



Lesson 3: Getting What You Want Using Hungarian

Kérem.

LESSON NOTES

This phrase will help you take matters into your own hands! In today's lesson we'll take a look at the word "Please," which will be very important when you need to ask for something.

In Hungarian, "Please" is kérem. Let's break it down by syllable ké-rem. Now let's hear it again kérem.

Let's take a closer look at kérem. The easiest way to use this word is by pointing at something and saying Ezt kérem ("This one, please") or Azt kérem ("That one, please.") Let's hear them again Ezt kérem. Azt kérem.

Please remember that in Hungary it is a little rude to point at people. But pointing at things, especially when you are trying to buy something at the market, or when it helps to illustrate your point, is perfectly okay. Just make sure you use köszönöm or "thank you" when the object is handed to you.

Another translation of "please" could be the phrase legyen szíves. We use this phrase to ask someone to do something for us and it is usually followed by a verb. Let's see that again: legyen szíves. Break it down to syllables: le-gyen szí-ves. Here's an example: Legyen szíves adja ide ("Please hand it to me.") Legyen szíves adja ide. Here's another example. You may hear this at the airport: Legyen szíves nyissa ki. ("Please open it.") All of these sentences with the phrase legyen szíves are polite and formal.

PHRASES

Hungarian	English
Ezt kérem.	This please.
Azt kérem.	That please.

VOCABULARY

Hungarian	English
kérem	please
Legyen szíves	Please (followed by a verb)
ezt	this
azt	that

QUICK TIP

We have learned the sentence *Ezt kérem.* ("This, please.") We may need to spend some time with the grammar here. The first word *ezt* ("this") is in the accusative. The easiest way to understand accusative case is to say that a noun is in the accusative if it is the object in the sentence. This statement, although somewhat simplified, will help us understand Hungarian grammar a bit more. Now, if you want to say "This is beautiful," a sentence where the word "this" is not an object, you have to use a slightly different form in Hungarian. *Ez szép.* "This is beautiful." You just have to lose the *-t* from the end of the word. The same thing is true for "that." *Az szép.* "That's beautiful."

Now try linking these sentences together: "This is beautiful. This one please. Please hand it to me." In Hungarian it would go: *Ez szép. Ezt kérem. Legyen szíves adja ide.* Don't forget to thank the person who is helping you so much.

QUICK TIP 2

Legyen szíves, as we have mentioned before, is a formal way to ask someone to do something. You might catch Hungarians saying *Légy szíves* or even *Légyszi*. These forms, especially the second one, are very informal and usually only used between friends. Do not try to use them in an office or to your superiors. However, if you're in a conversation with some Hungarian friends in bar, try to slip in a long *Lééégyszííí* ("Pleeease") when asking them to get the next round! You will surely get an appreciative pat on the back.