets pass A
<i>ras-</i>	N A	N adjourns, dismisses A
<i>s-</i>	N A N <i>se</i>	N lowers A N descends
<i>za-</i>	N A	N neglects A

The verb and the derived ones are stressed like this (the one derived with *s-* is again stressed like the base verb):

nàpūštām, napúštati ~ nàpustīm, napùstiti
pūštām, púštati ~ pustīm, pùstiti

The verb *opuštam* ~ *opustim* is the way to say "relax". Passive participles are formed as (*opuštan*), *opušten*; gerunds are like *opuštanje*. Some gerunds have special meanings:

dopuštenje "permission"

63 Verbs on '-iram'

There's a big group of Croatian verbs (in fact, there are thousands of them) that are quite similar in many aspects. Let's see their common features and meet the most important ones.

These verbs are mostly older and less older *loans*, that is, words taken from another language. For instance, old loans in English are "collect", "connect", etc. The Croatian verbs I'm talking about are most often taken from German. This is one example:

analizīrām, analizírao "analyse"

This verb is *the* way to say "analyse" in Croatian — there's no other way, actually. If you have some knowledge of German, you will immediately see that it's quite alike *analysieren*. It even has the stress on the same syllable.

These verbs (there are thousands like them!) always have such endings (in fact, they are absolutely regular a-verbs) and accents like the verb above. Since such verbs are often used, you can immediately guess where the speaker comes from: if the present is stressed as *analizīram*, he or she is from the North (around Zagreb) or the West (Rijeka, Pula, some islands). Otherwise, ones who use the Standard *analiziram* are from elsewhere or use the Standard accent (you hear it in TV news).

Furthermore, the above verb is impf. and does not have the real perf. pair — it stands for an action that takes some time. Most of the *-iram* verbs have only impf. forms — they are then used in both aspects.

Many such verbs are normal Croatian verbs. But some of them are just a "scientific" or "learned" way of talking. For instance, there are two verbs meaning "correct": one is *ispravljam ~ ispravim*, but there's also "learned" *korigiram* (only impf.), obviously from German *korrigieren*. Such "learned" verbs are not used by common folk too often.

Croatian is unlike English — there are some people in Croatia (they include "language police", but also some others) — who are afraid of foreign verbs in Croatian. So not all words in Croatian are "acceptable" by all — this also depends whom you are talking to. About a thousand of *-iram* verbs are "acceptable", but there are much more. However, there are many verbs where a replacement is hard to find. Some examples are (I list here only presents since they are all a-verbs):

<i>asfaltiram</i> "asphalt, pave a road"	<i>organiziram</i> "organize"
<i>bombardiram</i> "bomb"	<i>pakiram ~ s-</i> "pack", "wrap"
<i>eksploDIRAM</i> "explode"	<i>parkiram</i> "park (a car)"
<i>fotografiram</i> "take photos"	<i>planiram ~ is-</i> "plan"
<i>kalibriram</i> "calibrate"	<i>protestiram</i> "protest"
<i>mariniram</i> "marinate"	<i>studiram</i> "study (on university)"
<i>maskiram</i> "mask"	<i>telefoniram</i> "phone"
<i>matiram</i> "check-mate"	<i>tuširam</i> "shower (wash)",
<i>miniram</i> "mine (put explosives)"	etc.

There is no other way to say "plan" (verb) in Croatian but *planiram*! It's a very often used verb as well. The noun is just *plan* mⁱ "plan"

Bear in mind that everything I wrote for *analiziram* holds for the verbs above (esp. the stress), except that a few has perf. pairs. Unfortunately, one has to memorize which ones have a perf. pair, and which do not. However, the perf. verb is always created by adding a prefix. Unfortunately, the prefix must be learned — there's no rule. So, mixed blessings.

All such verbs have either an object in acc. or no object at all (*eksploDIRAM*). Most of them that can have an object also form the mediopassive with *se*. They are never dative verbs or similar.

Some verbs are often used but sometimes "original" Croatian verbs are used instead:

blokiram "block" (also *zaustavljam* ~ *zaustavim*,...)

emitiram "emit, broadcast" (also *odašiljem*)

faširam "mince (meat)" (also *meljem*, *mljeo*,...)

garantiram "guarantee" (also *jamčim*)

kopiram "copy" (also *preslikavam* ~ *preslikam*)

kreiram "create, design" (also *stvaram* ~ *stvorim*, etc.)

servisiram "service, maintain" (many verbs with similar meanings exist as well...)
etc.

Sometimes there's a subtle difference in meaning. The verb *kreiram* involves "creativity", "imagination", while *stvaram* has more to do with "effort"; however, both mean basically just "create". Some are ambiguous, like *servisiram*: it can mean several things: "maintain", "serve", "repair", etc. It's not considered acceptable by some people, considering it "bad Croatian".

There are even some verbs that are formed with *-iram* but out of Croatian words, and not foreign ones: an example is *lažiram* "rig, manipulate". Some others that seemingly fall into this group are actually completely unrelated (e.g. *biram* "choose" has *-iram*) so most things said above don't apply to them.

64 Colloquial and Regional Vocabulary

Introducing Colloquial Words

In most languages, there are difference between "street" language, and "official" language. Some words are never heard in Parliaments or TV news, for instance, English "ain't" and "wanna" are often used, but not in "serious" occasions. Such words are called *colloquial*. Some of them are:

meaning	Standard	colloquial
"boy", "boyfriend"	<i>mlàdīć</i>	<i>dečko</i>
"girl", "girl"	<i>djevōjka</i>	<i>cura</i>
"small girl"	<i>djevòjčica</i>	<i>curica</i>
"lack", "miss" (verb)	<i>nedostajem</i>	<i>falim</i>
"fit" (verb)	<i>odgovaram</i>	<i>pašem, pasao</i>
"iron (for pressing cloth)"	<i>glàčalo</i>	<i>pēgla</i>
"iron" (verb)	<i>glàčām</i>	<i>pēglām</i>
"double" (adj.)	<i>dvòstruk</i>	<i>duplī</i>

Verbs *nedostajem* and *falim* put what is missing in nom., and the affected one (who or what needs it) in dat.:

Fali mi Ana. lit. "Ana is missing to me" = "I miss Ana".

Regional Words

There is a twist: some colloquial words depend on the region. Actually, there's a similar situation in the US: South uses "coke", North "pop", while California and West use "soda" for a generic soft drink (look up *pop soda map* on the Internet)

Croatia has broadly 5 distinct historical regions, which can be grouped to **coastal** (Istria, Northern Littoral, Dalmatia) and **inland** (the rest). Generally speaking, the coastal regions have a lot of Mediterranean influences (chiefly Venetian), and the inland has a lot of German influences. The major coastal city is Split, while the major inland city is Zagreb (the capital). Of course, there's traditional animosity, football rivalry, etc. It's impossible to list all differences, let's say there are differences in mentality, culture, attitudes etc. Croatia is a land of striking regional differences, from voting patterns to eating habits.



Yes, *Slavonia* is a region within Croatia, *Slovenia* is another country (west of Croatia), and *Slovakia* is yet another country (between Poland and Hungary)! Please don't confuse them.

To give an example, how do you say "tomato" in Croatian? If you look in a dictionary, it says *ràjčica*. But no one really uses that word, except in the TV news! In a shop, you will ask for a *paradajz* (inland), or for a *pomidōr* (coast). Weird, isn't it?

There are many common terms that differ between inland and coast, things mainly regarding everyday life, as food, vegetables, kitchen utensils, bed clothing, etc. Here are some examples:

meaning	Standard	inland	coastal
"snack"	<i>užina</i>	<i>gàblec</i>	<i>màrēnda</i>
"bedsheet"	<i>plahta</i>	<i>plahta</i>	<i>làncūn</i>
"screwdriver"	<i>odvijāč</i>	<i>šràfcīger</i>	<i>kacàvīda</i>
"button"	<i>dùgme, gumb</i>	<i>gumb</i>	<i>bòtūn</i>
"pillow"	<i>jàstuk</i>	<i>jàstuk</i>	<i>kùšīn</i>
"quarter, 1/4"	<i>četvrt</i>	<i>frtalj</i>	<i>kvarat</i>
"hour"	<i>sāt</i>	<i>sat, ura</i>	<i>ura</i>
"paint (wall)" (verb)	<i>bojim, bojao</i>	<i>farbam</i>	<i>pituram</i>

The terms *užina*, *gablec*, and *marenda* correspond to German *Zwischenmahlzeit*, a minor meal between larger meals.

Another nice example of variation is *cornmeal*, having three different names in various parts of Croatia: *žganci* (m.pl., Central Croatia), *palenta* (Northern littoral, Istria), and *pura* (Dalmatia). All three words are written on a bag of instant cornmeal sold in shops — see the photo on the right — together with a more formal description (the last row).



Even when two people are trying to talk "almost Standard", they will use some different words. For instance, on internet forums, any non-formal communications, but also in songs, novels, etc. For example, Google™ for [šrafciġer site:.hr](http://šrafciġer.site.hr) and compare number of hits with [odvijāč site:.hr](http://odvijāč.site.hr).

Colloquial Time

Next, there's a common, but colloquial way of telling time in "quarters" and "halves", quite different in inland and coastal area:

meaning	inland	coastal
"14:00"	<i>dva</i>	<i>dvā</i>
"14:15"	<i>frtalj tri (!)</i>	<i>dvā i kvarat</i>
"14:30"	<i>pol(a) tri</i>	<i>dvā i pō</i>
"14:45"	<i>tri frtalj(a) tri</i>	<i>trī manje kvarat, dvā i trikvarat</i>
"15:00"	<i>tri</i>	<i>trī</i>

Observe that in inland, quarters are related to the past hour, but number that is used is of the next hour! This is a quite non-obvious way to express time. This is similar to ways in Southern Germany and Austria (and *frtalj* comes from German *viertel* "quarter"). The same non-obvious scheme is common in Hungarian.

Despite all clocks and TV news using the 24-hour system, colloquially, the 12-hour system is used, with additional *popodne* or *prijēpodne* used sometimes to avoid confusion.

In coastal regions, *ura* is quite common instead of *sat* "hour".

This is just a small part of regional variations. If you go to smaller towns and villages, you will be able to hear something completely different, called *dialect*, where not just some words are changed, but lot of them, together with a lot of grammar (including prepositions and case roles!), accents and sounds. That will be dealt with a bit later.

65 Interjections and Presentatives

• • • Review: **26 Demonstratives and Definiteness**

This strange term is about words used to convey emotions or simply to shout, like "ouch", "hey", etc. Some of them are:

hej to call someone
joj to express strong emotions, surprise, or even pain
jao to express pain or surprise, "woe"
aha stress on the last a; to express agreement
a, ah emotions
o, oh emotions, surprise etc.

Some of them can be used with pronouns; case used depends on the interjection:

joj mene used only with *mene*
jao + dat. — woe to someone e.g. *jao tebi*

Then there are interjections used to encourage, call or drive away animals:

iš to drive away animals generally
šic to drive away cats
mic to call cats
điha to make a horse move etc.

There's a special interjection *na*; a noun in genitive or accusative can be attached, it's used when offering food to animals or small children. It's considered quite rude to say *na* to an adult person; the polite way is *izvoli* or *izvolite*.

Finally, there are so-called **presentatives**, roughly corresponding to English "Here's....!" They correspond exactly to French *voici* and *voilà*, but there are three of them (recall that Croatian has three-way distinction instead of English/French two-way here/there). They don't change case/gender/number, and they are used with nouns in genitive after them.

meaning	neutral demonstrative	presentative
this	<i>òvō</i>	<i>evo!</i>
that (showing)	<i>tō</i>	<i>eto!</i>
that (distant)	<i>ònō</i>	<i>eno!</i>

They are simply more emotional versions of neutral demonstratives, used in live situations, that is, not when telling about what happened, but only when talking about (or presenting to someone) things and people visible and present around you at the time! One can use short forms of pronouns with them. For example:

Ovo je moja kuća. "This is my house."
Evo moje kuće! "Here's my house!" (standing in front of it)
Ono je moja teta. "That is my aunt."
Eno moje tete! "That's my aunt!" (talking to someone about a distant, but visible person)
Evo me! "Here I am!" (as you expected, I came...) — **a very frequent expression**
Eno ga! "That's him!" (you just spotted someone)

One needs some practice to understand exactly all situations where presentatives are used. However, this is hardly essential... On it's own, they are also used:

Evo. "Here it is." — It's the normal, friendly way to offer things.

Eto. "That's it.", "Done.", "That was it."

So, when giving things, you should use expressions like these (remember that gen. with uncountable nouns means "some", and can be used instead of acc.):

word	noun case	whom to	example(s)
<i>na</i>	gen./acc.	animals, small children only	<i>Na vode!</i>
<i>evo</i>	gen.	someone you're friend with	<i>Evo vode!</i>
<i>izvòli</i>	acc.	someone you are talking <i>ti</i> with, <u>politely</u>	<i>Izvoli vodu! Izvoli vode!</i> (gen. = "some")
<i>izvòlite</i>	acc.	more than one person / <u>politely</u> to someone you are not talking <i>ti</i> with	<i>Izvolite vodu! Izvolite vode!</i> (gen. = "some")

Of course, you can say *izvoli* to your dog. A lot of people do.

66 Final L Lost; Sound Assimilations

Final L Lost

In the Standard Croatian, there is a [special sound rule](#) that introduces many apparent irregularities.

Recall that past participles end on *-o* for m, but follow a more usual pattern *-lo* n, *-la* f with other genders. Recall that I said that not all m-nouns and i-nouns end on a consonant in nom.sg. Some of them actually end on *-o* in nom.sg. It's all a consequence of of "the final l rule":

The final l rule:

In Standard Croatian, a syllable cannot end on *-al*, *-el*, *-il*, or *-ul*: when it should occur, it is automatically converted to *-ao*, *-eo*, *-io*, *-uo*.

Additionally, *-(i)jël* is converted to *-ïo*. (*ï* is just a notation I invented, disregard it for now, pronounce just as any *i*)

Exceptions to this rule are some rare words, and *l* before *b*.

In other words, it happens only when *-al*, *-el*, *-il*, or *-ul* are word-final, or there's a consonant after them.

So, for the past participles: if there are *čitalo* sg.n, and *čitala* sg.f, one would expect **čital* for sg.m, but it's actually *čitao* — the final *-al* was "automatically" substituted with *-ao*. (With an *, I've marked that we expect such a word, but that word does not exist.)

Now, it works only on ends of syllables: in the noun *selo* this does not occur, since the syllable does not end on *l*: there's no consonant after it.

The rule also does not work for *-ol*: *stol* mⁱ "table, desk" is the best example. Furthermore, if we try to construct possessives for *selo* and *stol*, we'll get:

seoska škola "village school" (we naively expect **selska*)

stolni nogomet "table football"

The adjective is expected to be **sel-ski*, but it's converted to *seo-ski* by the rule. *Stol-ni*, since it contains an *-ol*, is left untouched.

This explain nouns like:

posäo mⁱ "job" dat. *posla* nom.pl. *poslovi* (nom. **posäl* → *posäo*)

Compare it to *stol*, *bol*, *sol*, *vol* mⁱ "ox".

This rule applies to the Standard Croatian only: it's quite different in dialects and Serbian, for example... Since the rule is actually not applied in a dialect that was spoken in Zagreb long ago, there's actually a street there called *Selska*.

There's a list of all common nouns where this rule applies:

anđeo m^a "angel" dat. *anđelu* nom.pl. *anđeli*

arkandëo m^a "archangel" dat. *arkandëlu* nom.pl. *arkandëli*

besmisäo mⁱ "without any sense" dat. *besmislu*; no plural

čaväo mⁱ "nail" (for construction) dat. *čavlu* nom.pl. *čavli*

dïo mⁱ "part" (of something) dat. *dijëlu* nom.pl. *dijëlovi*

kotäo mⁱ "kettle, cauldron" dat. *kotlu* nom.pl. *kotlovi*

misäo f "thought" nom.pl. *misli* (an i-noun!)

orão m^a "eagle" dat. *orlu* nom.pl. *orlovi*
pakão mⁱ "hell" dat. *paklu* nom.pl. *pakli pepeo* mⁱ "ash" dat. *pepelu* nom.pl. *pepeli*
pijětão mⁱ "cock" dat. *pijětlu* nom.pl. *pijětlovi* or *pijětli*
posão mⁱ "job" dat. *poslu* nom.pl. *poslovi*
smisão mⁱ "meaning, sense" dat. *smislu*; no plural
uzão mⁱ "knot" dat. *uzlu* nom.pl. *uzlovi*
ugão mⁱ "corner" dat. *uglu* nom.pl. *uglovi*
veo mⁱ "veil" dat. *velu* nom.pl. *velovi*

Sometimes, an *ã* leaves an *l* before a consonant, so *l* transforms in all cases where the *ã* is lost. The best example are nouns like *misliilãc* m^a "thinker":

nom.sg.	<i>misliilãc, mislioc</i>
acc.sg.	<i>mislioca</i>
dat.sg.	<i>misliocu</i>
gen.sg.	<i>mislioca</i>
ins.sg.	<i>misliocom</i>
<hr/>	
nom.pl.	<i>mislioci</i>
acc.pl.	<i>mislioce</i>
dat./ins.pl.	<i>misliocima</i>
gen.pl.	<i>misliilãca</i>

Such nouns can have nom. with *l* transformed, meaning that the *ã* has disappeared even from the nominative!

Some nouns, including recent loans, are exceptions to the rule. All nouns ending on *-djël* are among them:

general m^a "general (of army)" nom.pl. *generali*
hotel mⁱ "hotel" nom.pl. *hoteli*
odjël mⁱ "section, compartment" nom.pl. *odjëli*
predjël mⁱ "landscape, part of land" nom.pl. *predjëli*; less often nom.sg. *predio*
stil mⁱ "style" nom.pl. *stilovi*
udjël mⁱ "share, one's part" nom.pl. *udjëli*; less often nom.sg. *udio*
tunel mⁱ "tunnel" nom.pl. *tuneli*
val mⁱ "wave" nom.pl. *valovi*
žalba f "complaint"

In certain adjectives this rule applies, but it's often avoided by using the *i* form or having forms where the rule is not applied, together with many exceptions:

bijël m, *bijëla* f "fat" or *bijëli* m; the rule would produce *bïo*, but it's not often used;
debeo m, *debela* f "fat" or *debeli* m
mio m, *mila* f "dear" or *mili* m
mukão m, *mukla* f "hoarse, husky" or *mukli* m
nagão m, *nagla* f "abrupt" or *nagli* m
okrugão m, *okrugla* f "round" or *okrugli* m
stalãn m, *stalna* f "constant"; *stalno* adj. "all the time"
svjětão m, *svjetla* f "luminous" or *svjëtli* m
podli m, *podla* f "villainous"; *podão* is not often used
veseo m, *vesela* f "cheerful" or *veseli* m

Voicing Assimilations

There's a systematic change in Croatian consonants when coming into a contact. The *voicing* of the first one is adjusted to the voicing of the second one. It implies that the first consonant is sometimes changed.

To simplify the situation a bit, I'll divide consonants to three groups:

- voiced
- unvoiced
- others

"Others" don't participate in any way in this process. The other two groups are arranged in pairs, voiced-unvoiced. If a voiced consonant is found before an unvoiced one, it changes to its unvoiced buddy. Likewise, if a unvoiced is found before a voiced one, it mutates into its voiced counterpart. So sequences voiced-unvoiced and unvoiced-voiced are eliminated. The pairs are:

voiced	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>dž</i>	<i>đ</i>	<i>z</i>	—	—
unvoiced	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>č</i>	<i>ć</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>h</i>

Exceptions are *c* and *h*: they don't have a voiced counterpart. But they never change as well.

All other consonants have nothing to do with this.

How it works? For instance, adjective *nizāk* "low" loses its *ā* in all other forms, so we would have *nizka*. But *k* is unvoiced, so *z* mutates to its unvoiced pair (*s*) to produce *niska*.

Some other examples:

gladāk adj. *glad-ka* → *glatka*
predāk "ancestor" gen. *pred-ka* → *pretka*
pijem: *iz-pijem* → *ispijem*
postavim: *pred-postavim* → *pretpostavim*
cijedim: *iz-cijedim* → *iscijedim*
hladim: *raz-hladim* → *rashladim*

This is the reason why some prefixes used in verb derivation have variants: sometimes it's *iz-*, and sometimes *is-*. It's just assimilation by voicing.

Other sounds don't participate in this law at all:

raz-mislim → *razmislim*
s-mislim → *smislim*
raz-lomim → *razlomim*
s-lomim → *sломim*

However, there's a curiosity: sequences *dš* and *ds* are unchanged in spelling:

predstavim (not the expected *-ts-*)
odšecem (not *-tš-*)

It's just a spelling convention, it should be pronounced as /*pretstavim*/ etc.

Most other Slavic languages don't reflect any of this in their spelling, among others, Russian and Slovene. It was so in some Croatian spellings used in the past.

Fusing Similar Sounds

When two identical sounds occur, they fuse together:

od-dižem → *odižem*
iz-sišem → *is-sišem* → *isišem*
raz-stavim → *ras-stavim* → *rastavim*

Sequences *sš* and *zž* merge:

iz-šaram → *is-šaram* → *išaram*

An exception is *j*, it stays in words like *najjači* "strongest".

However, sometimes prefixes have longer variants to avoid this problem:

s-stavim → *s-a-stavim*
s-srećem → *s-u-srećem*

Similar things occur to avoid certain sequences of vowels:

o-učim → *o-b-učim*
 But *na-učim* → *na-učim*

A similar, but awkward problem is when *d* or *t* come before *c* or *č*. Due to the nature of *c* and *č*, *t* is fused with it, and only *c* or *č* are pronounced. But should it be so in the spelling? Words *otac* "father" and *predak* "ancestor" are examples:

nom.sg.	<i>otac</i>	<i>predak</i>
nom.sg.	<i>oca / otca</i>	<i>pretka</i>
ins.sg.	<i>ocem / otcem</i>	<i>pretkom</i>
voc.sg.	<i>oče / otče</i>	<i>pretče / predče / preče</i>
nom.pl.	<i>oci / otci</i> or <i>očevi / otčevi</i>	<i>pretci / predci / preci</i>

Various people defend and support different spellings with quite arbitrary arguments. You'll see all types of spellings in a lot of places. One problem is that the shortest spelling was preferred in the past, and changing it is not simple...

These problems occur only when words are spelled as one. According to the Standard, prepositions should be pronounced together with the word after them, and this assimilation applies as well:

iz kuće should be pronounced */iskuće/* in the Standard Croatian
od kuće as */otkuće/*
s bratom as */zbratom/*

But this is not reflected in the standard spelling at all, and many people don't pronounce prepositions together with words after them anyway.

However, the biggest spelling issue is writing of *ijë/jë*. Traditionally *j* was lost after *r*, but some people prefer to keep it, so there are examples as:

vrijëme
vrëmenu / vrjëmenu
vrëmenom / vrjëmenom

Etc. But all together, such issues are not really important, it's just spelling.

67 Expressing "do", "happen", etc.

Croatian has no verb that translates English 'generic' verb "do". If you are asking about what someone is doing, you should use *radim* "work":

Što radiš? "What are you doing?"

The verb is impf., and when used in this meaning, *napravim* is used as the perf. verb:

Što si napravio? "What have you done?"

Što ćeš napraviti? "What are you going to do?"

The verb *radim* is normally used in meaning "work", but can also mean "prepare (food)", "make":

Radim u školi. "I work in a school."

Radim ručak. "I'm making lunch."

Radim zadaću. "I'm doing the homework."

Actions without expressed objects, (something is "going on") are expressed with the following verbs:

doglašam ~ dogodim "go on"

dešavam ~ desim "happen"

zbivam ~ zbijem, zbio "happen"

All three verbs are always used with *se*. Of these three, *dešavam* is more frequent in Serbian and the Croatian Standard prefers *doglašam*. Verb *zbivam* is used more literally, in books etc. Some examples with subjects:

Nešto se dogodilo. "Something happened."

Ništa mi se nije dogodilo. "Nothing happened to me."

Dogodila se nesreća. "An accident happened."

Radi se o..

There's an impersonal phrase involving the verb *radim* that means approximately "it's about": *radi se o....* After *o* there's a noun phrase in dative.

The *radi se o...* is impersonal, therefore one must use 3rd person singular — and neuter in the past tense:

Radi se o mom ocu. "It's about my father."

Radilo se o tvom poslu. "It was about your job."

As usual one can insert a whole *to..* phrase after the preposition.

Radi se o tome da ne znam engleski. "It's about me not speaking English."

Radilo se o tome kako.... "It was about how..."

Clause Replacements

In English, it's possible (but maybe not polite) to answer a question with just yes/no. In Croatian, it is normal:

Imaš li auto? "Do you have a car?"

Nemam. "I don't have one."

Ne, nemam. "No, I don't have one."

Ne. "No."

Another feature is shortening whole clauses. For instance:

"Do you think she will come back?"

"I think so" / "I don't think so."

Croatian uses another approach: the whole clause after conjunction *da* can be shortened to just *da* "yes" or *ne* "no":

Misliš (li) da će se vratiti? "Do you think she will come back?"

Mislím da da. lit. "I think yes" = "I think so." (yes, two *da*'s in a row!)

Mislím da ne. lit. "I think no" = "I don't think so."

The construct is used with most verbs that allow *da* + factual clause (*znam* "know", *očekujem* "expect", *bojim se* "be afraid" etc.), e.g.:

Bojim se da ne. "I'm afraid not."

There are frequent phrases with *da ne*:

Zašto da ne? "Why not?"

Kako da ne! -- expresses opposition to the previous negation

The phrase *kako da ne* cannot be exactly translated: it expresses disagreement with the previous question where something negative was implied. It sounds complicated but it's actually simple:

Niste bili u Rimu? "You haven't been to Rome, didn't you?"

Kako da ne! Dvapat. "We did! Twice."

69 Intentionally Omitted Features

This blog is titled "Basic Croatian". Having read all this, you may ask yourself: is this *really* the basic Croatian, or the complete Croatian? Well, I have left out intentionally some stuff. You may call it advanced stuff — you will find them in newspapers, books, in TV news. Nobody uses them actually in casual conversation or in normal writing. I hate when people describe features of the Croatian grammar and "forget" to mention that many of things described are actually seldom (actually: never) used nowadays. So, what did I leave out?

Indefinite Adjectives

One of the first things I said about Croatian was "there are no articles". Well, I have kind of lied. There are no articles, but there are so-called indefinite adjectives. That is, some adjectives (not all!) have special forms when describing indefinite nouns. What I wanted to say, the forms I have described actually mean "the big X", where "the big" is one word. Now I'm going to describe how to say "a big X", where "a big" is again just one word.

However, almost nobody uses these forms. But you can hear them occasionally, so it's good to understand them. The forms for the plural and f gender are the same as for the "normal" adjectives, so I'll list only singular for m and n genders:

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n
nom.sg.	-	-	-ø
acc.sg.	-a	-	-ø
dat.sg.		-u	
gen.sg.		-a	
ins.sg.		-im	

You see, the endings are similar to nouns! According to the standard, possessive adjectives like *Ivanov*, *Anin* should have only indefinite forms:

Vidio sām Ivanova brata. "I saw Ivan's brother." (Standard, but seldom used)

Vidio sām Ivanovog brata. "I saw Ivan's brother." (not Standard, but everyone uses it!)

The only thing that is really used from indefinite adjectives in everyday life is *-i* vs. no ending in nom. (and acc.). These forms are used in poetry, however: one instance is the poem *Odlazāk* "Departure" by Tin Ujević (performed by Arsen Dedić, look it up on YouTube™).

This poem contains other not really often used words, such as *spomenāk*, *kaloper* — I had to look into a dictionary to find their meanings! *Šestopir* or "shestopyor" is a type of ancient weapon. The word *mjēsto* means also "town", not only "place", and *spomenāk* is a plant "forget-me-not" (*Myosotis palustris*):

*U slutnji, u čežnji... daljine, daljine;
u srcu, u dahu... planine, planine.*

*Malena mjēsta srca moga,
spomenāk Brača, Imotskoga.*

*I blijēsāk slavna šestopera,
i miris, miris kalopera*

*Tamo, tamo da putujem,
tamo, tamo da tugujem...*

(Tin Ujević)

"In suspicion, in yearning... distances, distances;
In heart, in breath... mountains, mountains.

Small towns of my heart,
forget-me-not of Brač, of Imotski

And a flash of famous shestopyor,
And the smell, smell of costmary

There, there I would travel,
There, there I would mourn..."

My rough translation is literal and does not rhyme. I have underscored an indefinite adjective. Observe the poetic inversion of adjectives as well: *srca moga*, found in many songs, Croatian anthem, and in vocative forms!

The Plusquamperfect Tense

This is another past tense. It's used for things that happened before something else in the past. It's made in the same way as the past tense, but you don't use present of "be" (*sām, si...*) but the past (*bio sām, bio si...*), e.g.:

Jeo sām. "I was eating." (past)

Bio sām jeo. "I had been eating." (plusquamperfect)

I use it sometimes. I think I used it a year ago or so, once. Or was it the year before?

The Aorist Tense

This is another past tense. This tense has nothing in common with the common past tense, it's made of *one word*, something we have seen only for the present tense! It's made from the past base, with restoring *d* or *t* that were lost. And, yeah, it's mostly made from perfective verbs! It has very special, although regular endings:

pres. class		a	n		i
1 st sg. pres.		<i>skuh-a-m</i>	<i>pad-ne-m</i>	<i>dig-ne-m</i>	<i>pomisl-i-m</i>
3 rd pl. pres.		<i>skuh-a-ju</i>	<i>pad-nu</i>	<i>dig-nu</i>	<i>pomisl-e</i>
past class		a	o	n	i
past part. f		<i>skuh-a-la</i>	<i>pa--la</i>	<i>dig-nu-la</i>	<i>pomisl-i-la</i>
a o r i s t	1 st sg.	<i>skuh-a-h</i>	<i>pad--oh</i>	<i>dig-nu-h</i>	<i>pomisl-i-h</i>
	2 nd /3 rd sg.	<i>skuh-a-</i>	<i>pad--e</i>	<i>dig-ne</i>	<i>pomisl-i</i>
	1 st pl.	<i>skuh-a-smo</i>	<i>pad--osmo</i>	<i>dig-nu-smo</i>	<i>pomisl-i-smo</i>
	2 nd pl.	<i>skuh-a-ste</i>	<i>pad--oste</i>	<i>dig-nu-ste</i>	<i>pomisl-i-ste</i>
	3 rd pl.	<i>skuh-a-še</i>	<i>pad--oše</i>	<i>dig-nu-še</i>	<i>pomisl-i-še</i>

pres. class		e				to be
1 st sg. pres.		<i>popi-je-m</i>	<i>tres-e-m</i>	<i>pozov-e-m</i>	<i>ispeč-e-m</i>	<i>sām</i>
3 rd pl. pres.		<i>popi-ju</i>	<i>tres-u</i>	<i>pozov-u</i>	<i>ispek-u</i>	<i>su</i>
past class		o				
past part. f		<i>popi--la</i>	<i>tres--la</i>	<i>pozva--la</i>	<i>ispek--la</i>	<i>bi--la</i>
a o r i s t	1 st sg.	<i>popi--h</i>	<i>tres--oh</i>	<i>pozva--h</i>	<i>ispek--oh</i>	<i>bi--h</i>
	2 nd /3 rd sg.	<i>popi--</i>	<i>tres--e</i>	<i>pozva--</i>	<i>ispeč--e</i>	<i>bi--</i>
	1 st pl.	<i>popi--smo</i>	<i>tres--osmo</i>	<i>pozva--smo</i>	<i>ispek--osmo</i>	<i>bi--smo</i>
	2 nd pl.	<i>popi--ste</i>	<i>tres--oste</i>	<i>pozva--ste</i>	<i>ispek--oste</i>	<i>bi--ste</i>

	3rd pl.	<i>popi--še</i>	<i>tres--oše</i>	<i>pozva--še</i>	<i>ispek--oše</i>	<i>bi--</i>
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The aorist of *sām, bio...* is *bih, bi, bi, bismo*, etc. — exactly the "conditional verb"!

I use it sometimes, when I want to say something monumental or archaic, or just different.

The Imperfect Tense

And this is *yet another* past tense, again just a single word. As its name tells, it's made from imperfective verbs only.

I have never used it. I don't know the endings. I should look into the book. You could look into Wikipedia or elsewhere. Well, no one uses it. Ever.

Past Adverbs

This form is an adverb (therefore, indeclinable) meaning "after x-ed,...". For instance:

Napisavši pismo, otišao sām u poštu. "Having written the letter, I went to the post office."

It exists only for perfective verbs, and it's made from the past base, by adding *-vši* or *-avši* (if the base ends on a consonant), after restoring *d* or *t* if one was lost.

napis-a-la → *napis-a-vši*
pogod-i-la → *pogod-i-vši*
ispek--la → *ispek--avši*
pozva--la → *pozva--vši*

The past adjective of *sām, bio...* is used as an adjective and has a special meaning:

bivši adj. "ex", "former", "once in existence"

Beside *bivši*, I can't recall that I ever used a past adverb.

Updated 2013-10-18

70 Introducing Dialects

Warning: you might want to skip this chapter and the following ones in the first reading. It introduces some advanced topics.

What are **dialects**? There's no simple answer, but everyone seems to understand the concept. They are different varieties that are hidden under one "umbrella" language.

So, in a perfect world, there would be discrete languages, and they would be internally divided into dialects. Surely, in a border area between two languages, a dialect could have some characteristics of the neighbor language. Well it is so maybe if we discuss Hungarian, a language that's surrounded with completely unrelated and unintelligible languages, but in the case of Croatian it's very far from the actual situation.

Is it necessary to have any knowledge of Croatian dialects? Well, yes. Not really to be able to speak them (but it would be immensely appreciated if you, e.g. try to move to a particular region of Croatia) but to have some idea and understanding of them, because they are actually used much. People actually use them. Actually, everyone mostly uses a mix of the Standard and dialect. This table summarizes what I mean:

dialect	mostly dialect + some Standard	some dialect + mostly Standard	Standard
people at home, local pubs, shops; poetry, traditional and pop songs	ordinary people in public, at office; pop songs; forums	"educated" people in public, politicians, government; local radio stations; songs, novels	professional speakers on TV and radio

For instance, most movies feature some mix of dialect and standard, and a few of them were mostly in dialect: no subtitles were supplied, you were on your own and had to learn unknown words the hard way, by guessing their meaning.

How many distinct dialects are there? Well, there's no clear answer. To explain the complicated situation we need to look at a wider picture of "Western South Slavic dialects" (WSS) — that is, all dialects/speeches from Austrian and Italian border with Slovenia, all the way east to Southern Serbia.

Some dialects are spoken by only one ethnic group, others by up to four! For example, Croats speak at least 9 different dialects. The dialects spoken are usually grouped into *Slovenian*, *Kajkavian*, *Čakavian*, and *Štokavian*, but that grouping actually hides the real diversity.

So what are Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian etc. *languages*? They are standards roughly based on a dialect, with some arbitrary and artificial additions.

Since all standards (except Slovenian) are based on fairly similar dialects, usually there's no need to translate between the Standard languages — I can read any book written in Bosnian or Serbian (but there are some differences in legal, scientific etc. terms). It's a bit harder with Slovenian for me (and speaking with the proper accent is out of question). But it's much easier for speakers of Kajkavian dialects.

Should one disregard dialects as uneducated, rural speech, and concentrate on the Standard? Not completely. First, because they appeal to emotions, songs frequently include some dialect. In fact, the bulk of Croatian pop is in dialect, mainly Southeastern Čakavian and Ikavian Neoštokavian. For instance, a quite popular tune, *Galeb i ja* "Seagull and me" is completely in dialect; here I quote a part of it (a "translation" to the Standard Croatian is on the right):

Ča sve vaja, u svom bisu
Da i more vrije, pini
Bit gospodar, usrid svega

Što sve valja, u svom bijesu
Da i more vrije, pjëni
Biti gospodar, usrëd svega

Živo klicat, u visini!

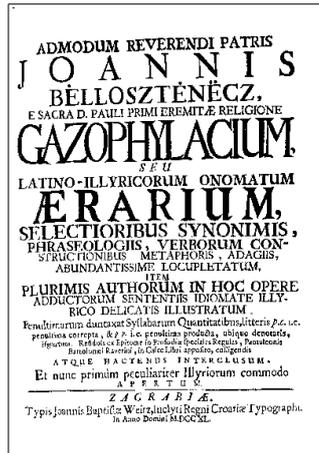
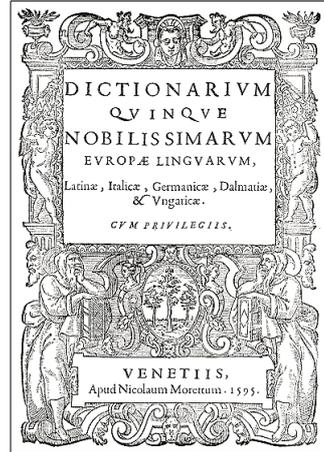
U visini kada Sunce
Bez pristanka nama sije
I da ništa na tvom nebu
I na moru bisno nije.
A... moj galebe

(Tomislav Zuppa)

Živo klicati, u visini!

U visini kada Sunce
Bez prëstanka nama sije
A da ništa na tvom nebu
I na moru bijëšno nije
A... moj galebe

The very first word, *ča*, does not exist in the Standard, and in fact the Čakavian dialects are named after it (it means "what"). Similarly, a lot of movies and books feature various dialects in dialogs. But there's another reason. Here are front pages of some old books:



These are (from the left) the first printed novel in Croatian (Zoranić: *Planine*), published in year 1569; a five-language dictionary (Latin, Italian, Croatian, Hungarian, German) published in 1595, and a huge Latin-Croatian dictionary published in 1740, but actually written a century earlier. And all these works are in various dialects, not in the today Standard or some early version of it. Even in the 20th century a major work of Croatian literature was written in the Kajkavian dialect (*Balade Petrice Kerempuha*). Croatian dialects actually invoke "past glory" and late medieval culture; they were (and still are) speeches of advanced towns in Croatia, particularly on the coast. The story how the today Standard was selected is too complicated to explain here — a mix of history and politics, as one can expect.

So, the dialects in Croatia are not commonly associated with illiterate and ignorant peasants; the only way of escaping them is limiting oneself to TV news on the public TV. Therefore, I'll explain features of major dialects.

Beware, dialects differ in sounds, stress, details of grammar such as number of cases; in various case and verb endings, number of tenses; in some basic vocabulary including pronouns, etc. The differences are larger than e.g. between the Ukrainian and the Russian language! Yeah, you could have chosen some other language, but now it's too late.

Updated 2013-03-04

71 Locative Case and Common Dialect Variations

• • • Review: [70 Introducing Dialects](#)

There are some characteristics shared by many WSS dialects, especially by the western ones. Here I'm going to list the most important ones. The Standard forms are here for comparison; the are marked by curly braces {...}.

The Locative Case

In the Standard Croatian and in some dialects, there's no difference between the dative and the locative, but in many dialects there are some differences. So, I must re-introduce the locative case. It is used only with prepositions, chiefly *u*, *na* when meaning static location, and with *po* when meaning "all over, through", and *o* "about".

The dative is used on it own, and with prepositions *k* and *prema*, meaning "toward"; with *usprkos* or *unatoč* "despite". Furthermore, the instrumental, dative and locative have the same form in plural in the Standard and some dialects; but differ in others.

To put it in another way: when in the Standard one would use the dative after certain prepositions (mentioned above) in many dialects, there's a special form that's used then, called the locative. Such "special form" is really another case.

Verbs and Nouns

In many dialects, there are verbs or verb forms that differ from the Standard. The most widespread is a different (regular) form of present for *mogu*.

	Standard	many dialects
1 sg.	<i>mogu</i>	<i>morem</i>
2 sg.	<i>možeš</i>	<i>moreš</i>
3 sg.	<i>može</i>	<i>more</i>
1 pl.	<i>možemo</i>	<i>moremo</i>
2 pl.	<i>možete</i>	<i>morete</i>
3 pl.	<i>mogu</i>	<i>moru</i>

In some dialects, instead of *dođem*, *došao*, *došla*, *doći*, *prođem*, *prošao*, *prošla*, *proći*, *nađem*, *našao*, *našla*, *naći*, forms *dojdem*, *došao*, *došla*, *dojti* and similar are used (that is, *jd* instead of *đ*, and *jt* instead of *ć*, again making them more regular.

In many dialects, conditional verb is modified, often to just *bi* in all persons.

In dialects along the coast, and a bit in the interior, there's *-n* instead of *-m* in verb, noun and preposition endings, e.g. *znan* {*znam*}, *gledan* {*gledam*}, ins. *ženon* {*ženom*} etc.

There are Standard nouns and verbs that don't exist in many dialects, and others are used instead. For instance:

Standard	many dialects	meaning
<i>sat</i>	<i>ura</i>	"watch", "clock", "hour"

Standard	many dialects	meaning
<i>godina</i>	<i>ljěto</i>	"year"
<i>vatra</i>	<i>ogānj</i>	"fire"
<i>tražim</i>	<i>iščem, iskao</i>	"search", "look for" (verb)
<i>vratim</i>	<i>vrnem</i>	"return" (verb)

There are some other variations, for instance *topao, topla* vs. *tepao, tepla*, then variations in prepositions, etc.

Vowel Variations

This is actually a variation that's very visible, and affects many words. Now my special notation, *ě*, comes to use. Standard sequences *ijě, jě* and *ě* are called '**yat**'. In many dialects different sounds stand in their place. For instance, in Ikavian Štokavian, and Southeastern Čakavian (also called "Ikavian Čakavian") it's almost invariably *i*:

Standard	Ikavian dialects
<i>lijěp</i>	<i>līp</i>
<i>pjěsma</i>	<i>pisma</i>
<i>mrěža</i>	<i>mriža</i>

You will find a lot of Croatian pop songs with *līp, cvīt, vrīme, srića, dīte* {*lijěp, cvijět, vrijěme, srěća, dijěte*}. They are all in ikavian.

There are some other variations, for example (in a completely unrelated dialect) Std. *pās* - dial. *pēs*, where *ē* is a vowel between *e* and *i*; such variations are called '**yer**'. It affects all "disappearing a's", and some others, e.g. *męgla* instead of *māgla* (I have marked most of them with *ä*).

Please don't ask now why the names *yat* and *yer*. It's a very long story. I'll just say that really a long ago there were two additional letters, and these were their names (a bit similar to Middle English [yogh](#)).

Short Accusative of Personal Pronouns

In many dialects and even sometimes in the Standard, one uses short forms of personal pronouns *mene* and *tebe* in acc. after prepositions:

Standard: *za mene, za tebe*
 many dialects: *za me, za te*

The Final L Rule

In many dialects the "final l rule" is not functional or is modified.

Standard: *gledao, mislio, posāo*
 some dialects: *gledal, mislil, posāl*
 some other dialects: *gleda, mislija, posä*

Consonant Variations

In many dialects, there are variations in how some consonants are pronounced (and consequently written!). Usually there's a smaller number of consonants than in the Standard; some possibilities are (in various dialects):

- *lj* is pronounced as *j*
- *ć* is pronounced as *č*
- *đ* is pronounced as *j*
- *h* is pronounced as *v*, or not pronounced at all
- some difficult combinations are simplified, for instance *kći*, *pčela*, *hvala*, and *tko* are pronounced as *hći* (or *ći*), *čela*, *fala*, and *ko*
- *gdjě* is pronounced as *di*, *gđe*, *đe*, *gdo*...
- *htio* (past part. of *hoću*) is pronounced as *tio*, *stija*, *štel*, *otel*, *ćeo*...

An example of a song using more or less all above variations (except special locative forms) is [Lipa is lipa](#) sung by Goran Karan:

*Dođi u ponoć, prođi niz skaline
ako se nisi drugom obećala
za tobom noćas plaču mandoline
najlipša ružo ikad procvitala*

*Dođi u ponoć, prođi kraj đardina
tu di je mladost uvik jubovala
ubrat ću tebi cvitak ruzmarina
tu di je mater ocu viru dala*

*Lipa si, lipa, anđeli ti sliče
lipa si, lipa, usne, tvoje lice
jubi me, jubi i kad zora sviće
sa neba pada po nama cvíće*

*Dođi u ponoć, prođi kraj fontane
da misec vidi tvoje lipa oči
a ti mu reci da ih čuvaš za me
i da ćeš noćas meni, vilo, doći*

(Nenad Ninčević)

The words mean: *di* "where" {*gdjě*}, *lipa* "beautiful" {*lijěpa*}, *jubi* imper. "kiss" {*ljubi*}, *misec* "moon" {*mjěsec*}, *cvíće* coll. "flowers" {*cvijěće*}, *đardin* "garden", *vira* "promise"...

This song uses a superficially similar ikavian dialect but also illustrates verbs like *dojdem*, and *tepli* "warms"; instead of *h* there's always *v* or *j* (look up "A vitar puše" on YouTube™):

*Su zron soli, su mrvu kruva
i puno duše
Ova nas jubav tepli i čuva
a vitar puše!
Su pjatom juve kad projdu dani
i stvari luše
Ova nas jubav jača i rani
a vitar puše!*

*I neka projdu sve obilance,
Svi lipi gušti i sve užance!
I neka nijma ni sna ni smija
Uz tebe uvik znan ča bi tija –
A vitar puše, a vitar puše*

(Jakša Fiamengo)

This is how it would look in Standard (to show differences) and roughly translated to English:

*Sa znom soli, s mrvom kruha
i puno duše*

"With a grain of salt, with a crumb of bread
and a lot of soul

*Ova nas ljubav grije i čuva
a vjětär puše!
S tanjurom juhe kad prođu dani
i stvari loše
Ova nas ljubav jača i hrani
a vjětär puše!*

This love warms and keeps us
and the wind blows!
With a plate of soup when days pass
and bad things
This love strengthens and feeds us
and the wind blows!

*I neka prođu sva obilja,
Svi lijepi užici i sve proslave!
I neka nēma ni sna ni smijēha
Uz tebe uvijek znam što bih htio –
A vjětär puše, a vjětär puše*

And may all plenties pass,
All nice pleasures and all celebrations!
And may there be no dreams, no laughter
Beside you I always know what I want –
And the wind blows, and the wind blows"

You see, translating it to Standard destroys rhyme and rhythm. Dialect songs are rarely translated, therefore it's not uncommon that many Croatians don't actually know what all words of some popular song mean, if they are not familiar with that dialect. This might sound strange to you, but there's a lot of French, Italian and other songs popular in Croatia and majority in Croatia doesn't not speak those languages, so it's not uncommon that you like some song that you actually don't understand. In fact, I had to look into a dictionary to find meaning of word *obilanca* in this song!

Despite sounding traditional, it's actually a modern pop song from 1980's.

Verb System

In many dialects, the aorist and imperfect tenses are not used. But they are seldom used in the Standard as well.

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75 SE-Čakavian and I-Štokavian

We arrive at two dialects that are mixing quite often, and most of the times it's hard to tell if a speech is more Čakavian or Štokavian. And we find some nice songs!

Both dialects have just *i* for the 'yat' and are therefore called *ikavski* ("ikavian"). Therefore, *dite, mliko, lipo, svit, cvit, vrime, mriža* vs. Std. *dijete, mlijeko, lijepo, svijet, cvijet, vrijeme, mreža*.

The two dialects are spoken in two areas: SE-čakavian is spoken in western and southern Istria (refugees from the Turkish wars moved there some 500 years ago) and in Dalmatia, on all islands except the most southern ones (Mljet and further down south) and on the mainland west from the Neretva river (this means that Dubrovnik uses another dialect), and inland up to Central and Western Bosnia. Also, there are some long-time-ago settlers in Slavonia and Northern Vojvodina (in Serbia) around Subotica, and some others in Slavonia along the Sava river.

In Dalmatia, there is a opposition between the islands and the mainland, which can be shown schematically (and simplified) like this:

islands, some coastal towns	most coastal towns	Split, coastal area	hills, inland
→ <i>Vlaji</i>			
SE-čakavian + some i-štokavian	i-štokavian + some SE-čakavian	i-štokavian	i-štokavian
<i>ča, bil/bi, san</i>	<i>ča, bija, san</i>	<i>šta, bija, san</i>	<i>šta, bio, sam</i>
← <i>Boduli</i>			

I have shown variation in the "Final L Rule", and the 1st pers. sg. *sām*. More or less on islands and along the coast, there is final *-n* vs. the final *-m* in the Standard.

The most widespread version of the "Final L Rule" is that any final *l* is changed to *a* or *ja*. This is most visible in past participles:

bija, gleda, mislija, učija, pisa vs. Std. *bio, gledao, mislio, učio, pisao*

There's an interesting fact in Dalmatia: there are names for people "inland" or "further inland" (*Vlaj*) and "coastal" or "islanders" (*Bodul*). This means that people inland call everyone on the coast and islands *Boduli*, and people on the mainland coast call only the islanders *Boduli*; the opposite holds for the name *Vlaj*. The names are often used as mild insults.

The grammar is a mix of Čakavian and Štokavian, but nowadays Štokavian features prevail on the mainland (but maybe still use *ča* "what"), while Čakavian is still used on the islands. There are some exceptions, for example some songs from the mainland use Čakavian to sound more archaic or poetic. An example is [Projdi vilo](#) written and sung by Zlatan Stipišić (known as Gibonni):

*Projdi vilo mojin verson
Niz kadene od sarca mog*

*Jubav išće tilo jako
Nosin brime od žeje moje*

*Ti zanesi dite moje
Moje ime od karvi moje*

(Z. Stipišić)

Obviously Čakavian forms — *projdi* (imperative of *projdem*), *verson* (ins. of *vers* "verse"), *jubav* etc. with some interesting forms: *sarce*, *karv* instead of *srce* "heart", *krv* "blood" etc. Stress patterns are also čakavian (*moje* is stressed on the last syllable, etc.)

Vila is an interesting concept: it's something like a "fairy", a powerful being looking like a beautiful girl. The term is much revered in the traditional Croatian culture, some old organizations have it in their name, many songs use it: this is a powerful mythical being, not just a creature from tales for children.

Another example of contemporary Dalmatian pop, [Ditelina s četiri lista](#) "Four-leaf clover", is fully štokavian; and [Dalmatino povišću pritrujena](#) is written in an intentionally archaic čakavian (more about the song later). Click on links or look for the songs on YouTube™.

You can hear how the singer singing *Ditelina s četiri lista* pronounces *moja* with the stress on the first syllable. Otherwise a lot of words, especially Venetian loans, are similar. The past participles are *posidija*, *zaliya*, etc. And you can hear only Čakavian in the other song (on the right, but I cannot understand it all without a dictionary!)

One more example is [Nostalgična](#) by TBF, an example of Split dialect.

Local dialects in Dalmatia are often called by locals simply "Dalmatian". As we see it's not so simple. Most Dalmatians are really proud of their dialect, one can hear it quite often on TV, there is a big music production and songs using these dialects are popular through the whole former Yugoslavia. There is a lot of local patriotism as well, as indicated by popular songs named:

- [Samo ti, Dalmacija](#) "Only you, Dalmatia",
- [Dalmacija, sve ti cvitalo](#) "Dalmatia, may everything blossom for you",
- [Dalmacija u mom oku](#) "Dalmatia in my eye",
- [Dalmatinac sam](#) "I am Dalmatian"

Probably the most revered one is quite archaic [Dalmatino povišću pritrujena](#) "Dalmatia, burdened by history" -- I have already shown it, compared with *Ditelina s četiri lista*. It was written by the father of already mentioned Zlatan Stipišić. All those songs are often sung on football matches, in celebrations, etc. Look for them on the YouTube™

A tradition of Dalmatia is *klapa* (a capella) singing. A lot of *klapa* performances can be found on YouTube™. They sing mostly traditional songs, and easily fill football stadiums.

However, I-Čakavian is spoken in Western Istria as well, again with a lot of Štokavian mix. A [song by Gustafi](#) illustrates them:

*Kadi su ta vrata kroz ka san pasa
Ja bin se torna
Kadi san prije bija kad san bija ja
Kad te nis pozna*

*Kadi su ti žuti lasi
Ke čeka san i gleda hi z daleka
I sve se ruši, sve se ruši
Sve z vragon gre bez nje
Ma ja san tu*

(Edi Maružin)

One can hear many characteristic words: *kadi* "where", *lasi* "hair", *nis* = Std. *nisam*, and *-a* in past participles: *bija*, *čeka*, *gleda* (Std. *bio*, *čeka*, *gledao*). Characteristic Čakavian words like *bin* (cond.) and *gre* are found. Interestingly, the sound is quite different: Istria is quite far away from Dalmatia.

76 Ije- and E-Štokavian

These two dialects are very similar, and they serve as bases for Standard Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian and Montenegrin languages. The reason that you can use Croatian in Serbia is that both Standard Croatian and Standard Serbian are based on similar dialects.

The main difference between ije-štokavian and e-štokavian is *yat* (*ijě, jě, ě*) which is always *ě* in e-štokavian.

Features

The grammar is very similar to the Standard Croatian (the Standard is derived from this dialect, after all). However, there are some frequent forms in ije-štokavian that are not standard, coming from *j* getting fused with the previous sound (in {...} I have listed standard forms for comparison):

đěca {*djěca*}
gđě, đe {*gdjě*}
ćěram {*tjěram*}

Another feature is simplifying of consonant clusters:

ko, đe, ćerka, čela, tica {*tko, gdjě, kćerka, pčela, ptica*}

Final *-ao* is also often simplified:

piso, imo, reko, ko {*pisao, imao, rekäo, kao*}

In some variants, there are many Turkish words, such as *avlija* "street", *ćilim* "carpet", *bakšiš* "tip (in a restaurant or cafe)" etc.

In many variants, *h* is either lost or replaced with *v* (this does not happen to Bosniaks). Frequent examples:

duvan {*duhan*} "tobacco"
muva {*muha*} "fly" (an insect)
suv {*suh*} "dry"

The infinitive often ends on just *-t*: *uzet, vratit...*

The stress is very similar to the Standard. In some dialects unstressed *i*'s in the middle of words are frequently omitted; e.g.:

četri {*četiri*} "4"
profesorca {*profesorica*} "female professor"

One can find *četri* occasionally in newspapers (Google for e.g. "[četri dana](#)"). You will find that sometimes people spell such words with an apostrophe ('), indicating where sounds were omitted, e.g.:

'ko, 'đe, 'ćerka, 'tica, pis'o, rek'o, čet'ri, vratit' etc.

In some areas, as in I-Štokavian, there is *-ni-* instead of *-nu* in past participles and infinitives of *ne/nu*-verbs and other verbs that have *nu*-past in the Standard Croatian:

krenem, krenio, krenit {*krenem, krenuo, krenuti*} perf. "go"
gurnem, gurnio, gurnit {*gurnem, gurnuo, gurnuti*} perf. "push"

Another difference from the Standard Croatian is use of *-iji* instead of *-ji* in common possessive adjectives, for example:

božiji {*božji*} "god's"
dječiji {*dječji*} "children's"
mačiji {*mačji*} "feline, cat's"

Such adjectives are quite acceptable as Standard in Bosnia and Serbia.

Another very frequent feature is using *što* instead of Std. *zašto* "why", and Std. *što* is replaced by *šta*. This is almost the norm in Bosnia.

Characteristic Words

In Bosnia and Serbia, one can often hear the following affectionate words meaning roughly "my friend, buddy" which are frequently inserted in sentences:

bolan "my friend" (to a male, Bosnia)
bóna "my friend" (to a female, Bosnia)
bre "man, my friend" (Serbia)

These three words **instantly** label someone pronouncing them as being from from Bosnia or Serbia. For example:

Što si se, bolan, prepao? "Why did you, my friend, get scared?" (Bosnia)

There are numerous other local differences in vocabulary. In Serbia, infinitive is frequently replaced with *da* + present.

Dubrovnik Dialect

In Dubrovnik, ije-štokavian is spoken with some twists. Stress is very similar to the standard one, *h* is not lost, past participles end on *-ō* (*imō, dō, rekō* vs. Standard *imao, dao, rekao*). The most striking feature is that every long *ā* is pronounced close to *ō*, so *Grād* "city = Dubrovnik" is pronounced close to *grōd*. There are a lot of words of Romanic origin, as well as some specific names, e.g. *Dživo, Niko*.

Torlak Dialects

In Southern Serbia, there are some dialects that are sometimes included in Štokavian, but are actually a separate group ("Torlak"). They retain final *-l* (e.g. *rekal, nosil* vs. Standard *rekaō, kazaō*) or change it with *-a*, as well as forms like *najdem, pojdem*, otherwise not characteristic of Štokavian (but norms in Čakavian and Kajkavian). Another feature is personal pronoun *gu* acc.sg.f instead of *ju* or *je*.

77 Kajkavian, Part 1

The first thing that one notices when listening to a typical Kajkavian speech is that it *sounds different*. Kajkavian is spoken in the north of Croatia, around Zagreb and in a broad diamond-shaped area between borders with Slovenia and Hungary.

Kajkavian in its various forms (there are no sharp borders when going from Kajkavian stops to Slovene or Čakavian) is spoken by some 800000 persons, or even 1.2 million -- there are no precise counts — but the number is similar or greater to the whole population of Dalmatia! However, if you turn on any Croatian radio station, it's very unlikely that you will hear anything Kajkavian. It's even not easy to find songs on YouTube™.

However, there are some great songs, and [Suza za zagorske brege](#) is one of greatest Croatian songs, and some verses in it are without a doubt the saddest.

*V jutro dišeče gda bregi su spali
A mesec još zajti ni štel
Potiho sem otprl rasklimanu lesu
I pinklec na pleča sem del*

*Stara je mati išla za menom
Nemo vu zemlu gledeč*

*Ni mogla znati kaj zbirem vu duši
I zakaj od včera nis rekel ni reč
Preveč smo toga povedat si šteli
A se smo pozabili več*

*Gda smo vre prešli kraj najzadnje hiže
Vu suzah najemput sem bil
Kaj ne bi to vidla stara mi mati
Z rukami lice sem skril*

*Sud oko mene su disale rože
I bil je rascveteni maj*

*A ja nis ni jemput pogledal za sobom
Od tuge nis mogel pozdraviti kraj
Samo sem bregima dragim obečal
Da vrnul se bum nazaj*

(Ana Bešenić)

"On a scented morning, while the hills were sleeping
and the Moon was reluctant to set
I silently opened the rickety gate
and put a small load on my back

My mother followed me
silently looking down

She couldn't know what I was pondering in my soul
And why I didn't utter a word since yesterday
There was too much to say to each other
And we have forgotten it all.

When we passed the last house
I was suddenly in tears
So that my old mother couldn't see it
I hid my face with hands

All around me, the scent of roses
And the May was blossoming

And I didn't once look behind me
Too sorrowful to say goodbye to my homeland
I only promised to the dear hills
That I will come back."

(based on the translation by Mojast, YouTube)

Observe forms very similar to NW Čakavian: *v suzah* = loc. pl., *z rukami* ins. pl., *nis* {*nisäm*}, but there are many words and features specific to Kajkavian.

Sounds

The Kajkavian sounds different because it usually has a different vowel system than other dialects. It has two types of *e* and sometimes two types of *o*; other vowels can be also pronounced in strange ways.

The 'yat' (sequences *ijë*, *jë*, *ë* and *î*) is almost always "back" *e* (I spell it here as *ë*, e-with-a-dot-below). The 'yer' (*ä*) is always also *ë*, and it still disappears! The notation *ä* finally comes to use: all *ä*'s from Štokavian and Čakavian are *ë*'s in Kajkavian (Standard forms are in curly braces {...}):

dëska {*däska*} "plank"

mëgla {*mägla*} "fog"

lëp {*lijëp*} "nice"

nedëla {*nedjëlja*} "Sunday"

petëk {*petäk*} "Friday"

šëñ {*sän*} "dream"

stëklo {*stäklo*} "glass"

vëter {*vjëtär*} "wind"

pęs {*päs*} "dog"

Other *e*'s (that don't have anything with 'yat' or 'yer') are pronounced differently, more open, like /æ/. The difference is similar to English "bad" (*e* = /æ/) vs. "bed" (*ę*). The open *e* is a very characteristic sound of Kajkavian. Note that the *ę* is just a special notation seldom never used in everyday life, there's no agreed way to spell two *e*'s (scientific works usually use *ę* vs. *e*-with-hook-below).

Other vowels are usually pronounced much more "closed", for instance *a* is pronounced somewhere between Čakavian and Štokavian *a* and *o*, similar to American pronunciation of "lot". In many variants, in some words, there's "closed" *o* (*o*) instead of *u*: *mož*, *roka*, *roža*, *poť* instead of *muž*, *ruka*, *ruža*, *put*, but that does not apply to all *u*'s in all words!

Additionally, there are variants where some *long* vowels are pronounced as "diphthongs": long *ę* is *ië*, long *o* *ou*; for instance, *lep* and *dęn* are in some regions actually pronounced as *liep dien* "nice day". Unfortunately, there are many local variants and I cannot go to such details here.

There is no sound *lj* in most variants, usually *l* is used instead: *prijatel* (Std. *prijatelj*). The sound *ć* is fused with *č*, there is only one sound, spelled as *č*.

The "Final L Rule" does not work at all, there are final *l*'s all over the place: *čital* (Std. *čitao*), etc. Initial *čr* is in some words as in NW čakavian: *črn*, *črv* "black, worm" {*crn*, *crv*}. Most consonants are softened when word-final: *krv*, *bręg* are normally pronounced as /*krf*, *bręk*/. This is similar to German.

There are three pitch distinctions (stress types) on a stressed vowel similar to Čakavian, in most local speeches, and can fall on any syllable.

In most variants, words cannot begin on *i/-* and *u-*, *j-* and *v* get prefixed to such words, e.g. *vuho* "ear" {*uho*}

Nouns

Often there's no difference between *m^a* and *mⁱ* genders and noun types — there are only *m* nouns and *m* gender. The declension patterns vary a bit, here's one "average" example (according to [Mijo Lončarić, Kajkavska morfologija](#)):

case	<i>m^a</i> -nouns	<i>mⁱ</i> -nouns	n-nouns	a-nouns	i-nouns
nom.sg.	-	-	-æ	-a	-
acc.sg.	-a			-u	
dat./loc.sg.	-u		-e	-ę	-i
gen.sg.	-a				
ins.sg.	-æm		-um (-om)		
nom.pl.	-i	-a	-e	-i	-i
acc.pl.	-e				
dat.pl.	-æm		-am		
gen.pl.	-æv (-ih)		- (-ih)		-ih
ins.pl.	-i, -(a)mi		-am(i)		-mi
loc.pl.	-ęh, -ih		-ah, -ęh, -ih		-ęh, -ih

The case pattern is in many aspects similar to the Čakavian: there is no long plural, all nouns have

only the short plural; there are no consonant changes before *-i*: *korak* "step", pl. *koraki* vs. Std. pl. *koraci*!

In some regions, but not everywhere, *æ* implies not the *o/e* variation, but *ɛ/e*, or even only *e*; therefore in such regions it's not *selo* "village", *meso* "meat" but *seɫ*, *mesɛ*!

The following nouns are characteristic of Kajkavian:

<i>balta</i> "axe" { <i>sjékira</i> }	<i>luknja</i> "hole" { <i>rupa</i> }
<i>cajt</i> "time" { <i>vrijéme</i> }	<i>melja</i> "flour" { <i>brašno</i> }
<i>cucek</i> "dog" (also <i>peš</i>) { <i>päs</i> }	<i>meša</i> "(church) mass" { <i>misa</i> }
<i>cug</i> "train" { <i>vlak</i> }	<i>najže</i> "attic" { <i>tavan</i> }
<i>človek</i> , <i>čovək</i> "man, human" { <i>čovjék</i> }	<i>oblok</i> "window" { <i>prozor</i> }
<i>črešnja</i> "cherry" { <i>trėšnja</i> }	<i>pajcek</i> "small pig" { <i>prase</i> }
<i>dėkla</i> "girl" { <i>djėvojka</i> }	<i>pajdaš</i> "buddy"
<i>fela</i> "type, kind" { <i>vrsta</i> }	<i>pezezi</i> m pl. "money" { <i>noväc</i> }
<i>grunt</i> "cultivated land"	<i>pleča</i> n pl. "back (of a person)" { <i>leđa</i> }
<i>hiža</i> "house" { <i>kuća</i> }	<i>štreka</i> "railroad" (<i>pruga</i>)
<i>kača</i> "snake" { <i>zmija</i> }	<i>trsje</i> "vineyard" (<i>vinograd</i>)
<i>klet</i> "shack, small building in a vineyard"	<i>vanjkuš</i> "pillow" { <i>jastuk</i> }
<i>kmica</i> "dark, darkness" { <i>tama</i> , <i>mrak</i> }	<i>veš</i> "village" (also <i>selo</i>) { <i>selo</i> }
<i>kupica</i> "glass (for water, wine), cup" { <i>čaša</i> }	<i>vura</i> "hour" { <i>sat</i> }
<i>kuruza</i> "corn" { <i>kukuruz</i> }	<i>zdenec</i> "well" { <i>bunar</i> }
<i>lasi</i> f pl. "hair" { <i>kosa</i> }	<i>zelje</i> "cabbage" { <i>kupus</i> }

Certain nouns that were previously only found in Kajkavian (e.g. *dečko* "boy, boyfriend") are now used more widely and belong to Colloquial Croatian; on the other hand, many old Kajkavian words are being replaced by ones from the Standard Croatian. Furthermore, some nouns (e. g. *črešnja*, *lasi*, *pezezi*) are found in Čakavian as well.

In some regions, a short stress cannot be on the last syllable, therefore it's *žěna* compared to Čakavian *ženà*. Generally, stress in Kajkavian is more similar to one in Čakavian, than to Standard Croatian or the most of Stokavian dialects.

Adjectives

The case patterns of adjectives again vary a bit, here's an "average" pattern:

case	m ^a	m ⁱ	n	f
nom.sg.	- , -i	- , -i	-æ	-a
acc.sg.	-æga			-u (-o)
dat./loc.sg.	-æmu			-ɛ
gen.sg.	-æga			-e
ins.sg.	-ɛm (-im)			-um (-om)
nom.pl.	-i	-a		-e
acc.pl.	-e			
dat.pl.	-ɛm (-im)			
gen./loc.pl.	-ɛh (-ih)			
ins.pl.	-ɛmi (-imi, -ami)			

In some regions, but not everywhere, as in nouns, *æ* implies not the *o/e* variation, but *ɛ/e*,

therefore, it's not *lepo selo* but *lepe sele!*

Another important thing is that most adjectives form comparative by adding *-ši* (in Standard only three use that ending). Keep in mind that in Kajkavian there's "disappearing e" instead of "disappearing a" of Štokavian, Čakavian and of course Standard:

dobër → *bolši* {*dobär* → *bolji*} "good → better"
slab → *slabši* {*slab* → *slabiji*} "weak → weaker"

Again, in some Kajkavian regions, *-eji* is used as well to form comparatives. The following adjectives are characteristic of Kajkavian:

betežen, betežna "ill" {*bolestän*} *grd* "ugly" {*ružän*}
črn "black" {*crn*} *hud* "evil" {*zao*}
glibok "deep" {*dubok*} *nor* "crazy" {*lud*}

Verbs

The present tense has slightly modified and simplified endings; I have also listed "be", and its negation:

1st sg.	<i>-e-m</i>	<i>-a-m</i>	<i>-i-m</i>	<i>sęm</i>	<i>nis</i>
2nd sg.	<i>-e-š</i>	<i>-a-š</i>	<i>-i-š</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>nisi</i>
2nd sg.	<i>-e</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>je</i>	<i>ni</i>
1st pl.	<i>-e-me (-mo)</i>	<i>-a-me (-mo)</i>	<i>-i-me (-mo)</i>	<i>sme (smo)</i>	<i>nisme (-mo)</i>
2nd pl.	<i>-e-te</i>	<i>-a-te</i>	<i>-i-te</i>	<i>ste</i>	<i>niste</i>
3rd pl.	<i>-e-ju</i>	<i>-a-ju</i>	<i>-i-ju</i>	<i>sę</i>	<i>nisę</i>

Some regions have *-me* in 1st pers. pl., others the usual *-mo*. As in Čakavian, "can" is just regular *morem*, but there's also a special verb "can not": *nemrem*. The comparative verb is just *bi* in all persons and numbers.

The future is formed either with verb *bum* + past part., or just present of perf. verbs is used. The verb *bum* is shortened *budem* and of course has present forms only:

bum čekal {*čekat ću*} "I will wait"
buju pili {*pit će*} "They will drink"
kupim to {*kupit ću to*} "I'll buy that"

Past participles of course have *-l* in sg. m, and *ě* is inserted instead of *ä*. In i/je-verbs pattern is modified:

rekeļ, rekla {*rekäo, rekla*} past part. "say" (perf.)
videļ, vidla {*vidio, vidjěla*} past part. "see" (perf.)

Infinitive is used only in constructs with other verbs, it's not used to form any tenses. There are two types of infinitives: with and without final *-i*. One with *-i* is used with non-motion verbs:

Nemrem spatī. {*Ne mogu spavati.*} "I can't sleep."
Idem spat. {*Idem spavati.*} "I'm going to sleep."

For example of verb forms, here's a popular song in Kajkavian *Kaj nam pak moreju*:

Igramo polku, glazba nam svira
Kaj nam pak moreju

*Vužgi po bajsu, dosti je mira
Kaj nam pak moreju*

...

*Dignimo čaše u zdravlje naše
Kaj nam pak moreju
Kakav je da je, život nam paše
Kaj nam pak moreju*

*Igrame, pevame
I pajdaše dobre sebi zoveme
Igrame, pevame
I do zore mi se doma ne dame*

...

The following verbs are characteristic of Kajkavian:

běžim, bežal "run" {trčim}
deñem, deļ perf. "put" {stavim}
hičem, hital ~ hitim, hitil "throw" {bacam ~ bacim}
(h)očem, štel (!) "want" {hoću, htio, htjela}
jamram "whine" {kukam}
naredim perf. "make" {napravim}
pem perf. "go" {idem}
razmem "understand" {razumijem}
rivam ~ rinem "push" {guram ~ gurnem}
spominam "talk" {razgovaram}
vlečem, vlekēļ, vlekla "pull" {vučem, vukāo, vukla}
zimam ~ zemem, zel "take" {uzimam ~ uzmem, uzeo}

Many Kajkavian verbs are also used in NW Čakavian; among them, all verbs derived from *idem* have *-jdem* (Std. *-đem*):

deļam "work" {radim}
dišim, dišal "smell" {mirišem, mirisao}
dojdem, došēļ, došla, dojtī "come" {dođem, došāo, došla, doći}
iščem, iskal "search" {tražim}
kurim "burn" {palim}
mučim, mučal "keep silent" {šutim, šutio, šutjela}
najdem, našēļ, našla, najti "find" {nađem, našāo, našla, naći}
otpirem, otpiral ~ otprem, otprl "open" {otvaram ~ otvorim}
peljam ~ do- "carry, bring" {vozim ~ dovezem, dovezao, dovezla, dovesti}
poveđam ~ velim "tell, say" {govorim, kažem}
prosim "please, kindly ask" {molim}
spim, spal "sleep" {spavam}
tancam "dance" {plešem}
tečem, teķēļ, teķla, teči "run" {trčim}
zabim ~ po- "forget" {zaboravljam ~ zaboravim}
zapirem, zapiral ~ zaprem, zaprl "close" {zatvaram ~ zatvorim}

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78 Kajkavian, Part 2

Characteristic functional words

Characteristic preposition for Kajkavian is *pri* + loc. "at", used also with gen. (depends on the region)

Tak se negda pri nami delale. "It was done like that at our place in the past." (lit. "at us")
{*Tako se nekad kod nas radilo.*}

Other characteristic prepositions:

med + ins. "between, among" {*među*}
poleg + gen. "beside" {*pored, pokraj*}
v(u) + loc./acc. "in/into" {*u*}

The preposition *v* is often seen as *f* or even *h*: *f hiži* "in house".

Characteristic relational words:

gdo or *što* prep. "who" {*tko*}
(*g*)*da* adv. "when" {*kad(a)*}
negda(r) adv. "sometimes", "in the past" {*nekad(a)*}
(*š*)*teri* adj. "which" {*koji*}

In relational words, there's often *u* instead of *o*:

kuliki adj. "how big" {*kolik*} *tuliki* adj. "that big" {*tolik*} *unda* adv. "then" {*onda*}

Some adverbs that differ markedly from the Standard:

furt adv. "always, all the time" {*stalno*}
komaj adv. "barely" {*jedva*}
mam adv. "immediately" {*odmah*}
proč adv. "away"
rad adv. "eagerly, willing, gladly" {*rado*}
tijam adv. "even" {*čak*}
zdej (western regions), *ve* (eastern) adv. "now" {*sad*}

Some examples:

Tam je naš kraj v terem se same govori "kaj". "There's our land where only "kaj" is spoken."
(lit. "in which")
{*Tamo je naš kraj u kojem se samo govori "kaj"*}

Diminutives

Kajkavian is known for frequent use of diminutives. Instead of Štokavian and Čakavian suffix *-ić*, it uses *-ek* to make masculine diminutives, and *-eko* for neuter ones:

ftič "bird" → *ftiček* "little bird"
cvet "flower" → *cvetek* "small flower"
kuma "godmother; non-related woman" → *kumica* "small/dear older woman"
srce "heart" → *srček* "small heart"

Diminutives are often used to make words nicer, more polite and do not necessary imply something small.

Numbers, Gender, etc.

In most regions, with numbers 2-4 plural forms of adjectives and nouns are used (that is, there are no dual forms), e.g.:

to są moji dva brati "those are my two brothers" (*moji, brati* nom. pl.)

Use

Although there are many more Kajkavian than Čakavian speakers, Kajkavian is virtually absent from public sphere, although one of great works of the 20th century Croatian literature, *Balade Petrice Kerempuha*, was written by Miroslav Krleža in "ideal" Kajkavian, how it could exist if it were the standard language. However, there are some efforts, for instance Bible is being translated into Kajkavian.

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80 Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin

Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin are separate **standard languages** that are quite similar to the Standard Croatian.

The Cyrillic Alphabet

The first difference is that Serbian and Montenegrin use another alphabet — **Cyrillic**. However, there is an 1:1 correspondence between Croatian Latin and Serbian Cyrillic:

Serbian Cyrillic	A a	Б б	В в	Г г	Д д	Ђ ђ	Е е	Ж ж	З з	И и
Croatian Latin	A a	B b	V v	G g	D d	Đ đ	Ee	Ž ž	Z z	I i

Serbian Cyrillic	Ј ј	К к	Л л	Љ љ	М м	Н н	Њ њ	О о	П п	Р р
Croatian Latin	J j	K k	L l	LJ lj	M m	Nn	Nj nj	O o	P p	R s

Serbian Cyrillic	С с	Т т	Ђ ђ	У у	Ф ф	Х х	Ц ц	Ч ч	Џ џ	Ш ш
Croatian Latin	S s	T t	Ć ć	U u	F f	H h	C c	Č č	Dž dž	Š š

Observe that the Cyrillic alphabet has a different order of letters than Latin. I have highlighted characters that are really different than Latin.

In reality, in today's Serbia the Cyrillic alphabet is mostly used in official and ceremonial uses. Majority of newspapers are published in Serbian Latin (a.k.a Croatian Latin) script. Web sites published in Cyrillic have usually a "LAT" button somewhere. For instance, [Politika](#) daily has pages both in Cyrillic and Latin (check CYR and LAT links on top), but B92 TV is in Latin only. Even the [web site of Serbian government](#) has links *ћирилица* "Cyrillic" and *latinica* "Latin" on the top (Cyrillic is chosen by default).

It's interesting to note that some Serbs are afraid that the Cyrillic script will fall out of use and consequently, they think, Serbs will "lose their identity".

There are few differences in spelling. The first one is spelling of foreign names. Serbian usually respells them using approximated pronunciation:

Serbian spelling	original
<i>Njujork / Њујорк</i>	"New York"
<i>Džordž Buš / Џорџ Буш</i>	"George Bush"
<i>Čikago / Чикаго</i>	"Chicago"

The second one is spelling of the future tense. When an infinitive on *-t* is immediately followed by an auxiliary *ću, ćeš...* it's spelled together, and the infinitive-final *-t* is discarded if exists:

Croatian	Serbian
<i>pisat ću</i>	<i>pisaću</i>
<i>reći ću</i>	<i>reći ću</i>

Serbian vs. Croatian

Serbian has some specific words which are almost never used in (Standard) Croatian, for instance:

Croatian	Serbian	meaning
<i>kat</i>	<i>sprat</i>	"floor, story (of a building)"
<i>kotač</i>	<i>točak</i>	"wheel" (not "steering wheel"!)
<i>kruh</i>	<i>(h)lěb</i>	"bread"
<i>juha</i>	<i>supa</i>	"soup"
<i>mjēhur</i>	<i>bešika</i>	"bladder"
<i>mahune</i> f pl.	<i>boranija</i>	"green beans"
<i>nogomet</i>	<i>fudbal</i>	"football"
<i>otok</i>	<i>ostrvo</i>	"island"
<i>plin</i>	<i>gas</i>	"gas"
<i>riža</i>	<i>pirinač</i>	"rice"
<i>sat</i>	<i>časovnik</i>	"clock"
<i>sigurān</i> adj.	<i>bezbedān</i> adj.	"secure, safe"
<i>škare</i> f pl.	<i>makaze</i> f pl.	"scissors"
<i>tjēdan</i>	<i>nedělja, sedmica</i>	"week"
<i>uvjēt</i>	<i>uslov</i>	"condition, prerequisite"
<i>val</i>	<i>talas</i>	"wave"
<i>vlak</i>	<i>voz</i>	"train"
<i>zrak</i>	<i>vazduh</i>	"air"
<i>žlica</i>	<i>kašika</i>	"spoon"

Adverbs *puno/jako* vs. *mnogo* are characteristic in meaning "a lot", "very". Of course, *vrlo* can be used as well, but it's not used in speech much:

Puno hvala! "Thanks a lot." (Croatian only)

Mnogo hvala! "Thanks a lot." (Serbian, sometimes Croatian)

Jako sām umorna. "I'm very tired." (Croatian only)

Mnogo sām umorna. "I'm very tired." (Serbian only)

Vrlo sām umorna. "I'm very tired." (both languages, but not often used)

However, *mnogo* is normally used in both Croatian and Serbian meaning "much" before comparatives: *mnogo veći* "much bigger".

Different "cultural" terms indicate that Serbian and Croatian cultures developed separately. Some words used in Standard Serbian are acceptable in Croatian as colloquial words, and some of them are quite frequent in Croatia:

Croatian	Serbian	meaning
<i>glačalo</i>	<i>pegla</i>	"iron" (for cloth)
<i>rajčica</i>	<i>paradajz</i>	"tomato"
<i>tisuća</i>	<i>hiljada</i>	"thousand"

Some words have only a slightly different form due to different adaptation of foreign words:

Croatian	Serbian	meaning
<i>gripa</i>	<i>grip</i>	"flue"
<i>kemija</i>	<i>hemija</i>	"chemistry"
<i>kaos</i>	<i>haos</i>	"chaos"
<i>funkcioniram</i>	<i>funkcionišem, funkcionisao</i>	"function" (verb)
<i>milijun</i>	<i>milion</i>	"million"
<i>minuta</i>	<i>minut</i>	"minute"

Verbs ending on *-išem, -isao* are very characteristic of Serbian; in Croatian, there's only the verb *mirišem, mirisao*.

Some words differ only in one sound, or endings; sometimes gender is changed:

Croatian	Serbian	meaning
<i>jučer</i>	<i>juče</i>	adv. "yesterday"
<i>korišten</i>	<i>korišćen</i>	adj. "used"
<i>kuham ~ s-</i>	<i>kuvam ~ s-</i>	"cook" (verb)
<i>lani</i>	<i>lane</i>	adv. "last year"
<i>lijën</i>	<i>lenj</i>	adj. "lazy"
<i>opći</i>	<i>opšti</i>	adj. "common"
<i>spominjem ~ spomenem</i>	<i>pominjem ~ pomenem</i>	"mention"
<i>promatram</i>	<i>posmatram</i>	impf. "watch, look at"
<i>shvaćam</i>	<i>shvatam</i>	"understand"
<i>sretan</i> adj.	<i>srećan</i> adj.	"happy, lucky"
<i>sol</i> f	<i>so</i> f	"salt"
<i>svećenik</i>	<i>sveštenik</i>	"priest"
<i>večer</i> f	<i>veče</i> n	"evening"
<i>točka</i>	<i>tačka</i>	"point, dot"

Different *t* vs. *ć* in Croatian and Serbian don't really have an underlying logic, as you can see. It's just so, must be remembered word-by-word.

Serbian shows many characteristics of Štokavian dialects:

- it frequently loses the initial *h*, like in *istorija* "history", otherwise changes it to *j* or *v* (e.g. *suv* "dry")

- final *-l* is always lost (even in *sol* and *stol*: *so* and *sto*)
- some words are simplified (e.g. *ko* vs. *tko* "who").

People usually associate Ekavian Štokavian (*mlěko, lěpo*) with Serbian, but it's not really true, since Serbs use both as Standard: most Serbs outside of Serbia (in Bosnia and Croatia) and in some parts of southern Serbia use Ijekavian Štokavian (*mlijěko, lijěpo*) and Serbs in most of Serbia, including Belgrade, use only Ekavian Štokavian (*mlěko, lěpo*). You can find both in Serbian newspapers. As a whole, the Serbian Standard is much less strict than Croatian, there is a bigger choice of "acceptable" variants.

As an illustration, here are double descriptions from a tube of tomato paste, Croatian at top, Serbian at bottom (I actually took photos of a tube):



Montenegrin and Bosnian/Bosniak

Montenegrin uses more or less the same vocabulary and spelling conventions as Serbian, but only the Ijekavian variant. It uses few specific forms, like *nijěsmo* vs. Croatian/Serbian *nismo* "we aren't". Recently the Montenegrin alphabet adopted two additional letters:

Montenegrin Cyrillic	Ć ć	З з´
Montenegrin Latin	Ś ś	Ž ž

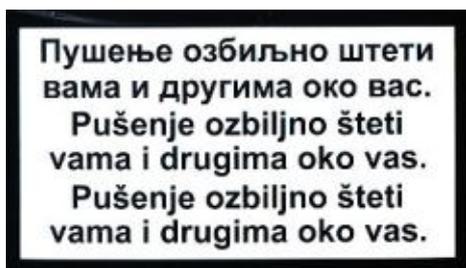
In a case that your computer cannot render these characters, they look like a S and Z (both Cyrillic and Latin versions) with an additional stroke over it, resembling Ć. They are "softened" variants of š and ž. The new characters are not much used, the [web site of the Government of Montenegro](#) doesn't use them (and is by default in Latin, but can be switched to Cyrillic!).

Bosnian (or: **Bosniak**, there's a dispute over name) is similar to Serbian, but uses only Latin script and Ijekavian. Two spelling differences (e.g. *Njujork* and *imaću*) are used sometimes in Bosnian, but it seems that the Croatian version occasionally prevails (*New York, reći ću*). Bosnian sometimes freely mixes Croatian and Serbian terms, so both *tisuća* and *hiljada* "1000" seem acceptable.

Since Bosnian is a standard used by Bosniaks which are predominantly Muslim, there are lot of oriental and Islamic terms. Sound *h* is always retained, even where Croatian does not:

Bosnian	Croatian	meaning
<i>lahko</i> adv.	<i>lako</i> adv.	"easily"
<i>kahva</i>	<i>kava</i>	"coffee"
<i>daidža</i>	<i>ujak</i>	"uncle"

Bosnia-Herzegovina is today officially tri-lingual, as evidenced by this warning on a box of cigarettes which displays three *identical* sentences (the first one is just in cyrillic, I have take the photo of an actual box):



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81 Zagreb Dialect

Zagreb City dialect is a Kajkavian dialect with a lot of Štokavian features. However, not all citizens speak the same dialect. Generally, older people will use more German words and more Kajkavian forms, younger ones will use a lot of štokavian features. This is the dialect used everyday by myself.

Some people who move to Zagreb from non-Kajkavian parts tend to adopt some features of Zagreb dialect (famously, [mayor Bandić](#), born in Herzegovina, and therefore speaker of I-Štokavian, uses a lot of Kajkavian features with mixed and occasionally comic results). Others completely refuse to try speaking the local dialect.

These are common and distinguishing features of Zagreb City dialect:

- the Zagreb scheme of vowel stress, no vowel lengths, no rising or falling tones: *odlazim* {Std. *òdlazīm*}; and stress on any syllable: *kolač*, *vozač*
- *bi* as conditional verb, one form for all persons and numbers
- a lot of colloquial words common in Inland Croatia (*pegla* "iron", *kužim* ~ *s-* "understand", *dečko* "boy", *fakat* adv. "really"...)
- only one sound instead of Standard pairs *č* and *ć*, or *dž* and *đ*
- not using *li* in questions
- *ko* "as" {*kao*}
- *jel* for introducing questions and subclauses, also meaning "because" {*jer*}

Frequently *-äo* in past part. m. is shortened to *-o* (*reko* instead of *rekäo*)

Some examples (all taken from the Internet)

Kam ideš? "Where are you going to?"
...pa pita jel sam čuo za njega "...so he/she asks if I heard of him"
Jel si siguran? "Are you sure?"
Jel se znamo? "Do we know each other?"
Nišť nisam našla. "I didn't find anything." (lit. "nothing")

These features vary in frequency (sorted from more to less frequent):

- "functional" words without final consonants: *kak* "how", *tak* "so", *tam* "there", *ak* "if"... {*kako*, *tako*, *tamo*, *ako*}
- *kolko* "how much", *tolko* "so much", etc. {*koliko* etc.}
- *kaj* "what" and its derivatives: *nikaj* "nothing", *nekaj* "something", etc.
- infinitives without *-i*: *reć*, *pisat*,...
- *niš* "nothing"
- verb *nemrem* "can not"
- *di* "where"
- *bum* as perfective counterpart of *sam*, *si*, used for forming futures with past participles
- weakening of final consonants
- the "Final L Rule" turned off: past participles like *pisal*, *vozil* etc., words like *posel* "job"
- ins. *menom* vs. Standard *mnom* (from *ja*)
- Kajkavian 3rd pers. pl. in the present tense: *ućiju*, *voziju*

The last group of features is seldom encountered nowadays and used mostly by older people:

- ekavian words: *lep*, *bel*, *dete*
- kajkavian declension in nouns
- many German loans
- specific prepositions, prefixes and forms: *zemem* perf. "take", *dojdem* perf. "arrive, come"
- specific Kajkavian words: *furt* "always", *prav* "true"
- specific politeness, e.g. *prosim* "please"
- preference on using diminutives

- Kajkavian e in place of Standard ä: *meġla, steklo, pes*

There's always only one type of e, and vowels are more open than in most Kajkavian dialects.

For an example of Zagreb dialect, listen to this song by Elemental, an ambitious pop/hop-hop group from Zagreb:

<i>Kolko nisko idemo, može li uopće niže</i>	"How low are we going, can it be any lower
<i>možda nam se digo zanos</i>	Maybe our enthusiasm has risen
<i>al standard nam se ne diže</i>	But our living standards haven't
<i>dani ponosa i slave</i>	Days of proud and glory
<i>i minusa na tekućem</i>	And current account overdrafts
<i>mi ne živimo, mi preživljavamo</i>	We don't live, we survive
<i>šta ostavljamo našem</i>	What do we leave to our
<i>budućem naraštaju</i>	Future generation
<i>dugove, račune, rate kredita nas guše</i>	Debts, bills, loan payments choke us
<i>a nemamo ni kune</i>	And we don't have a single <i>kuna</i>
<i>kombiniramo kako odgodit plaćanje</i>	We perform tricks to postpone payment
<i>bar za desetak dana</i>	For 10 days at least
<i>jebo život kad na karticu se kupuje hrana</i>	Screw the life when food is bought with a credit card
<i>di smo sad...</i>	Where are we now..."

(Luka Tralić "Shot" & Mirela Priselac "Remi")

Observe Zagreb accents (*preživljavamo, ostavljamo*, etc.), *di* "where", *al* "but" and infinitives without the final *-i*, but also *šta* "what" and past part. like *digo* vs. Standard *digao*)...

Some local radio stations in Zagreb use Zagreb Dialect, mostly its common features, and sometimes less frequent features, to appeal to listeners. However, the dialect is considered not acceptable by non-Kajkavian outsiders, it's a sign of being "not educated" and so.

Updated 2013-03-08

84 Abbreviations, Phrases and Euphemisms

Every language has many idiomatic phrases, constructs that have unexpected meanings. Generally they cannot be translated from language to language.

Abbreviations

The following words have often-seen abbreviations, which do not change through cases and singular/plural. Abbreviations having more than one letter end with a period (.), and one-letter abbreviations do not:

word	abbr.	meaning	word	abbr.	meaning
<i>godina</i>	<i>god.</i>	"year"	<i>sekunda</i>	<i>sek.</i>	"second"
<i>komad</i>	<i>kom.</i>	"piece"	<i>stoljēće</i>	<i>st.</i>	"century"
<i>minuta</i>	<i>min.</i>	"minute"	<i>stranica</i>	<i>str.</i>	"page"
<i>mjēsec</i>	<i>mj.</i>	"month"	<i>sveti, sveta</i>	<i>sv.</i>	adj. "saint"
<i>sat</i>	<i>h (!)</i>	"hour"	<i>ulica</i>	<i>ul.</i>	"street"

Therefore, in English you would see "1 pc" ("piece"), "2 pcs" ("pieces") but in Croatian it's always *1 kom.*, *2 kom.*.

Many abbreviations common to the metric system are also often seen, such as *m* (*metar*), *kg* (*kilogram*), etc.

Phrases

A few often used phrases have standard abbreviations:

phrase	abbr.	meaning (Engl. abbr.)
<i>na primjēr</i>	<i>npr.</i>	"for example" (e.g.)
<i>to jest</i>	<i>tj.</i>	"that is" (i.e.)
<i>i tako dalje</i>	<i>itd.</i>	"et cetera" (etc.)

Furthermore there are some phrases where words are always used together but meaning can be easily deduced:

phrase	literal	meaning
<i>postavim pitanje</i>	"pose a question"	"ask a question"
<i>položim ispit</i>	"lay down an exam"	"pass an exam"
<i>prēma tome</i>	"according to that"	"therefore"
<i>u ime + gen.</i>	"in the name of"	"on behalf of"

There are some phrases involving "modal" *na* + acc., that translate to English adverbs:

phrase	literal	meaning
<i>na brzinu</i>	"on speed"	"hastily"

phrase	literal	meaning
<i>na sreću</i>	"on luck"	"luckily, fortunately"
<i>na vrijeme</i>	"on time"	(same as the English phrase)
<i>na žalost</i>	"on regret"	"unfortunately, regrettably"

They are sometimes spelled as one word (e.g. *nažalost*).

Some other phrases having completely shifted meanings are:

Bogu iza leđa "middle of nowhere"
grom iz vedra neba "out of the blue"
imam i ovce i novce "have cake and eat it"
nalazim (~ nađem) zajednički jezik "find a common ground"
mačji kašalj "nothing serious"
na licu mjesta "on the spot, immediately"
ni pet ni šest "without hesitation"
ostavljam (~ ostavim) na cjédilu "leave out in the cold", "betray"
ostavljam (~ ostavim) na miru "leave alone"
pao s Marsa "without a clue", "without any prior knowledge"
prépušten sam sebi "left to his/her own devices"
punom parom "full steam"
spajam (~ spojim) kraj s krajem "make ends meet"
špansko selo "something completely unknown"
u (punom) jeku "in full swing"
trn u oku or *trn u peti* "thorn in one's side"
živim na visokoj nozi "spend lavishly, have extravagant lifestyle"

Euphemisms

Euphemisms are words or phrases that are used instead of something we cannot say openly for some reason. For instance a verb *preminem* "pass away" is used instead of *umrem*, *umro*, *umrla*, *umrijéti* "die". Also, when someone dies, reasons are seldom said clearly, a phrase *nakon kratke/duge i teške bolesti* "after a short/long and serious illness" is used instead.

It's worth noting that Standard Croatian has different verbs used with meaning "die" depending on *who* dies. For people, *umrem*, *umro*, *umrla*, *umrijéti* (or *preminem*), but for animals *crknem* should be used instead. However, many speakers use just *umrem* in all occasions.

Note that Croatian has relatively few Bible-based phrases, despite Croats being traditionally Catholics.

Updated 2013-11-06

85 How To Curse

Warning! This entry contains words that can disturb some people :)

Every language contains some "strong" words that are considered taboo in many circumstances, and are chiefly used by adult males, or in extremely emotional circumstances.

There are four types of "cursing":

1. **a real curse**, directed at someone, it really a kind of magic formula, for instance, you wish that someone dies, never has children, or something else. In traditional beliefs, this curse can then be removed by a skilled person (a priest, a Gypsy lady...)
2. **a personal insult**, when you just want to show your opinion about someone or something
3. **a profanity**, basically not directed at anyone, but expressing emotions, like anger, or just boosting self-esteem
4. **a filler word** or **expletive**, when you use a "vulgar" word to fill gap, or in a generic way, meaning "something", "someone"

Some words related to this are:

kunem, kleo ~ *pro-* "throw a curse"
zaklinjem ~ *zakunem, zakleo* "give an oath"
vrijeđam ~ *uvrijedim* "insult, offend"
kletva "curse"
proklet adj. "cursed", "damned"
prost adj. "vulgar" (older meanings: "simple", "free")
uvrěda "insult"

The verb *kunem* means "throw a curse", but also "be vulgar"; a derived verb *zakunem, zakleo* ~ *zaklinjem* means "pledge", "give oath". Surprisingly, *kunem + se* means "give oath" as well!

The actual curse is simply a wish, which can also include an invocation of God (*Da Bog da...*) or so. "Vulgar" words can be used, but are not essential.

"Vulgar" words in Croatian are simply names of sexual body parts and related things, and verbs describing related functions. The most used are:

jebem, jebao ~ *po-* "fuck"
kurac "male sexual organ"
pička, dat. *pički* "female sexual organ"
serem, srao ~ *po-* "shit"
sranje "shit" (a verbal noun of *serem*)

You should be careful when using them, since the first three are considered extreme language by most speakers. They are mostly used in set phrases that also include *mati* f "mother" to maximize effect (*jebo* is just a contraction of *jebao*, and a bare past participle is used as a "wish"):

jebem ti mater lit. "I fuck your mother"
jebo ti päs mater lit. "may a dog fuck your mother"
idi u pičku materinu lit. "go to your mother's cunt"

Warning: these are **serious insults**, using them can provoke a physical response from the insulted person, sometimes using weapons if available, and could lead to lethal consequences.

Next, there are various "names" that can be used for a person:

budala m/f "fool"
đubre "trash"
idiot "idiot"

kreten "idiot"
kurva "whore"
peder "faggot"

People curse often privately, curses are often heard in movies and songs (shown in primetime), and sometimes in public speech (I must admit, in extreme situations).

86 Penultimate Stress

• • • Review: **59 Word Stress (Accent)**

I'm going to show you the stress pattern of some m-nouns. The word "penultimate" means "one before the last one". Basically, in this pattern, whenever anything is added to the noun, the stress shifts to the right, and is mostly on the syllable before the last one. The stress is always rising, except in vocatives:

nom. sg.	<i>vòjnīk</i>	<i>kòlāč</i>	<i>hòtēl</i>	<i>gospòdār</i>
acc. sg.	<i>vojníka</i>	<i>kòlāč</i>	<i>hòtēl</i>	<i>gospodára</i>
dat./loc. sg.	<i>vojníku</i>	<i>koláču</i>	<i>hotèlu</i>	<i>gospodáru</i>
other cases in sg.	(same stress as dat. sg.)			
voc. sg.	<i>vojníče</i>	<i>koláču</i>	<i>hotèlu</i>	<i>gospodáru</i>
nom. pl.	<i>vojníci</i>	<i>koláči</i>	<i>hotèli</i>	<i>gospodári</i>
other cases in pl.	(same stress as nom. pl.)			
gen. pl.	<i>vojníkā</i>	<i>koláčā</i>	<i>hotélā</i>	<i>gospodārā</i>
voc. pl.	<i>vojníci</i>	<i>koláči</i>	<i>hoteli</i>	<i>gospodári</i>

In the Standard stress system, there's an opposition between nom. (and acc., if acc. = nom., that is, for m^l nouns) and all other cases.

The gen. pl. follows the general rule (check the chapter on Stress).

Here's a clear difference between the Standard and the Zagreb stress system: in the Zagreb system, the last syllable is stressed in nom. and voc. sg. and exactly the same syllable is stressed in all other cases, regardless of endings added: always *i* in *vojnīk*, *a* in *kolač*, *a* in *gospodar*, etc.

In the Standard system, there's a falling stress in both vocatives (as usual).

In the table above, I have shown that the noun *hòtēl* behaves like others in this group. However, for many nouns that have a short last syllable (e.g. *student*), the Standard accent does not move at all through cases – therefore we have *stùdenta*, *stùdenti*, etc. in the Standard system, and *student*, *studenta*, *studenti* in the simplified (Zagreb) system. Actually, I'm not sure what the rule is.

Some nouns in this group are (there's no need to indicate stress since it always follows the above pattern):

alāt "tool"
aparāt "device"
aviōn "airplane"
balkōn "balcony"
balōn "balloon"
bankār "banker"
bazēn "pool"
betōn "concrete"
bombōn "hard candy"
bunār "water well"
bolesnīk "sick person"
brojčanīk "dial, gauge"
bukēt "bouquet"

komentār "comment"
kormilār "helmsman"
kostīm "costume"
kotāč "wheel"
kovāč "(black)smith"
kristāl "crystal"
krojāč "tailor"
krumpīr "potato"
kurīr "courier, messenger"
kvadrāt "square (in geometry)"
lokāl "bar, parlour"
mesār "butcher"
mjenjāč "gearbox"

prvāk "champion"
portīr "doorkeeper"
purān "turkey (male)"
pušāč "smoker"
račūn "bill, receipt"
recept "recipe"
redār "security guy"
rezervāt "(nature) reserve"
rezultāt "outcome, result"
romān "novel"
roštīlj "barbecue, grill"
ručnīk "towel"
rukāv "sleeve"

<i>češnjāk</i> "garlic"	<i>mladić</i> "young man"	<i>sapūn</i> "soap"
<i>činovnik</i> "clerk"	<i>mitraljēz</i> "machine gun"	<i>seljāk</i> "peasant"
<i>čuvār</i> "guard, warden"	<i>modelār</i> "modeller"	<i>sitniš</i> "coins, small money"
<i>dirigent</i> "orchestra conductor"	<i>mornār</i> "sailor"	<i>slatkīš</i> "candy"
<i>dječāk</i> "boy"	<i>nepušāč</i> "non-smoker"	<i>skakāč</i> "jumper, chess knight"
<i>dućān</i> "shop"	<i>nosāč</i> "carrier"	<i>stanovnik</i> "inhabitant, dweller"
<i>duhān</i> "tobacco"	<i>novčanik</i> "wallet"	<i>svjēdok</i> "witness"
<i>ekrān</i> "(TV, movie) screen"	<i>okvir</i> "frame"	<i>šampōn</i> "shampoo"
<i>fakultēt</i> "university dept."	<i>ormār</i> "closet, wardrobe"	<i>šešir</i> "hat"
<i>frizēr</i> "hairstylist"	<i>pakēt</i> "packet, package"	<i>špināt</i> "spinach"
<i>filozof</i> "philosopher"	<i>papir</i> "paper"	<i>tanjūr</i> "plate"
<i>fotograf</i> "photographer"	<i>parfēm</i> "perfume"	<i>tajkūn</i> "tycoon"
<i>gospodār</i> "master"	<i>parkēt</i> "hardwood floor"	<i>terēn</i> "terrain, ground"
<i>gradīc</i> "small town"	<i>pastir</i> "shepherd"	<i>trajekt</i> "ferry"
<i>herōj</i> "hero"	<i>penzionēr</i> "pensioner"	<i>trkāč</i> "runner"
<i>ināt</i> "spite"	<i>perēc</i> "pretzel"	<i>utikāč</i> "electric plug"
<i>inženjēr</i> "engineer"	<i>perōn</i> "railway platform"	<i>vagōn</i> "railway car"
<i>jelovnik</i> "menu"	<i>pjěšāk</i> "pedestrian, pawn"	<i>veterinār</i> "vet"
<i>jahāč</i> "rider"	<i>pjěščanik</i> "sandbox"	<i>vidik</i> "sight, panorama"
<i>junāk</i> "hero"	<i>plakāt</i> "poster, billboard"	<i>vladār</i> "ruler"
<i>kafic</i> "(café) bar"	<i>planinār</i> "alpinist"	<i>vodič</i> "guide"
<i>kamiōn</i> "truck"	<i>pokrivāč</i> "blanket, cover"	<i>vojnik</i> "soldier"
<i>kartōn</i> "cardboard"	<i>pomoćnik</i> "aide, helper"	<i>volān</i> "steering wheel"
<i>kapetān</i> "captain"	<i>portrēt</i> "portrait"	<i>vozāč</i> "driver"
<i>kirurg</i> "surgeon"	<i>potrošāč</i> "consumer"	<i>vratār</i> "gate keeper, doorman"
<i>klavir</i> "piano"	<i>prekidāč</i> "switch"	<i>zanāt</i> "craft, trade"
<i>kolāč</i> "cake"	<i>pomagāč</i> "helper, accessory"	<i>zidār</i> "mason, bricklayer"
<i>komād</i> "piece"	<i>princip</i> "principle"	<i>zubār</i> "dentist"

The word *svjēdok* moves its accent (*svjēdok*, *svjedōka*, *svjedōci*) as expected from the described scheme.

Some place and country names also fall into this group:

<i>Berlīn</i>	<i>Japān</i>	<i>Plomīn</i>
<i>Balkān</i>	<i>Londōn</i>	<i>Solīn</i>
<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Pariz</i> "Paris"	<i>Trogir</i>

Names some for male inhabitants also belong here, including the native name for "Croat":

<i>Englēz</i> "Englishman"	<i>Mađār</i> "Hungarian (man)"
<i>Francūz</i> "Frenchman"	<i>Poljāk</i> "Pole, Polish (man)"
<i>Hrvāt</i> "Croat (man)"	<i>Slovāk</i> "Slovak (man)"
<i>Kinēz</i> "Chinese (man)"	<i>Talijan</i> "Italian (man)"

It's obvious that there are many "foreign" words in this group. Actually, many such nouns are very close to corresponding English words, so the translation is obvious:

<i>admirāl</i>	<i>dinamit</i>	<i>kalendār</i>	<i>margarin</i>	<i>oceān</i>	<i>satelit</i>
<i>albūm</i>	<i>festivāl</i>	<i>kanāl</i>	<i>metāl</i>	<i>planēt</i>	<i>servis</i>
<i>apetit</i>	<i>hokēj</i>	<i>kapital</i>	<i>model</i>	<i>problēm</i>	<i>signal</i>
<i>atōm</i>	<i>hotel</i>	<i>karnevāl</i>	<i>motel</i>	<i>reportēr</i>	<i>sistem</i>
<i>automāt</i>	<i>ideāl</i>	<i>konduktēr</i>	<i>motor</i>	<i>restoran</i>	<i>telefon</i>
<i>balēt</i>	<i>institut</i>	<i>magnet</i>	<i>neurōn</i>	<i>salōn</i>	<i>tunel</i>

Foreign words that end on two consonants or *-es* (which is originally *-ess*, e.g. "process") have the short last consonant:

<i>akcent</i>	<i>diletant</i>	<i>koncept</i>	<i>moment</i>	<i>projekt</i>
<i>alarm</i>	<i>fašist</i>	<i>koncert</i>	<i>objekt</i>	<i>refleks</i>
<i>arhitekt</i>	<i>infarkt</i>	<i>kongres</i>	<i>patent</i>	<i>student</i>
<i>asfalt</i>	<i>instrument</i>	<i>kontakt</i>	<i>proces</i>	<i>subjekt</i>
<i>asistent</i>	<i>komunist</i>	<i>kontinent</i>	<i>produkt</i>	<i>turist</i>

This agrees with words such as *dirigent*, *recept*, *trajekt*... from the first list — they also have a short last syllable.

There are some words that end on *-tēt* in Croatian (from German ending *-tät*) that correspond to English words with *-ty*:

identitēt "identity"
elektricitēt "electricity"
kapacitēt "capacity"
raritēt "rarity"
univerzitet "university"

Words that correspond to English "-logist" (e.g. "gynecologist") end on just *-log* in Croatian and have the last syllable short, e.g.:

arheolog *biolog* *ginekolog* *kardiolog* *neurolog*

Almost all such "foreign" words with short end vowel have a rising stress fixed on the original penultimate syllable, e.g. *arheòlog*, *arheòloga*, *arheòlozi*,... *pàtent*, *pàtenta*, *pàtenti*, etc. in the Standard system.

Updated 2013-03-20

87 Common Noun Suffixes

• • • Review: **86 Penultimate Stress**

There's a number of common suffixes to create nouns; I will introduce some of them here. Adding them is *not* a regular process and meanings can be sometimes unexpected.

Places

Croatian sometimes expresses "ground", "area" (as in "playground") with the suffix *-lište* (the *ī* is always long), attached to the infinitive verb base; for instance:

verb	<i>-lište</i> noun
<i>čistim</i> "clean"	<i>čistilište</i> "purgatory"
<i>grādim, grādio</i> "build"	<i>grādilište</i> "building site"
<i>igram</i> "play"	<i>igralište</i> "playground"
<i>klīžem, klízao</i> "ice-skate"	<i>klizalište</i> "ice-skating rink"
<i>parkīram, parkírao</i> "park (a car)"	<i>parkiralište</i> "parking lot"
<i>šēćem, šétao</i> "walk"	<i>šetalište</i> "promenade, esplanade"

Unfortunately, this is not regular, you cannot just attach *-lište* to any verb, a limited number of verbs use this suffix to make "places" noun! Certain derived nouns have specific meanings:

kazalište "theater"
sveučilište "university"

Nouns on *-ište* are similar but derived a bit differently:

dvorište "(court) yard"
skladište "warehouse"

Of course, all of them are n-nouns!

Specific buildings or rooms are expressed often with the suffix *-onica* (sometimes shortened to *-ona*), and *-na*:

čekaonica "waiting room" (*čekam* "wait")
čitaonica "reading room" (*čitam* "read")
fotokopiraonica "photocopy shop" (*fotokopiram* "photocopy")
igraonica "playroom" (*igram* "play")
ljekarna "pharmacy" (*lijek* "medicine"), also *apoteka*
slastičarnica "ice cream, cake shop"
učionica "classroom" (*učim* "learn")
voćarna "fruit and vegetables shop" (*voće* "fruit")

Forms with just *-ona* are more common in Bosnia and Serbia (*čekaona, učiona*, etc.).

Persons

The suffix *-ač* is frequently, but not always, used (notice that *-a* in the suffix does not disappear) to derive "actors" from verbs:

kujem, kovao "forge" → *kovāč* "blacksmith"

plivam "swim" → *plivāč* "swimmer"
pjëvam "sing" → *pjëvāč* "singer"
vozim "drive" → *vozāč* "driver"

Regardless of the stress of base verb, all such derived forms always have the penultimate stress and a long last syllable (e.g. *vòzāč*).

The suffix *-āš* is similar to the previous one, however it's used to derive players of sports and traditional instruments (from nouns and sometimes verbs):

meaning	sport	player
"football"	<i>nogomet</i>	<i>nogometaš</i>
"basketball"	<i>košarka</i>	<i>košarkaš</i>
"handball"	<i>rukomet</i>	<i>rukometaš</i>
"to ski"	<i>skijam</i> (verb)	<i>skijaš</i>
"sport"	<i>sport</i>	<i>sportaš</i>

For certain traditional instruments, *-āš* is also used:

meaning	instrument	player
"accordion"	<i>harmonika</i>	<i>harmonikaš</i>
"mandolin"	<i>tambura, tamburica</i>	<i>tamburaš</i>

Again, regardless of the stress of the base word, they have the penultimate stress (e.g. *košarkāš*) – therefore I haven't marked stress in the examples above since it's the same in all words.

The word *sportaš* is a generic "sportman", "athlete". Words *kartaš* "card player" and more specific *pokeraš* "poker player" are also used.

For most modern instruments, the suffix *-ist* is used:

meaning	instrument	player
"guitar"	<i>gitara</i>	<i>gitarist</i>
"violin"	<i>violina</i>	<i>violinist</i>
"cello"	<i>čelo</i>	<i>čelist</i>

Again, regardless of the stress of the base word, the stress is always penultimate but the last syllable is short (e.g. *gitàrist*) – therefore I again haven't marked stress in the examples.

All words like *plivač*, *nogometaš* are masculine, to make feminine forms, append *-ica* to them (*plivačica*, *nogometašica*). The stress moves on the syllable before the suffix *-ica* in the Standard system and it shortens if it was long: *košarkàšica*.

All words like *plivač*, *nogometaš* are masculine, to make feminine forms, append *-ica* to them (*plivačica*, *nogometašica*). The stress moves on the syllable before the suffix *-ica* in the Standard system and it shortens if it was long: *košarkàšica*.

A very similar suffix is *-ār*, used by many nouns to produce "workers", "makers" from other *nouns*:

bràva "lock" → *bravār* "locksmith; precision metal worker"
kīp "statue" → *kipār* "sculptor"
kòrmilo "rudder" → *kormilār* "helmsman"

meso "meat" → *mesār* "butcher"
postòla "shoe" (Čakavian) → *postòlār* "shoemaker"
pošta "post" → *poštār* "postman, mailman"
riba "fish" → *ribār* "fisherman"
slika "picture, painting" → *slikār* "painter"
stól "desk, table" → *stolār* "carpenter" (lit. "table-maker")
ura "clock; hour" (Čakavian, Kajkavian) → *ùrār* "watchmaker"
zid "wall" → *zidār* "mason, bricklayer"
zūb "tooth" → *zùbār* "dentist"

Note that although *postola* is used only in Čakavian, the derived *postolar* is a perfectly Standard noun; a similar case is *ura*.

This suffix is attached to some verbs as well:

čūvām "guard, keep" → *čùvār* "warden, guardian"
kuhām "cook" → *kuhār* "cook, chef"
vlādām "rule, reign" → *vlàdār* "ruler"

Todo: explain stress of such nouns.

Meat

The suffixes *-ina* is used to derive name of "meat" from an "animal" name. Before it's added, nominative endings are discarded, but neuter nouns that add *-t* in cases other than nom. and acc. add it here as well:

pile (gen. *pileta*) "chick" → *piletina* "chicken"
tele (gen. *teleta*) "young calf" → *teletina* "baby beef"
june (gen. *juneta*) "calf" → *junetina* "veal"
govedo "cow, bull and similar animals, disregarding gender" → *govedina* "beef"
janje (gen. *janjeta*) "lamb" → *janjetina* "mutton", "lamb meat"

For some animals, *-etina* is used to make nouns sounding like *piletina*:

svinja "pig" → *svinjetina* "pork"
pura "turkey" → *puretina* "turkey meat"
konj "horse" → *konjetina* "horse-meat"
srna "roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*)" → *srnetina* "venison"

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89 Abstract and I-Nouns

Abstract Nouns

Abstract nouns are nouns standing from some abstract property. For example, from adjective "deep", one can derive English abstract noun "depth". In English, that's not the only way: actually, the default way is to add "-ness", e.g. "blind" → "blindness". Such abstract nouns are all derived from adjectives.

In Croatian, there are several ways to derive abstract nouns from adjectives. For some adjectives there are fixed abstract nouns, derived long time ago. But there's also a default way for other adjectives.

For many adjectives, *-ina* is added, and *-ok*, *el* and similar adjective endings are discarded, similar to when making comparatives:

dùbok "deep" → *dubìna* "depth"
visok "high" → *visìna* "height"
topão "warm" → *toplìna* "warmth, heat"
vrūc "hot" → *vrućìna* "heat"
brz "fast" → *brzìna* "speed, velocity"

All such nouns are feminine. Sometimes *-jina* is added, leading to j-softening:

kolik "how big" → *količìna* "quantity"
vèlik "big" → *veličìna* "size"
debeo, debel "fat" → *debljìna* "fatness"

To some adjectives, *-oća* or *-ota* is added:

ružān "ugly" → *ružnòća* "ugliness"
lijēp "nice, pretty" → *ljēpòta* "prettiness"
hlādān "cold" → *hladnòća* "cold" (noun)
glūh "deaf" → *gluhòća* "deafness"
sljēp "blind" → *sljēpòća* "blindness"

Note that the stress always moves to *i*'s or *o*'s in the suffix.

A few adjectives add *-stvo*, creating neuter nouns:

bògat "rich" → *bogàtstvo* "richness"
siròmašān "poor" → *siromáštvo* "poverty"

The "default" ending used by many adjectives (and all new adjectives that get adopted into Croatian) is *-ōst*. This is an important ending because it produces i-nouns. Beside this ending, the number of i-nouns is small and fixed. This ending produces "new" i-nouns. They are of course all feminine. Some examples:

star "old" → *starōst* f "age"
mlād "young" → *mladōst* f "youth"
spor "slow" → *sporōst* f "slowness"
prozīrān "transparent" → *prozīrnōst* f "transparency"
òtvoren "open" → *òtvorenōst* f "openness"
lūd "crazy" → *ludōst* f "crazyness"
živ "live" → *živōst* f "liveliness"
slān "salty" → *slanōst* f "saltiness"

If you want to be careful about the pronunciation, there's always a long *-ō* in *-ōst*.

List of I-Nouns

Here is a list of all commonly used i-nouns, aside from ones created with *-ost* (abbreviation coll. stands for "collective"; I was unable to find translations of some less often used words):

Note. I haven't updated all lengths and stresses, be patient.

<i>ávet</i> "specter"	<i>pleći</i> pl. "back (of a person)"
<i>besvijěst</i> "unconsciousness"	<i>plijěsan</i> "mold"
<i>bīt</i> "essence"	<i>počāst</i> "tribute"
<i>bjělokost</i> "ivory"	<i>pogibelj</i> "peril"
<i>blagodat</i> "blessing, boon"	<i>poluos</i> "half-axis"
<i>bōl</i> "pain"	<i>polusvijěst</i> "semi-consciousness"
<i>bolěst</i> "disease"	<i>pomast</i> "ointment"
<i>cijěv</i> "pipe"	<i>pomisāo</i> "glance, after thought"
<i>čār</i> "charm, lure"	<i>pomoć</i> "help"
<i>čāst</i> "honor"	<i>ponoć</i> "midnight"
<i>čeljad</i> coll. "people"	<i>pošāst</i> "pestilence"
<i>čeljūst</i> "jaw"	<i>povijěst</i> "history"
<i>četvrt</i> "quarter"	<i>prapovijěst</i> "prehistory"
<i>čīni</i> pl. "charms"	<i>pregršt</i> "handful"
<i>ćūd</i> "nature" (one's behavior)	<i>premoć</i> "domination"
<i>dēsni</i> pl. "gum" (in mouth)	<i>prepāst</i> "consternation"
<i>divljāč</i> coll. "wild game"	<i>prevlāst</i> "superiority"
<i>dōb</i> "age"	<i>prhut</i> "dandruff"
<i>dobīt</i> "profit"	<i>prīčest</i> "communion"
<i>dobrobīt</i> "wellfare, well-being"	<i>primisāo</i> "afterthought"
<i>dvēri</i> pl. "gate"	<i>pripomoć</i> "subvention, support"
<i>gārež</i>	<i>propāst</i> "downfall, decadence"
<i>glād</i> "hunger"	<i>propovijěd</i> "homily, sermon"
<i>grābež</i> "pillage"	<i>prsi</i> pl. "bosom, chest"
<i>grūdi</i> pl. "bosom"	<i>punomoć</i> "authorization, power of attorney"
<i>hrīd</i> "cliff"	<i>pūstoš</i> "wasteland, empty land"
<i>ispomōć</i> "dole"	<i>put</i> "complexion, skin color"
<i>ispovijěd</i> "confession"	<i>rāskoš</i> "splendor, luxury"
<i>ispovijěst</i> "confession"	<i>rāvan</i> "plain, flat land"
<i>jesēn</i> "autumn, fall"	<i>rāž</i> "rye"
<i>kāp</i> "drop" (of water, blood)	<i>rijěč</i> "word"
<i>kćī</i> "daughter" (see below!)	<i>rīt</i> "bog-land"
<i>klijět</i> "cottage"	<i>sablāst</i> "ghost, specter"
<i>kōb</i> "doom, fate"	<i>sablazan</i> "scandal"
<i>kokōš</i> "hen"	<i>samopomoć</i> "self-help"
<i>korīst</i> "benefit, avail, utility"	<i>samosvijěst</i> "self-awareness"
<i>kōst</i> "bone"	<i>samrt</i> "near death"
<i>krljušt</i> "scale (of fish)"	<i>savijěst</i> "consciousness"
<i>krmelj</i> "crumb in corner of eye"	<i>sklet</i> "scarlet" (a disease)
<i>krv</i> "blood"	<i>skrb</i> "care"
<i>kupelj</i> "bath"	<i>slāst</i> "savor, sweetness"
<i>lāž</i> "lie"	<i>slūz</i> "mucus"
<i>ljúbav</i> "love"	<i>smīsāo</i> "sense, purpose"
<i>māst</i> "grease"	<i>smrt</i> "death"
<i>milōst</i> "mercy"	<i>sōl</i> "salt"
<i>misāo</i> "thought"	<i>splāv</i> "raft"
<i>mjěd</i> "brass"	<i>srž</i> "core, marrow"
<i>mlādež</i> "youth"	<i>strāst</i> "passion"
<i>mlađ</i> "hatched fish"	<i>stvār</i> "thing"
<i>mlijěč</i> "milt"	<i>sućūt</i> "remorse"
<i>mōć</i> "power, influence"	<i>svemōć</i> "omnipotence"
<i>nadmōć</i> "dominance"	<i>svijěst</i> "consciousness, awareness"
<i>nagovijěst</i> "allusion"	<i>trúlež</i> "decay, rot"
<i>napast</i> "temptation"	<i>tvār</i> "matter" (in science)

<i>narav</i> "temper, nature"	<i>ūš</i> "louse"
<i>neman</i> "behemoth, monster"	<i>uši</i> pl. "ears"
<i>nemōć</i> "frailty"	<i>vároš</i> "small town"
<i>nesvijēst</i> "unconsciousness"	<i>večēr</i> "evening"
<i>nīt</i> "thread"	<i>vijēst</i> "news"
<i>nōć</i> "night"	<i>visoravan</i> "highland, plateau"
<i>obavijēst</i> "information"	<i>vjeroispovijēst</i> "confession" (what religion)
<i>objēst</i> "frolic"	<i>vlas</i> "one hair, thread"
<i>obītelj</i> "family"	<i>vlast</i> "authority, rule"
<i>oblāst</i> "zone, region"	<i>vlat</i> "blade" (of grass)
<i>oči</i> pl. "eyes"	<i>vrlet</i> "cliff, mountainous region"
<i>ōs</i> "axis"	<i>zabīt</i> "seclusion, inaccessible area"
<i>osti</i> pl. "fish spear"	<i>zaborāv</i> "oblivion"
<i>ovlāst</i> "authority"	<i>zamīsāo</i> "idea"
<i>pakōst</i> "malice, spite"	<i>zapovijēd</i> "order, command"
<i>palež</i> "arson"	<i>zaravan</i> "plateau"
<i>pamēt</i> "intelligence"	<i>zāvist</i> "envy"
<i>paprat</i> "fern"	<i>zimzelēn</i> "evergreen plant"
<i>pēc</i> "furnace"	<i>zōb</i> "oat"
<i>pèlud</i> "pollen"	<i>zvijēr</i> "beast"
<i>perūt</i> "dandruff"	<i>žuč</i> "gall, bile"

90 Movable Stress

• • • Review: **59 [Word Stress \(Accent\)](#)**

Movable-inanimate Pattern

This is the most complex pattern, you'll see why. This is why dative is not *strictly* equal to locative in the Standard Croatian, that's why my "dative=locative" was a bit of a lie.

This pattern applies to *some* mⁱ-nouns, and most i-nouns.

These nouns have the falling stress in all cases in sg. except in the locative. In the loc. sg. there's a rising stress on the syllable before the last one. For short nouns like *nos* "nose" and *noć* "night" it's again the first syllable, since there are only two syllables in loc., but for longer nouns like *bolest* it's visible; hence the name "movable". The same motion happens in dat./loc./ins. and gen. pl.

The last syllable in nom. and acc. is always long (*nōs*, *bolēst*, *korāk*) and the same syllable can be short in other cases (*nos-*, *bolest-*) or can be long (*korāk-*) – it depends on the word. It's the same syllable that's stressed in loc. sg.

Actually, that syllable had the same length in all cases some thousand years ago, but then it always lengthened in nom./acc. Two subpatterns are marked as "short" and "long", but remember that the last syllable is always long in nom./acc. sg.

case	m ⁱ -nouns		i-nouns		
	"short"	"long"	"short"		"long"
nom./acc. sg.	<i>nōs</i>	<i>korāk</i>	<i>nōć</i>	<i>bolēst</i>	<i>vlāst</i>
dat. sg.	<i>nosu</i>	<i>korāku</i>	<i>noći</i>	<i>bolesti</i>	<i>vlāsti</i>
other cases in sg.	(same stress as dat. sg.)				
loc. sg.	<i>nòsu</i>	<i>koráku</i>	<i>nòći</i>	<i>bolèsti</i>	<i>vlásti</i>
nom. pl.	<i>nosovi</i>	<i>korāci</i>	<i>noći</i>	<i>bolesti</i>	<i>vlāsti</i>
other cases in pl.	(same stress as nom. pl.)				
dat./loc./ins. pl.	<i>nosovima</i>	<i>korácima</i>	<i>nòćima</i>	<i>bolèstima</i>	<i>vlástima</i>
gen. pl.	<i>nosōvā</i>	<i>korākā</i>	<i>nòćī</i>	<i>bolèstī</i>	<i>vlástī</i>

The pattern becomes obvious if you recall that *á* = *ā* + rising accent.

Common m-nouns in the "short" sub-group (a long vowel only in nom./acc. sg.) are:

<i>brōd</i> "ship"	<i>mēd</i> "honey"
<i>brīd</i> "edge"	<i>mōst</i> "bridge"
<i>brōj</i> "number"	<i>plēs</i> "dance"
<i>govōr</i> "speech"	<i>rōg</i> "horn"
<i>lēd</i> "ice"	<i>nōs</i> "nose"

Common m-nouns in the "long" sub-group (a long vowel in all cases) are:

<i>dār</i> "gift"	<i>vrāt</i> "neck"
<i>glās</i> "voice"	<i>zīd</i> "wall"
<i>grād</i> "city"	<i>zrāk</i> "air"
<i>mūlj</i> "mud"	<i>zūb</i> "tooth"

Most i-nouns belong to the "short" sub-group (e.g. *nōć-noći*, *pēc-peći*, *laš-laži*, *kōst-kosti*...) but a few do belong to the "long" subgroup; the most common ones are:

<i>bōl</i> "pain"	<i>nīt</i> "thread"
<i>glād</i> "hunger"	<i>pamēt</i> "intelligence"
<i>hrīd</i> "cliff"	<i>rijěč</i> "word"
<i>kāp</i> "drop (of water, oil...)"	<i>stvār</i> "thing"
<i>korīst</i> "benefit, utility"	<i>vijěst</i> "news"
<i>māst</i> "grease, fat"	<i>vlāst</i> "authority, government"

Recall that the sequence *ijě*, such as in *rijěč*, is just a spelling tradition for *jě*, and the pronunciation is actually /rjěč/.

So, if you aim for a Standard pronunciation (or just "Štokavian" with all lengths), you should observe the difference *nōć-noći* vs. *vlāst-vlāsti*!

Some "core" i-nouns (that is, ones not derived with *-ost*) belong to the fixed stress pattern:

<i>ljúbav</i> "love"	<i>pústoš</i> "wasteland, empty land"
<i>obítelj</i> "family"	<i>ráskoš</i> "splendor, luxury"
<i>smrt</i> "death"	<i>závist</i> "envy"

You may note that all of them (except for *smrt*) have a rising stress in the nom., and that immediately indicates they are not in the movable-inanimate pattern, which predicts a falling stress in nom.

With Prepositions

When prepositions are found before such words in cases that do not have a rising stress (i.e. not in loc. sg.) the preposition is pronounced together with the word after as "one word", therefore, the falling stress "jumps" to the preposition and appears on its *first syllable*! For instance:

preko noći (gen.) pronounce as *prekonoći* (falling stress on *pre-*!)
na nos (acc.) pronounce as *nanos* (falling stress on *na-*!)

Note that this is not the same as *na + pūt = /nàpūt/*, where a new rising stress appears! Distinguishing such stress movements is without a doubt, the hardest thing to learn in Standard Croatian. I don't know it either, but I don't claim I speak Standard...

When prepositions come before nouns with rising stresses, the Standard pronunciation as usual, the stress does not move:

u noći (loc.) pronounce as /unòći/
u nosu (loc.) pronounce as /unòsu/

91 Slang

Both **slang** and **colloquial** terms are "unofficial language". However, there's an important difference: all people use colloquial terms: grandmothers and grandsons use *pegla*, but not many grandmothers use slang. Slang changes frequently, and it's associated with young people mostly.

Slang varies by city and by age group. I'm frankly not familiar with slang in all regions of Croatia, so I will describe slang from Zagreb and partly from Split.

However, there are some slang words which are known in most regions, some of them are:

slang word	Standard word	meaning
<i>lova</i>	<i>novac</i>	"money"
<i>faca</i>	(<i>važna</i>) <i>osoba</i>	"(important) person"
<i>stari</i>	<i>otac</i>	"father"
<i>stara</i>	<i>majka</i>	"mother"
<i>tip</i>	<i>čovjek</i>	"guy"

Words *stari* and *stara* are simply forms of adjective *star* "old" and decline as adjectives:

Razgovarao sam o staroj. "I was talking about my mother." (*staroj* dat.)

Razgovarao sam sa starom. "I was talking to my mother." (*starom* ins.)

It's interesting to remark that *lova* originates from Gypsy (Romani) Gurbet language (some consider it a "dialect").

Zagreb Slang

The following nouns are often used in Zagreb slang (matching Standard words are in curved braces {}):

<i>bulja</i> "head" { <i>glava</i> }	<i>klopa</i> "food" { <i>hrana</i> }
<i>buraz</i> "brother" { <i>brat</i> }	<i>marica</i> "police van"
<i>cuga</i> "drink" { <i>piće</i> }	<i>murja, murija</i> "cops, police" { <i>policija</i> }
<i>fora</i> "a cool thing, joke"	<i>murjak</i> "cop" { <i>policajac</i> }
<i>frajer</i> "(good-looking) guy"	<i>šora</i> "fight, scuffle" { <i>tučnjava</i> }
<i>frka</i> "panic, something urgent"	<i>tulum</i> "party" { <i>zabava</i> }

Some nouns are just shortened or mangled versions of full nouns, often with specific endings (-s, -as, -sa, -ač...) or just diminutives:

<i>alkos</i> "alcoholic" { <i>alkoholičar</i> }	<i>nogač</i> "football" { <i>nogomet</i> }
<i>badić</i> "swimming suit" { <i>kupaći kostim</i> }	<i>raska</i> "class-mistress" { <i>razrednica</i> }
<i>birc</i> "cafe" (serving liquor as well)	<i>ročkas, ročkas</i> "birthday" { <i>rođendan</i> }
<i>Dalmoš</i> "Dalmatian (man)" { <i>Dalmatinac</i> }	<i>rege</i> pl. "license plates" { <i>registarske tablice</i> }
<i>dučkas, dučkas</i> "shop" { <i>dućan</i> }	<i>starke</i> "Converse All-Stars shoes"
<i>faks</i> "university (department)" { <i>fakultet</i> }	<i>studoš</i> "(university) student" { <i>student</i> }
<i>fotka</i> "photography" { <i>fotografija</i> }	<i>tekma</i> "sport (football) match" { <i>utakmica</i> }
<i>narkić, narkos</i> "drug addict" { <i>narkoman</i> }	<i>viksa</i> "second home, vacation house" { <i>vikendica</i> }

The *raska* is a female teacher in charge of a whole class, who contacts parents about behavior of students in a primary or high school. The following verbs are often used in Zagreb slang:

slang word	Standard word	meaning
<i>barim ~ z-</i>	<i>zavodim</i>	"seduce"
<i>brijem, brijao</i>	—	diverse meanings
<i>furam</i>	—	"carry", "wear", "drive", "date"
<i>kužim ~ s-</i>	<i>shvaćam, razumijem</i>	"understand"

The verb *brijem* of course means "shave" but has a lot of additional meanings in Zagreb slang:

grammar	meaning
N <i>da</i> ...	"believe", "think"
N <i>na</i> A	"be into", "be fascinated with", "identify with"
N <i>po</i> D	"visit", "have fun (in club, city)"
N <i>s</i> I	"spend time with", "be in a relationship with"

For instance:

Ana brije da je manekenka. "Ana thinks she's a model."

Ana brije na jogu. "Ana is into yoga."

Ana brije po Zagrebu. "Ana has fun all over Zagreb."

Ana brije s Markom. "Ana dates Marko."

The verb *furam* means "carry", "wear", "drive", but also:

grammar	meaning
N A	N wears, carries, drives A
N <i>se na</i> A	N imitates, behaves like A
N <i>s</i> I	N dates I, is in a relationship with I

For instance, these quotes come from the Croatian Telecom Web portal (tportal.hr):

Mickey Rourke fura s Courtney Love. "Mickey Rourke dates Courtney Love." ([source](#))

Kim Kardashian se fura na Beyoncé. "Kim Kardashian copies Beyoncé." ([source](#))

Really, these are not fully accurate translations. I will find better ones.

Next, there are several adverbs and adverbial expressions:

slang	Standard	meaning
<i>do jaja</i>	—	"fully, over the top"
<i>za istač</i>	<i>stvarno</i>	"for real"
<i>za ozbač</i>	<i>ozbiljno</i>	"seriously"

There's a wealth of words taken straight from English: *sori* "I'm sorry", *pliz* "please", etc. They are sometimes mangled in the characteristic way, so "sorry" becomes *sorkač*...

Internet Slang

Croatian Internet slang mostly borrows phrases from English Internet slang (e.g. LOL) but

nevertheless has some specific words:

lajkam (verb) "like (on Facebook)"

pozz "bye" {*pozdrav*}

[under construction]

Recently some special spellings were seen, chiefly used by teenage (and younger) girls: every *v* (and often *l* as well) is spelled as *w*, *č/ć* and *š* are often spelled *ch* and *sh*, making a Croatian text superficially similar to English. For instance:

Al meni je jedan wech odawno izmamio pogled i ukrao srce heheh..I ono, upoznala sam ga užiwu blablaba... ([source](#))

92 Fancy Sentence Starts

When you write a text, or speak carefully, and want the sentences to "flow" from one to another, you frequently use fancy words to start them, like "however", "furthermore", "nevertheless". Such "fancy start words" are sometimes called *conjunctive adverbs* or *connectors*.

They indicate a relation of the sentence they start with stuff already said, e.g. consequence, completion, opposition, etc. Here are main connectors with English counterparts:

relation	English	Croatian
consequence	"therefore"	<i>dakle,</i> <i>prema tome</i>
not consequence	"on the contrary"	<i>naprotiv,</i> <i>nasuprot tome</i>
expected	"of course", "naturally"	<i>dakako,</i> <i>naravno</i>
not expected	"nevertheless"	<i>usprkos tome,</i> <i>ipak</i>
opposition	"however"	<i>međutim,</i> <i>no</i>
expanding	"furthermore", "besides"	<i>nadalje,</i> <i>osim toga</i>
emphasis	"in fact"	<i>zapravo</i>
similarity	"likewise"	<i>slično,</i> <i>isto tako</i>
conclusion	"finally"	<i>konačno,</i> <i>na kraju</i>
change of subject	?	<i>nego</i> (in coll. speech)

All such "starts" are usually separated by a comma (,) from the rest of the sentence. Some examples:

Naravno, pit ćemo pivo. "Of course, we will drink beer."

93 "Vulgar" Slang

• • • Review: **85** [How to Curse](#), **91** [Slang](#)

Warning! This entry contains words that can disturb some people :)

Slang uses "vulgar" words and words derived from them to express everyday things, not "vulgar" at all. It also uses other words to express sexual and taboo concepts.

The main "vulgar" word is the verb *jebem*, *jebao* "fuck". In slang, this verb gets more meanings, and derived verbs have diverse meanings, which are connected with "strong" or even "violent" things.

The verb *jebem* in slang on its own also means "bother", "worry", similar to Standard Croatian verb *mučim*, with one who suffers in acc., and the cause in nom., e.g.:

Jebe me matematika. "Math is annoying me."

However, if used in an impersonal dative construct (with *za* + acc.), it means "not give a damn":

Jebe mi se za matematiku. "I don't give a damn about math."

Mind that the verb is impersonal in this construct, that is, in the 3rd pers. sg. n always! Search for "[jebe mi se za](#)" on Google™ to see how often it's used. While most consider it vulgar, it's sometimes found in Internet media, e.g.:

Eto'o: Jebe mi se za Arsenalovog Henryja "Eto'o: I don't give a damn about Henry from Arsenal" ([source](#))

Some derived verbs used in slang are:

zajebavam ~ *zajebem*, *zajebao* "joke", "cheat", "take advantage of"
najebem, *najebao* perf. "get hurt", "get caught", "suffer"
odjebem, *odjebao* perf. "go away"

Since all those verbs are derived from *jebem*, they are still considered vulgar, however they are more acceptable than *jebem*, *kurác* etc.

The verb *zajebavam* ~ *zajebem*, *zajebao* is often used in informal speech, in broad meaning "behave irresponsibly", "deceive", similar to English "fool" (and "screw up" or "fuck up" in slang).

Imperative *odjebi* means "go away" (similar to English slang "fuck off"). For instance, a Croatian pop group had a song with a line *Odjebi od mene*:

<i>Zatvori prozor i pokrij me</i>	<i>Tvoje lice, tvoje riječi</i>
<i>Tiho zaključaj vrata</i>	<i>Postale su prebljēde</i>
<i>Odjebi od mene</i>	<i>Uzmi šal i svoju glazbu</i>
<i>Tiho zaključaj vrata</i>	<i>Odjebi od mene</i>
<i>Odjebi zauvijek</i>	<i>Uzmi šal i svoju glazbu</i>
	<i>Odjebi zauvijek</i>

Passive adjective *jeben* means "superb", "outstanding", while adverb *jebeno* means "extremely", similar to English slang "fucking":

Jebeno je hladno. "It's *fucking* cold."

Kurác has a meaning "something (worthless)" in slang, like in phrases:

za kurác "not valid, not functioning"

koji kurac "why" (also *koje sranje*)
neki kurac "something" (also *neko sranje*)
idem na kurac "irritate"

It can be used as an adverb, meaning "no way", "won't happen", that is, strongly negating the whole sequence:

hoćeš kurac "no way you'll do it"

Slang has also "replacements" for some vulgar words, for instance verbs *karam* or *fukam* instead of *jebem*. Replacements for *kurac* are the following nouns:

Zagreb Split

banana čuna
kara đoko
veseljko
kita

For instance, The Beat Fleet (TBF), a popular group from Split, used various words for penis in their hit *Veseljko*, a song that leaves no doubt what it is about:

<i>Kad dotaknem zvijezde</i>	"When I touch the stars
<i>Zaplovim u svemir</i>	Set sails into universe
<i>I kako čovjek je mali</i>	And how man is small
<i>A život je ko rijeka</i>	And life is like a river
<i>Možda još večeras upozna mog</i>	Maybe even tonight she'll meet my
<i>Mog Veseljka</i>	My willy"

A really "strong" language is present in a song by Edo Maajka, a Croatian-Bosnian rapper:

<i>Budi popularan sine,</i>	<i>De mi reci Denis,</i>
<i>nek ti misice puše <u>kurac</u></i>	<i>koji <u>kurac</u> tj. penis</i>
<i>Ko Zdravko Čolić,</i>	<i>Hoćeš od mene, ko si,</i>
<i><u>karaj</u> sine sa estrade cure fine . . .</i>	<i>sa vrata mi se mali nosi</i>
<i>Budi ko Halid imaš glasa,</i>	<i>Gospon Huljić, ti ne slutiš,</i>
<i>u selu budi faca</i>	<i>ja sam nova nada kužiš</i>
<i>Nek ti Huljić radi ploču,</i>	<i>Imam eura znam pjevat,</i>
<i>pa <u>karaj</u> danju i noću . . .</i>	<i>hoću non-stop <u>jebat</u></i>

95 Other Stress Patterns

I will explain the stress pattern of some a-nouns, n-nouns and stress of adjectives.

A-Nouns: Rising-Falling Pattern

Most a-nouns have the fixed stress. However, some do not: this pattern applies to some a-nouns where stress (in the Standard system) is rising in some cases (nom. sg. and most others) and falling in others (acc. and voc. in both sg. and pl. and nom. pl.). The stress is on the first syllable, which can be either short or long, except for gen. pl. where the rising stress is on the syllable before the ending *-ā*:

case	"short"		"long"
nom. sg.	<i>kòsa</i>	<i>zèmlja</i>	<i>gláva</i>
other cases in sg.	(same stress as nom. sg.)		
acc. sg.	<i>kosu</i>	<i>zemlju</i>	<i>glāvu</i>
voc. sg.	<i>koso</i>	<i>zemljo</i>	<i>glāvo</i>
nom./voc./acc. pl.	<i>kose</i>	<i>zemlje</i>	<i>glāve</i>
gen. pl.	<i>kósā</i>	<i>zemáljā</i>	<i>glávā</i>
dat./loc./ins. pl.	<i>kòsama</i>	<i>zèmljama</i>	<i>glávama</i>

The pattern again becomes obvious if you recall that *á* = *ā* + rising accent. The lengths in gen. pl. are due to the general rule. Often used nouns in this group are:

<i>bùha</i> "flea" ††	<i>nòga</i> "leg" *	<i>strána</i> "side"
<i>dàska</i> "plank"	<i>óvca</i> "sheep"	<i>strijéla</i> "arrow"
<i>dúša</i> "soul" *	<i>pčèla</i> "bee"	<i>svínja</i> "pig" †
<i>gláva</i> "head" *	<i>péta</i> "heel"	<i>vòda</i> "water" *
<i>grána</i> "branch"	<i>ròsa</i> "dawn"	<i>vójska</i> "army"
<i>gréda</i> "(wooden) beam"	<i>rúka</i> "arm, hand" *	<i>zèmlja</i> "ground; Earth; country" *
<i>ìgla</i> "needle"	<i>slúga</i> "servant" †	<i>zíma</i> "winter"
<i>kòsa</i> "hair"	<i>srijéda</i>	<i>zmija</i> "snake" ††
<i>mètla</i> "broom"	"Wednesday"	<i>zòra</i> "dawn"
<i>mùha</i> "fly" ††	<i>sína</i> "roe deer"	<i>zvijézda</i> "star"
	<i>stijéna</i> "rock"	

Many nouns are marked with an asterisk (*): they can have the same falling stress also in dat. sg. Some others are marked with dagger (†): they can have a rising stress in acc. sg; ones marked with a double dagger have always a rising stress in acc. sg.

Dont forget that *zvijézda* is just an unfortunate spelling convetion; it's pronounced /zvjéžda/, acc. sg. /zvjēždu/!

Frequently, even when people speak Standard Croatian, they regard many of such nouns as having the fixed stress (as in nom. sg.).

It's safe to assume that all other a-nouns have the fixed stress.

N-Nouns: Falling-Rising Pattern

Most n-nouns have the fixed stress. However, there are some that have a pattern with a falling stress in sg. and a rising one in pl. on the syllable before case endings (e.g. *mjèst-a*, *jezèr-a*). The stressed syllable is normally short (except for one noun: *vrijeme*):

nom./acc./voc. sg.	<i>ime</i>	<i>jezero</i>	<i>vrijēme</i>
other cases in sg.	(same stress as nom. sg.)		
nom. pl.	<i>imèna</i>	<i>jezèra</i>	<i>vremèna</i>
gen. pl.	<i>iménā</i>	<i>jezérā</i>	<i>vreménā</i>
other cases in pl.	(same stress as nom. pl.)		

Again, the lengths in gen. pl. are due to the general rule. Often used nouns in this group are:

<i>breme</i> "burden"	<i>nevrijeme</i> "storm, bad weather"	<i>tjeme</i> "scalp"
<i>ime</i> "name"	<i>poluvrijeme</i> "half-time"	<i>vime</i> "udder"
<i>jezero</i> "lake"	<i>sjeme</i> "seed"	<i>vrijēme</i> "time; weather" *

The noun *vrijēme* is the only such noun having a long vowel in nom./acc./voc. sg. and the spelling of its case forms is affected by it, as shown in the table above.

96 Foreign Words And Names

- • • Review: **56 [Indeclinable Nouns and Adjectives](#), 91 [Slang](#)**

If you live in a big country, it's maybe hard for you to understand the outside influence on Croatian culture and of course its language.

When there's a movie on one of Croatian TV channels — it's likely an American movie (shown with subtitles). More than half of the songs played on radio stations are foreign (American, English, sometimes Italian). Book shops sell imported, English-language books as well, since many books don't get translated. If you drive for an hour or even less westward or northward from Zagreb — you come to the border, and another language is spoken across it. All cars are imported. Most shops sell foreign brands of clothes. Even in supermarkets, a lot of stuff is imported (e.g. candies, chocolate, snacks...) and has foreign names on it.

English (sometimes French and Italian) names for restaurants, cafés and shops are quite common, sometimes misspelled, or with mixed spelling (e.g. Croatian, English and French):



Not only shops bear English (sometimes French or Italian) names; a TV channel dedicated to mostly Croatian music videos is named *Croatian Music Channel* (CMC), and it organizes events called *CMC Party*.



One such event was [CMC PARTY presenting: The Love Collection](#), where a record called *The Love Collection* containing songs by Croatian performers only and published by the main Croatian music publisher, *Croatia Records*, was presented!

Recently, with a transition to market economy, a lot of English words appeared in commercial and corporate context, public relations, services, etc. For instance, a Croatian company organizes *The Ultimate Pub Quiz* (this is its Croatian name!):

The Ultimate Pub Quiz je inicijalno kreiran kao mali team-building event 2009. godine te je uspješno prihvaćen među tvrtkama i institucijama diljem Hrvatske. Od tada, razvio se kao korporativni team-building event ili show namijenjen za manje kompaktne grupe ili jednako tako kao večernji društveni event na konferencijama, poslovnim druženjima ili čak privatnim korporativnim partijima. ([Source](#))

Some words are spelled just as their English counterparts (*team-building, event, show*), while others are adapted (*parti* "party"). Such words are considered fancy and appealing by some people.

Meanings are sometimes shifted: *event* means "an organized event, social event, not just "event". Such often seen words are (with alternative spelling in brackets):

<i>brand (brend)</i>	<i>leasing</i>	<i>piercing (pirsing)</i>
<i>catering</i>	<i>lifestyle</i>	<i>shopping (šoping)</i>
<i>celebrity</i>	<i>manager (menadžer)</i>	<i>show</i>
<i>event "social event"</i>	<i>management (menadžment)</i>	<i>team-building</i>
<i>fitness "exercise; gym"</i>	<i>marketing</i>	<i>website</i>
<i>image (imidž) "public image"</i>	<i>monitoring</i>	<i>wellness</i>

From *shopping*, a verb *shoppingiram* (also spelled *šopingiram*) was derived, meaning "shop" (not just "buy", as *kupujem, kupovao ~ kupim*), and from it a gerund *shoppingiranje* (or *šopingiranje*) is

of course derived (BiH is a standard abbreviation for Bosnia-Herzegovina):

Dalmatinci i Slavonci masovno šopingiraju u BiH "Dalmatians and Slavonians shop in BiH in large numbers" ([T-Portal](#))

Commercial ads often feature a mix of English and Croatian, where name of event or service is in English, and the rest in Croatian. For instance:



Note that the shopping mall is called *Avenue Mall Osijek*. Such words are not limited to shopping and other services, celebrity contexts, but are also found in specialized areas, although always related to business:

[U] *Zagrebu se održava Retail Matchmaking Event u organizaciji tvrtke R.E.D. Star. Osim klasičnog "speed datinga" za developere i retailere, organizatori su sudionicima pripremili i nekoliko iznenađenja.* ([Source](#))

Here the writer puts "speed dating" into quotation marks, but not *developer* "property developer, real-estate investor" and *retailer* "shop owner".

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Appendix: Common Verb Families

Some important verb families are listed with brief description of related verbs and other words.

A.1 ložim

The verb *ložim* ~ *na-* meant once "put", but nowadays it mostly means "feed fire, furnace".

The derived verbs follow the asymmetric pattern, with impf. verbs derived from *-lāžēm*, *-lágao*. As for the stress, the base verb follows the falling-rising pattern as well.

The verbs are:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>od-</i>	N A	N puts away, postpones A
<i>iz-</i>	N A (D)	N exposes, exhibits A (to D)
<i>na-</i>	N A <i>da...</i>	N orders A to...
<i>ob-</i>	N A (I)	N covers surface of A (with I)
<i>po-</i>	N A	N lays A down N passes A (exam)
<i>prĕd-</i>	N A (D)	N proposes A (to D)
<i>pri-</i>	N A (D)	N appends A (to D)
<i>obraz-</i>	N A (D)	N explains A (to D)
<i>raz-</i>	N A	N dissolves A
<i>s-</i>	N A <i>se (s I) (u L) (da...)</i>	N assembles, puts together A N agrees (with I) (on L) (to...)
<i>u-</i>	N A (<i>u A1</i>)	N inserts A, invests A (in A1)
<i>za-</i>	N A <i>se za A</i>	N pawns A N supports, advocates A

The base *-lāžēm*, *-lágao* and e.g. the derived *s-lāžēm*, *s-lágao* look very similar to verb *lažēm*, *lagao* "tell lies" but they are not related; also observe the long vs. short *a* in the verb.

Not all verbs in the table above are often used: *razlažem*, *razlagao* is not often heard at all.

The verb *polažem*, *polagao* ~ *položim*, *položio* "lay down" is used to put things to ground, but also means "to pass" (an exam):

Položila sam fiziku "I have passed physics."

The verb *slažem*, *slagao* ~ *složim*, *složio* with *se* is the main way to express "agree" in Croatian:

Slažemo se u svemu. "We agree on everything."

There are many important derived nouns. Some the the left don't have a suffix, some derived with *-a*; all them have the fixed stress pattern:

<i>izlog</i> "shop window"	<i>rázlog</i> "reason"
<i>nálog</i> "order" (business, banking)	<i>slog</i> "syllable"
<i>òblog</i> "wrap" (in medicine)	<i>úlog</i> "investment"
<i>pòlog</i> "deposit" (in bank)	<i>obloga</i> "cladding, sheathing"
<i>prijédlog</i> "proposal"; "preposition"	<i>sloga</i> "harmony, concord"
<i>prílog</i> "attachment"; "side dish"; "adverb"	<i>uloga</i> "role"

The word *oblog* means "wrap" soaked in some liquid and used in medicine (and folk medicine) for treatment. Some examples of the nouns:

Tisuću i jedan razlog za posjet Istanbulu "1001 reason to visit Istanbul" (lit. "for visit to Istanbul") ([source](#))

Nouns *izlog*, *prijëdlog*, *razlog* and *uloga* are very often used in Croatian.

There are some passive adjectives that are also often used:

izložen "exposed"

složen "complex"

Updated 2012-11-05

A.2 pišem, pisao

Verb *pišem, pisao* ~ *na-* means "write", and is often used.

The verb family follows the asymmetric aspect pattern: *-pisujem, -pisivao* ~ *-pišem, -pisao*.

The verbs are:

prefix	grammar	meaning
<i>do-</i>	N A	N adds A (writing)
<i>ot-</i>	N A	N writes off A
<i>is-</i>	N A	N fills A with writing, N prints A
<i>o-</i>	N A	N describes A
<i>po-</i>	N A	N writes a list of A
<i>pot-</i>	N A	N signs A
<i>pre-</i>	N A	a. N transcribes, copies A b. N prescribes A
<i>pro-</i>	N A	N prescribes, regulates A
<i>pri-</i>	N A D	N attributes A to D
<i>ras-</i>	N A	N announces A (usually elections)
<i>u-</i>	N A (<i>u</i> A1) N A	N enrolls A (in A1) N enrolls A
<i>za-</i>	N A	N notes, writes down A

Verbs with *u-* and *is-* are used with special meaning: to "enroll" (someone in something, e.g. a child in school) and to "disenroll" (the opposite meaning):

If someone enrolls or disenrolls on his or her own, a *se* must be used, but it's not mandatory:

Upisala sam se na fakultet. "I enrolled college."

Upisala sam fakultet. (the same meaning)

There are few important derived nouns:

potpis "signature"

It's interesting to note parallels with English verbs of Latin origin:

pre-pisujem "trans-cribe"

pro-pisujem "pre-cribe"

Summary of Verb Forms

Warning: lists below are quite incomplete. My goal is to at least include the 1700 most common verbs. Be patient.

Verbs are divided to *verb types* (or *classes*), according to the way they form the present tense and past participles. Most verbs are in the same type in present and past, but there are many mixed verbs.

Forms that are always predictable (1st and 2nd pers. pl. of present and imperative, other forms of past part.) are not listed.

Simple Verb Types

These are the simplest verbs. The majority of verbs falls into these classes.

verb type →	n	a	i
pres. 1 st sg.	<i>bri-ne-m</i>	<i>im-a-m</i>	<i>misl-i-m</i>
pres. 2 nd sg.	<i>bri-ne-š</i>	<i>im-a-š</i>	<i>misl-i-š</i>
pres. 3 rd sg.	<i>bri-ne</i>	<i>im-a</i>	<i>misl-i</i>
pres. 3 rd pl.	<i>bri-n<u>u</u></i>	<i>im-a-ju</i>	<i>misl-<u>e</u></i>
present part.	<i>bri-nu-ći</i>	<i>im-a-ju-ći</i>	<i>misl-e-ći</i>
imper. 2 nd sg.	<i>bri-ni</i>	<i>im-a-j</i>	<i>misl-i</i>
past part. m	<i>bri-nu-o</i>	<i>im-a-o</i>	<i>misl-i-o</i>
past part. f	<i>bri-nu-la</i>	<i>im-a-la</i>	<i>misl-i-la</i>
infinitive	<i>bri-nu-ti</i>	<i>im-a-ti</i>	<i>misl-i-ti</i>
passive adj.	<i>za-bri-nu-<u>t</u></i>	<i>im-a-n</i>	<i>mišlj-<u>e-n</u></i>
gerund	<i>ga-nu-<u>će</u></i>	<i>im-a-nje</i>	<i>mišlj-<u>e-nje</u></i>

Almost all *n*-verbs are perfective; exceptions are *brinem*, *čeznem*, *ginem*, *tonem*, *trnem*, *trunem* and *venem*. Most simple, unprefixed *a*-verbs are imperfective.

'je/a Verbs

This is a big group of verbs usually with sound changes in present, due to *j*-softening (the present ending is actually *-jem*). It's best to learn both present and past (or infinitive) of such verbs.

pres. 1 st sg.	<i>der-e-m</i>	<i>skač-e-m</i>	<i>mič-e-m</i>	<i>laž-e-m</i>	<i>vež-e-m</i>
pres. 2 nd sg.	<i>der-e-š</i>	<i>skač-e-š</i>	<i>mič-e-š</i>	<i>laž-e-š</i>	<i>vež-e-š</i>
pres. 3 rd sg.	<i>der-e</i>	<i>skač-e</i>	<i>mič-e</i>	<i>laž-e</i>	<i>vež-e</i>
pres. 3 rd pl.	<i>der-u</i>	<i>skač-u</i>	<i>mič-u</i>	<i>laž-u</i>	<i>vež-u</i>

imper. 2nd sg.	<i>der-i</i>	<i>skač-i</i>	<i>mič-i</i>	<i>laž-i</i>	<i>vež-i</i>
past part. m	<i>der-a-o</i>	<i>skak-a-o</i>	<i>mic-a-o</i>	<i>lag-a-o</i>	<i>vez-a-o</i>
past part. f	<i>der-a-la</i>	<i>skak-a-la</i>	<i>mic-a-la</i>	<i>lag-a-la</i>	<i>vez-a-la</i>
infinitive	<i>der-a-ti</i>	<i>skak-a-ti</i>	<i>mic-a-ti</i>	<i>lag-a-ti</i>	<i>vez-a-ti</i>
passive adj.	<i>der-a-n</i>	<i>skak-a-n</i>	<i>mic-a-n</i>	<i>lag-a-n</i>	<i>vez-a-n</i>
gerund	<i>der-a-nje</i>	<i>skak-a-nje</i>	<i>mic-a-nje</i>	<i>lag-a-nje</i>	<i>vez-a-nje</i>

pres. 1st sg.	<i>puš-em</i>	<i>piš-em</i>	<i>šeć-em</i>	<i>drž-em</i>	<i>plješć-em</i>
pres. 2nd sg.	<i>puš-e-š</i>	<i>piš-e-š</i>	<i>šeć-e-š</i>	<i>drž-e-š</i>	<i>plješć-e-š</i>
pres. 3rd sg.	<i>puš-e</i>	<i>piš-e</i>	<i>šeć-e</i>	<i>drž-e</i>	<i>plješć-e</i>
pres. 3rd pl.	<i>puš-u</i>	<i>piš-u</i>	<i>šeć-u</i>	<i>drž-u</i>	<i>plješć-u</i>
imper. 2nd sg.	<i>puš-i</i>	<i>piš-i</i>	<i>šeć-i</i>	<i>drž-i</i>	<i>plješć-i</i>
past part. m	<i>puh-a-o</i>	<i>pis-a-o</i>	<i>šet-a-o</i>	<i>drht-a-o</i>	<i>pljěsk-a-o</i>
past part. f	<i>puh-a-la</i>	<i>pis-a-la</i>	<i>šet-a-la</i>	<i>drht-a-la</i>	<i>pljěsk-a-la</i>
infinitive	<i>puh-a-ti</i>	<i>pis-a-ti</i>	<i>šet-a-ti</i>	<i>drht-a-ti</i>	<i>pljěsk-a-ti</i>
passive adj.	<i>puh-a-n</i>	<i>pis-a-n</i>	<i>šet-a-n</i>	<i>(drht-a-n)</i>	<i>(pljěsk-a-n)</i>
gerund	<i>puh-a-nje</i>	<i>pis-a-nje</i>	<i>šet-a-nje</i>	<i>drht-a-nje</i>	<i>pljěsk-a-nje</i>

The common ones with sound changes are (I will expand this list):

bris-em, bris-ao "delete, clear"
dahć-em/dašč-em, daht-ao "pant"
diš-em, dis-ao "breathe"
diž-em, diz-ao "raise"
drž-em, drht-ao "shiver"
glod-em, glod-ao "gnaw"
hrč-em, hrk-ao "snore"
kaplj-em, kap-ao* "cough"
kašlj-em, kašlj-ao "cough"
kaž-em, kaza-ao "say, tell"
kreć-em, kret-ao "depart"
kiš-em, kih-ao "sneeze"
kleš-em, kles-ao "chisel, carve"
klič-em, klic-ao "cheer, shout"
kliž-em, kliz-ao "slide, skate"
lāž-em, lāg-ao "lie"
liž-em, liz-ao "lick"
maš-em, mah-ao "wave"
maž-em, maz-ao "spread (e.g. butter)"
mič-em, mic-ao "move"
miriš-em, miris-ao "smell"
nič-em, nic-ao "sprout"
njiš-em, njih-ao "sway, wobble"

piš-em, pis-ao "write"
plač-em, plak-ao "cry, shed tears"
pleš-em, ples-ao "dance"
plješć-em, pljěsk-ao "clap, applaud"
pomaž-em, pomag-ao "help"
pršč-em, prsk-ao* "splash"
puš-em, puh-ao "blow"
puž-em, puz-ao "crawl"
rěž-em, rěz-ao "cut"
siš-em, sis-ao "suck"
skač-em, skak-ao "jump"
sreć-em, sret-ao "encounter"
srč-em, srk-ao "sip"
stiž-em, stiz-ao "arrive, make on time"
sviće-em, svit-ao "dawn"
šapć-em, šapt-ao* "whisper"
šeć-em, šet-ao* "stroll"
teš-em, tes-ao "hew, trim"
urlič-em, urlik-ao "scream"
važ-em, vag-ao "weigh"
vež-em, vez-ao "tie, bind"
vič-em, vik-ao "yell"
žvač-em, žvak-ao "chew"

The verb *dršćem, drhtao* is sometimes found as an i/a-verb (*drhtim, drhtao*); verbs marked with an asterisk (*) sometime behave as plain a-verbs (e.g. *šetam*).

The common ones without sound changes are:

<i>brij-em, brij-ao</i> "shave"	<i>penj-em, penj-ao</i> "climb"
<i>der-em, der-ao</i> "tear"	<i>sij-em, sij-ao</i> "sow"
<i>grij-em, grij-ao</i> "heat"	<i>smij-em, smij-ao</i> "laugh"
<i>griz-em, griz-ao</i> "bite"	<i>staj-em, staj-ao</i> "stop, stand"
<i>laj-em, laj-ao</i> "bark"	<i>stenj-em, stenj-ao</i> "groan"
<i>or-em, or-ao</i> "till"	<i>traj-em, traj-ao</i> "last"

Of course, all others derived by merely prefixing them, e.g. *na-piš-em, na-pis-ao* belong to this group as well. Verbs derived from *stajem, stajao* are very common, e.g. *ostaj-em, ostaj-ao* "remain", *nestaj-em, nestaj-ao* "disappear" etc.

There are also verbs derived from roots that are not used on its own; the derived verbs are always imperfective, and the common ones are:

<i>-klinj-em, -klinj-ao:</i>	<i>-tež-em, -tez-ao:</i>
<i>proklinj-em, proklinj-ao</i> "curse"	<i>potež-em, potez-ao</i> "pull"
<i>zaklinj-em, zaoklinj-ao</i> "swear, take oath"	<i>stež-em, stez-ao</i> "tighten"
<i>-mač-em, -mak-ao:</i>	<i>-tič-em, -tic-ao:</i>
<i>namač-em, namak-ao</i> "soak"	<i>istič-em, istic-ao</i> "emphasize"
<i>umač-em, umak-ao</i> "dip"	<i>potič-em, potic-ao</i> "encourage"
<i>-mir-em, -mir-ao:</i>	<i>-tjěč-em, -tjěc-ao:</i>
<i>umir-em, umir-ao</i> "die, perish"	<i>istjěč-em, istjěc-ao</i> "flow out"
<i>-rič-em, -ric-ao:</i>	<i>potjěč-em, potjěc-ao</i> "originate"
<i>izrič-em, izric-ao</i> "utter, pronounce"	<i>stjěč-em, stjěc-ao</i> "acquire"
<i>narič-em, naric-ao</i> "wail, lament"	<i>utjěč-em, utjěc-ao</i> "influence"

Verbs derived by prefixing are derived from *brojim* (just an i-verb, eg. *z-brojim*) instead of *brojim, brojao*. Actually, Standard Croatian prefers *brojim* as a plain i-verb as well.

i/a Verbs

There's a group of verbs that have *-im* in the present, but *-a-* in the past and infinitive. No sound changes happen, however most such verbs contain palatal sounds (*č, š, etc.* or *j*). The common ones are:

<i>beč-im, beč-ao</i> "cry (for babies)"	<i>kleč-im, kleč-ao</i> "kneel"
<i>bjěž-im, bjěž-ao</i> "run away"	<i>pljušt-im, pljušt-ao</i> "rain heavily, shower"
<i>blej-im, blej-ao</i> "bleat"	<i>rež-im, rež-ao</i> "growl"
<i>boj-im, boj-ao</i> "be afraid"	<i>trč-im, trč-ao</i> "run"
<i>broj-im, broj-ao</i> "count"	<i>sp-im, sp-ao</i> "sleep"
<i>bruj-im, bruj-ao</i> "hum"	<i>stoj-im, stoj-ao</i> "stand"
<i>cvrč-im, cvrč-ao</i> "chirr"	<i>šušt-im, šuš-ao</i> "rustle, murmur"
<i>čuč-im, čuč-ao</i> "squat"	<i>vrišt-im, vrišt-ao</i> "scream"
<i>drž-im, drž-ao</i> "hold"	<i>zuj-im, zuj-ao</i> "buzz"
<i>huč-im, huč-ao</i> "boom"	<i>zvižd-im, zvižd-ao</i> "whistle"
<i>lež-im, lež-ao</i> "lay"	<i>zveč-im, zveč-ao</i> "twang"
<i>ječ-im, ječ-ao</i> "cry, shrill"	<i>zvuč-im, zvuč-ao</i> "sound"

Of course, verbs derived from them by just prefixing (e.g. *za-drž-im*) have same forms. Without any prefix, as listed above, all such verbs are imperfective.

Verbs *spim, spao* is seldom used without prefix (mainly *zaspim, zaspao* "fall asleep"), while *stojim, stojao* is mainly used in present, and its prefixed forms include few important and often used verbs, e.g. *postojim, postojao* "exist".

In some regions more such verbs are found, e.g. *mučim, mučao* "be silent" and *ćutim, ćutao* "be silent" (in Serbian).

i/jě Verbs

These verbs have *-im* in the present, *-io* in the past part m, but *-jě-* in other past participles and the infinitive. No sound changes happen. These verbs mix with plain i-verbs, however the following common verbs are used always just as i/jě-verbs:

vidim, vidio, vidjela "see" *želim, želio, željela* "want"
volim, volio, voljela "like, love" *živim, živio, živjela* "live"

The following verbs are seldom used as i-verbs, even colloquially:

bolim, bolio, boljela "hurt" *letim, letio, letjela* "fly"
lebdim, lebdio, lebdjela "hover"

For the following verbs, both forms used: i/je-forms prevails in written contexts (newspapers, books), pure i-verbs are chiefly colloquial:

ćutim, ćutio, ćutjela "feel" (regional) *trpim, trpio, trpjela* "suffer"
gorim, gorio, gorjela "burn" *vrtim, vrtio, vrtjela* "spin, turn"
grmim, grmio, grmjela "thunder" *visim, visio, visjela* "hang"
smrdim, smrdio, smrdjela "stink" *vrvim, vrvio, vrvjela* "swarm"
štedim, štedio, štedjela "save (money), spare" *žudim, žudio, žudjela* "yearn"
šutim, šutio, šutjela "be quiet"

Finally, for the following verbs, i/je-forms are seldom used even in serious newspapers, pure i-forms prevail:

gnjilim, gnjilio, gnjiljela "rot" *strepim, strepio, strepjela* "fear, quail"
hlapim, hlapio, hlapjela "evaporate" *šumim, šumio, šumjela* "whirr, hum"
starim, stario, starjela "age, grow old" *tamnim, tamnio, tamnjela* "darken"

All the verbs above are imperfective. Verbs derived from them behave in the same way, but all are perfective.

ijě Verbs

Such verbs have *-ijě-* in their present, but behave like *jě-*past verbs. The prototype verb is:

razum-ijě-m, razum-ĩ-o, razum-jě-la, razum-jě-ti "understand"

Common verbs in this group are also:

dospijem, dospio, dospjela, dospjeti "end up, appear"
smijem, smio, smjela, smjeti "be allowed to"
uspijem, uspio, uspjela, uspjeti "succeed"

***v Verbs**

Such verbs have a *-j-* in the present and imperative, and *-v-* in the past and infinitive. Unfortunately, often a vowel before it changes:

pres. 1st sg.	<i>d-aje-m</i>	<i>plj-uje-m</i>	<i>kralj-uje-m</i>	<i>poka-zuje-m</i>	<i>kupuje-m</i>
pres. 2nd sg.	<i>d-aje-š</i>	<i>plj-uje-š</i>	<i>kralj-uje-š</i>	<i>poka-zuje-š</i>	<i>kupuje-š</i>

- *st* roots (e.g. *rastem, rastao*)
- *d/t* roots (e.g. *jëdem, jëo*)
- *k/g* roots (e.g. *pečem, pekao*)
- *p/b* roots (e.g. *grebem, grebao*)
- *rë* roots (e.g. *umrëm, umro*)
- root change (e.g. *zovem, zvao*)

pres. 1st sg.	<i>pij-e-m</i>	<i>tres-e-m</i>	<i>rast-e-m</i>	<i>jëd-e-m</i>	<i>peč-e-m</i>	<i>greb-e-m</i>	<i>umr-ë-m</i>
pres. 2nd sg.	<i>pij-e-š</i>	<i>tres-e-š</i>	<i>rast-e-š</i>	<i>jëd-e-š</i>	<i>peč-e-š</i>	<i>greb-e-š</i>	<i>umr-ë-š</i>
pres. 3rd sg.	<i>pij-e</i>	<i>tres-e</i>	<i>rast-e</i>	<i>jëd-e</i>	<i>peč-e</i>	<i>greb-e</i>	<i>umr-ë</i>
pres. 3rd pl.	<i>pij-u</i>	<i>tres-u</i>	<i>rast-u</i>	<i>jëd-u</i>	<i>pek-u</i>	<i>greb-u</i>	<i>umr-u</i>
imper. 2nd sg.	<i>pij</i>	<i>tres-i</i>	<i>rast-i</i>	<i>jëd-i</i>	<i>pec-i</i>	<i>greb-i</i>	<i>umr-i</i>
past part. m	<i>pi--o</i>	<i>tres--äo</i>	<i>rast--äo</i>	<i>jë--o</i>	<i>pek--äo</i>	<i>greb--äo</i>	<i>umr-o</i>
past part. f	<i>pi--la</i>	<i>tres--la</i>	<i>ras-la</i>	<i>jë--la</i>	<i>pek--la</i>	<i>greb-la</i>	<i>umr-la</i>
infinitive	<i>pi--ti</i>	<i>tres--ti</i>	<i>ras-ti</i>	<i>jës--ti</i>	<i>pe--ći</i>	<i>grebs-ti</i>	<i>umr-ijë-ti</i>
passive adj.	<i>pij--en</i>	<i>tres--en</i>	—	<i>jëd-en</i>	<i>peč-en</i>	<i>greb-en</i>	—
gerund	<i>pij--enje</i>	<i>tres--enje</i>	—	<i>jëd-enje</i>	<i>peč-enje</i>	<i>greb-enje</i>	—

Verbs with **vowel-root** (e.g. *pij-e-m*) have a *-j-* in all forms except past part. and infinitive. All forms are completely regular, no sound shifts. Common ones are:

bij-em, bi-o "beat" (seldom used unprefixated)
čuĵ-em, ču-o "hear"
krij-em, kri-o "hide"
pij-em, pi-o "drink"
šij-em, ši-o "sew"
umij-em, umi-o "wash (face)" (perf.)

There are verbs derived from them by prefixing that have the same change, e.g. *po-pij-em*. The verb *bijem* is seldom used in Croatia, but derived verbs are very common: *u-bijem* "kill" (perf.), *raz-bijem* "shatter, break" (perf.), etc.

There are only few **consonant-root** and **st-root** verbs (but there are verbs derived by prefixing from these two):

tres-em, tres--äo, tres-la, tres-ti "shake, shiver"
rast-em, rast--äo, ras-la, ras-ti "grow"
griz-em, griz--äo, griz-la, gris-ti "bite"

Similar to *grizem* are verbs derived from *-vezem*, e.g. *povezem, odvezem*.

Verbs similar to *pečem* (**k-root**) have 3rd pers. pl. with *-k-* instead of *-č-*, past with *-k-*, and infinitive on *-ći*; imperative has a *-c-*. They can be listed as:

peč-em (pek-u), pek--äo, pek-la, pe-ći (pec-i !) "bake"

Similar verbs are:

obučem "wear, put on (clothes)" (perf.)
(rečem) "say" (present of this verb is seldom used)

sijjećem, sjěkăo "cut"
tečem "flow"
tučem "beat"
vučem "pull"

Of course, there are verbs derived from them by prefixing that have the same change, e.g. *po-vučem*. There are no g-root verbs that are commonly used nowadays.

A group of **d/t-root** verbs lose those consonants in past, and have an -s- in infinitive; the prototype verb is:

jěd-em, jě-o, jě-la, jě-sti "eat"

Similar verbs are:

bodem "stab, prod" (past part. m. *bo* or *boo*)
cvatem "blossom"
kradem "steal"
metem "sweep"
pletem "knit"

Of course, there are verbs derived from them by prefixing that have the same change, e.g. *po-jědem*.

Verbs derived from *-vedem* also fall into this subgroup, e.g. *povedem, prevedem, odvedem, dovedem*, etc. Their infinitives coincide with verbs derived from *-vezem*; for instance:

odvedem, odveo, odvela, odvesti "take away" (perf.)
odvezem, odvezao, odvezla, odvesti "drive away" (perf.)

They have similar meanings and are sometimes even confused.

The next two verbs are **rě-root** verbs and are quite archaic today, but verbs derived by prefixing from them are not (e.g. *umrěm* "die", *prostrěm* "spread out"):

mr-ěm, mr-o, mr-la, mr-ijě-ti "die"
str-ěm, str-o, str-la, str-ijě-ti (str-ti) "spread"

The second verb has two possible infinitive forms.

These verbs are impf.; verbs derived from them by prefixing (e.g. *u-mrěm*) are perfective. To get impf. pairs of the prefixed verbs, use verbs ending on *-ir-em, -ir-ao* (e.g. *umirem, umirao*).

Verbs with **root change** can be divided to two subgroups (a, e). The roots change in various ways that must be learned by heart verb by verb. Past participle forms and infinitives are regularly derived from past part. m.:

per-em, pra-o, pra-la, pra-ti "wash"

Common verbs are (left: a-subgroup, right: e-subgroup):

<i>berem, brao</i> "pick"	<i>kunem, kleo (!)</i> "curse"
<i>koljem, klao</i> "slaughter"	<i>meljem, mljeo</i> "mill"
<i>perem, prao</i> "wash"	<i>nadmem, naduo (!)</i> "bloat, swell" (perf.)
<i>serem, srao</i> "shit" (impolite!)	<i>otmem, oteo</i> "hijack" (perf.)
<i>šaljem, slao</i> "send"	<i>uzmem, uzeo</i> "take" (perf.)
<i>zovem, zvao</i> "call"	<i>žanjem, žeo</i> "rip, harvest"

Of course, there are verbs derived by prefixing from the verbs above, e.g. *operem, oprao* etc. There are also verbs derived from roots that are no longer used on its own; the common ones are:

- čn-em*, -**če-o**:
počnem, *počeo* "start" (perf.)
začnem, *začeo* "begat, conceive" (perf.)
- pn-em*, -**pe-o**:
napnem, *napeo* "tense, wind up" (perf.)
popnem, *popleo* "climb" (perf.)
raspnem, *rasleo* "crucify" (perf.)
zapnem, *zapeo* "trip, stumble" (perf.)
- sp-em*, -**su-o**:
raspem, *rasuo* "dissipate, spill" (perf.)
naspem, *nasuo* "cover, put over" (perf.)

n/0 Verbs

Certain verbs have present like n-verbs, and have 0-class past participles and infinitives. Some verbs can have two forms of past/infinite: 0-like and n-like. Since they have a *-n-* in present, there are no sound shifts there. All such verbs are perfective.

Verbs with (usually) only one form of past and infinitive:

- leg-n-em*, *leg-äo*, *leg-la*, *le-ći* "lie (down)" (perf.)
pomog-n-em, *pomog-ao*, *pomog-la*, *pomo-ći* "help" (perf.)
stig-n-em, *stig-äo*, *stig-la*, *sti-ći* "arrive (on time)" (perf.)
- sjed-n-em*, *sjed-o*, *sjed-la*, *sjed-ti* "sit" (perf.)
sret-n-em, *sre-o*, *sre-la*, *sres-ti* "meet, encounter" (perf.)
- sta-n-em*, *sta-o*, *sta-la*, *sta-ti* "stand" (perf.)

The root is "bare" in past/infinite and all complications from #e/0-verbs apply. Verbs derived from *stanem*, *stao* are very common, e.g. *postanem*, *postao* "become".

The following verbs have two possible forms of past and infinitive: 0-type and n-type. Since n-type forms are trivial (i.e. *tak-nu-o*, etc.) I will list only 0-type forms:

- dig-n-em*, *dig-äo*, *dig-la*, *di-ći* "raise" (perf.)
nik-n-em, *nik-äo*, *nik-la*, *ni-ći* "sprout" (perf.)
puk-n-em, *puk-äo*, *puk-la*, *pu-ći* "rip, burst, break apart" (perf.)
tak-n-em, *tak-äo*, *tak-la*, *ta-ći* "touch" (perf.)

Occasionally, one can hear n-type past or infinitive even for verbs like *legnem*: *legnuo* or *stignem* : *stignuo*.

Of course, this all applies also to verbs derived by prefixing from the above verbs, e.g. *po-tak-n-em*.

Irregular Verbs

There are few irregular verbs:

pres. 1 st sg.	(je)säm	(ho)ću (!)	mogu (!)
pres. 2 nd sg.	(je)si	(ho)ćeš	možeš
pres. 3 rd sg.	je(st)	(ho)će	može
pres. 1 st pl.	(je)smo	(ho)ćemo	možemo
pres. 2 nd pl.	(je)ste	(ho)ćete	možete
pres. 3 rd pl.	(je)su	(ho)će (!)	mogu (!)

imper. 2nd sg.	—	—	—
past part. m	<i>bio</i>	<i>htio</i>	<i>mogao</i>
past part. f	<i>bila</i>	<i>htjĕla</i>	<i>mogla</i>
infinitive	<i>biti</i>	<i>htjĕti</i>	<i>moći</i>
passive adj.	—	—	—
gerund	—	<i>htjĕnje</i>	—

Additionally, there's the verb *idem* and a group of verbs derived from it, e.g. *dođem*; *odem* shows special forms, others are similar to *dođem*:

idem, išao, išla, ići (idi!) "go"
dođem, došao, došla, doći (dođi!) "come" (perf.)
odem, otišao, otišla, otići (odi!) "leave" (perf.)

The verb *budem* has only present (*budem*) and imperative forms (*budi*) but both are completely regular.

Verbs derived from root *-nesem, -nio, -nijĕla* are also irregular in respect to root in present and past/infinitive. They are all perfective. They are often used, common ones are:

donesem, donio, donijĕla "bring" (perf.)
iznesem, iznio, iznijĕla "bring out" (perf.)
odnesem, odnio, odnijĕla "carry away" (perf.)
podnesem, podnio, podnijĕla "withstand, suffer" (perf.)
prĕnesem, prĕnio, prĕnijĕla "carry over, transport" (perf.)
unesem, unio, unijĕla "bring in" (perf.)