Easy Croatian


učim

(with case annotations)

Easy-Croatian.com
facebook/Easy.Cro
for Sandra, as she was very patient
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Introduction

This is a simple introduction to the Croatian language, where you can learn the very basics easily. (At least I hope so.)

It’s currently under construction: some parts are completed, some are not even started.

Two warnings. First, I’m not a professional language teacher or linguist. Second, English is not my native tongue so you will probably find some bad English in this ‘course’. Feel free to correct me.

If you’re an expert in Croatian, or have read some book with very detailed descriptions of Croatian grammar, etc. and want to ask me why something is not described here, please bear in mind that this ‘course’ is intentionally lightweight and focuses on performance and not learning all the details and formal rules.

What is Croatian? There’s no single answer. Strictly speaking, ‘languages’ are a kind of abstractions and oversimplifications. There’s language on the public TV, but there’s also language on the streets, in movies, books and songs. People in Croatia don’t speak a ‘monolithic’ language, despite being portrayed so in many introductory, and even advanced texts. There’s a lot of regional variation, and in some parts of Croatia, extraordinary local diversity is found. This affects not only the language spoken at home, but also how people talk in public, certain words and grammar rules. I will attempt to give at least an overview of all such variations: places of significant variation within Croatia will be marked with a ® mark, and explained at the end of each chapter.

In this work, I’ll use ‘Croatian’ as ‘what is most common in use in Croatia’, especially in everyday communication, e.g. at work, at university, in shops, at least in bigger cities, that is, how most people today speak (which is not uniform, as you will immediately see).

It turns out that the language most people in Croatia use is very close to what people in Bosnia-Herzegovina use, and quite similar to what many people in Serbia use. There are no sharp lines between Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian (defined as how people actually speak in these countries). Actually, the diversity within Croatia is much greater than e.g. difference between the standard languages you can hear on Croatian and Serbian public TV.

However, this means if you’re really interested in Bosnian or Serbian, this ‘course’ could be very useful to you; differences are small and I will summarize them at the end. Through this ‘course’, all important differences are marked: words that are really different are also marked with a ® mark, and such differences are explained at the end of each chapter. What applies to Bosnian, usually applies to Montenegrin as well. If you are interested in Croatian only, simply ignore such remarks.
Some might ask: why is this, then, only ‘Croatian’, and not ‘Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian’? There are two reasons: first, I happen to live in Croatia, so I know the actual speech and language in Croatia much better than in the 3 other countries; second, that would imply treating them on equal footing, i.e. giving many examples in three or four versions, including Serbian Cyrillic spelling from the start, and so on. Everything would get really complicated then. However, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian books by Ronelle Alexander do exactly that – you should check them if you like such an approach.

In Croatia, there are various manuals with rules for ‘standard’, ‘proper’ language. Not of them agree what is ‘standard’, and what is not. This ‘course’ will focus primarily on the everyday language: sometimes, there's a difference between formal (or 'standard') and everyday ('colloquial') words and forms, which are used in almost all circumstances, except in laws and textbooks. Such differences will be explained as well.

Depending on your background, you might find some features of Croatian a bit strange. For example, while English apple shows a simple variation (apple, apples) the Croatian jabuka has more forms (jabuka, jabuku, jabuci, jabukom, jabuko, jabuke, jabukama). Such forms will be introduced gradually, starting from more often used forms. Knowing any language beside English is really useful, since English is one of European languages most unlike Croatian. I’ve added examples in German, French, Italian, Spanish and Swedish at various places, since they are more similar to Croatian.

Each chapter supposes that you have mastered all previous chapters. The aim of this ‘course’ is to enable you to produce and understand as many useful sentences as possible with the minimal knowledge of grammar.

*Chapters 1-9* will introduce you to the very basics: alphabet, present tense, how to use nouns as objects. You'll be able to say Ana is driving Goran to school, It’s warm today, My name is Ivan, The bus to Zadar is leaving tomorrow at three o’clock, and much more.

*Chapters 10-19* will introduce you to gender in Croatian, use of adjectives, and useful words like this, that, my, your; you’ll be able to say Ana’s book is in this drawer, We’re eating in an expensive restaurant, and much more.

*Chapters 20-29* will introduce you to plural of nouns, adjectives and verbs, ways of expressing what you feel (e.g. I’m quite cold), expressions like car keys, my sister’s friend, past tense, use of pronouns (I saw her), and more.

*Chapters 30-39* will introduce you to more forms, ordinal numbers (first, second), more types of questions, expressing tools, company, conditional and polite expressions (e.g. I would like…) and more.

*Chapters 40-49* will introduce you to measuring, counting things, expressing existence, future tense, expressing how long actions were, and ways to express
accomplishments.

Chapter 50 and later will introduce you to various kinds of sentences and ways to communicate in various situations.

A small Core Dictionary is attached to this course. It currently contains about 1800 entries, with about 2900 most used words.

Since April 2016, all recent updates in offline versions (Kindle and PDF) are marked with a pale blue stripe on the right margin (like this paragraph) to draw attention to recent changes and added information. This does not apply to Exercises and Examples, or to the Core Dictionary, only to the main text.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have helped me: my wife for sound clips, Blaženka for additional sound clips; Boban Arsenijević for drawing the boundary of the standard stress area in Serbia, Dušica Božović for details on language in Serbia, CJ for many ideas and comments, Conor O’Neill for fixing my English, Аня Немова for drawing my attention to parts of grammar I’ve overlooked, Viviam for many comments and comparisons with Brazilian Portuguese, and many others who helped me improve this work.

Feel free to use this material in any way, but if you copy it, quote it, or republish it, please acknowledge the source (or link to this, etc.)

Happy learning!
— Daniel N.
01 Alphabet and Pronunciation

Croatian alphabet is simpler than English and much more similar to German or Spanish.

Letters b, d, f, h, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, z are pronounced more or less as in English. The letter g is pronounced always as in English go or get.

The following letters have a special pronunciation in Croatian:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific letters in Croatian</th>
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<tr>
<td>c as tz in tzar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>č as ch in child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>č similar to č, a bit ‘softer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>đ as j in joke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j as y in you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>š as sh in ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ž as s in pleasure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sequences of letters đž, lj and nj are considered single letters in Croatian; they are pronounced as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific two-letter sequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>đž similar to đ, a bit ‘harder’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lj like an l fused with a j</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as Italian gl (e.g. in figlia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or like English million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nj like an n fused with a j</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like Spanish ñ (e.g. in señor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Italian gn (e.g. in bagno)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or like English onion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 7 letters listed above (c to ž) and these two-letter sequences are Croatian-specific letters and have a somewhat special role in grammar. (You can remember them as consonants having ‘hooks’ on them, including j, having a ‘dot’ + letter c.)

Croatian vowels are quite different than English vowels: they should be pronounced as Spanish or Italian vowels, as rather ‘flat’. Vowels can be either long or short (similar to English fit vs. feet) but in some cities (notably, Zagreb, Rijeka and Pula) that distinction is lost.

Therefore, I have decided not to mark long vowels, as it would be too complicated for beginners: the rules are really complex and not respected in real life in many
parts of Croatia anyway.

Also, most people in Croatia pronounce today č the same as čć, and đž the same as đ. This feature includes most cities.

In the Standard pronunciation of č and đž, the tip of tongue is pressed against the palate (top of the mouth) right above teeth, the teeth are separated, and there’s a gap between lips and teeth; it’s called apical pronunciation.

There’s a vowel a (pronounced as e in English the) that’s never spelled; it appears in the following situations:

1. in seemingly impossible words like čvrst rigid, hard and krv blood: they can be approximately pronounced with the vowel a (at least by some Croatian speakers) as čvarst and karv. Actually, krv is pronounced a bit like English curve.

2. the same goes for e.g. bicikl bicycle, which is rather pronounced as bi-ci-kal (three syllables).

3. when talking about letters, Croatians often talk about the letter "b", and pronounce its ‘name’ as ba.

Although words should be pronounced as spelled, a great majority of Croatians pronounce the sequence ije (when not at the end of the word) as just je, for example:

lijepo beautifully is usually pronounced as ljepo
priorje before is pronounced as written (prije), since the ije comes at the very end

Some people pronounce lijepo as ljep-o (that is, l and j are separate sounds; this is regarded as standard), others as lj-e-p-o. To help you with the pronunciation, I’ve marked such normally written, but not pronounced i’s like this: lijepo. In the words like priorje, where all vowels are normally pronounced, nothing is marked.

There are very few other situations where something is written but not pronounced in Croatian, they will be specially emphasized.

Croatian spells the foreign names and places how they are originally spelled, if the original spelling uses the Latin script (e.g. New York, Chuck Norris), while in sometimes in Bosnian, and as the rule in Serbian, respelling according to an approximate pronunciation is used (Njujork, Čak Noris).

Stress (pronouncing one syllable a bit louder, as in English together) has quite complex rules and varies in colloquial speech in different parts of Croatia. Stress is never indicated in writing (similar to the practice in English, but unlike Spanish or Italian), and you are simply supposed to know it.

There are two common ways (or schemes) of stressing words used in speech:

The standard stress is used in the Standard Croatian, and in cities of Split, Osijek, Dubrovnik, and surrounding countryside; the area extends to Bosnia, and most of
Serbia. This is what you hear on the Croatian Public Radio and TV (this is the pronunciation you will find in language manuals and good dictionaries).

Furthermore, the Standard Croatian has two kinds of stress (ways that one syllable in the word can be stressed): with the *rising tone* and the *falling tone*. It’s a bit similar to tones in Swedish or even Chinese. The stress in the Standard Croatian is virtually identical to stress in the Standard Serbian or Bosnian, but many people in Croatia *don’t* use standard stress in everyday communication. Furthermore, rules governing standard stress are very complex (the stress changes in various forms of one word) so I think it would be too complex to introduce tones in a course intended for beginners (this approach is followed by most language schools that offer Croatian; I will describe details later, in A9 **Stress**).

Therefore, I decided just to mark what vowel is stressed, when the stress is not on the first syllable (that’s the default place of stress). This map shows roughly (the shaded area) where the standard stress scheme (or something quite similar to it) prevails in Croatia and neighboring countries, at least in public settings:

![Map of Croatia and neighboring countries](image)

The *western stress* is used colloquially, very often heard in Zagreb, surrounding areas and some other cities, including Rijeka and Pula. You can hear it on local radio stations. This is the pronunciation I personally use in everyday life, at work, in school, etc. (It’s sometimes, confusingly, called ‘urban stress’; you will find virtually nothing about it in textbooks.)

There are more stress schemes and ways to pronounce words in various dialects,
but they are more or less limited to small areas and villages. They will be briefly described in the section on dialects.

I won’t describe the stress schemes used in unshaded areas of Serbia and Montenegro. For some words, they are a very similar or identical to the ‘western’ stress, for others, quite different.

I will also mark the stressed vowel in the ‘western’ stress, when it’s different from the standard stress position. For many words, there’s little or no difference, and for others, there’s an obvious difference, as demonstrated with words ponekad sometimes and kolač cake (I have underlined the stressed vowels):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>standard</th>
<th>‘western’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ponekad</td>
<td>ponekad</td>
<td>ponekad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kolač</td>
<td>kolač</td>
<td>kolač</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, some people pronounce the words ponekad and kolač with the stress on the first syllable, and some others with the stress on the second syllable. You would never know it from the normal spelling, since stress is normally not marked.

Therefore, I marked the word ponekad and similar ones with two stress positions (that is, I have underlined two vowels). The first mark (from left) is always the standard position and the second mark (if indicated) the ‘western’ stress position.

    the first mark (if present):
    standard stress
    
    the second mark (if present):
    ‘western’ stress

pongekad

The word kolač and many others are marked in the same way. (Such markings are my invention. There are also standard stress symbols, but they are quite complicated and used only in specialized books. You can find more in Wikipedia and elsewhere.)

Bear in mind, if nothing is marked, the word is stressed on the first syllable. If there’s only one mark, practically everyone pronounces the stress on the same syllable.

There are a few words where the standard stress is not on the first syllable, but the ‘western’ stress is; one of them is the word for binoculars:

    standard: dalekozor
    ‘western’: dalekozor⁷⁺¹

For such words, I’ll underscore the standard stress position, and write in small superscript letters ‘W1’ after the word (i.e. ‘western’ stress on the 1st syllable), as
shown above.

A suggestion. I have to admit, the standard stress scheme is quite complicated, even in my watered-down version. Try learning the standard stress scheme only if you want to speak roughly as news presenters on Croatian Public TV, or you really want to imitate speech from the shaded area. Otherwise, don’t bother with it, and go for the ‘western’ scheme. You’ll sound roughly like someone from the unshaded regions, which is not bad if your main goal is to communicate. Keep in mind, stress is not marked in normal writing at all.

There are only couple of words that differ only by their stress, for example:

- frizer freezer
- frizer hairdresser

(Again, pay attention that both marks, for stress, and for i’s usually not pronounced are just my inventions: nobody uses them in writing.)
02 Simplest Sentences

The simplest sentences are of type Ana is sleeping or Ivan is running. Such sentences are in the present tense and in the 3rd person.

To make them in Croatian, you need the 3rd person present tense form or the verb (I’ll call it pres-3 for short).

(Verbs are words that mean an action or state, like listen, wait, eat, sit.)

Verbs are normally listed in Croatian dictionaries in the so-called infinitive form (inf for short). For most verbs, you just need to remove the ending -ti and you have the form you need now. For instance, let’s take these verbs right from a dictionary:

čitati read  plivati swim
kuhati cook  spavati sleep
pjevati sing  učiti learn, study
raditi work  voziti drive

It’s very easy to make simple sentences like the following:

Ana čita. Ana is reading.
Marko kuha. Marko is cooking.
Ivana spava. Ivana is sleeping.
Goran uči. Goran is studying.

Here one Croatian word (e.g. čita) really corresponds to two English words (e.g. is reading). Croatian present tense is just one word.

If you are new to learning languages, a warning: in very few instances you can just translate from English word-for-word and get a meaningful sentence in another language. For example, these two sentences in English have three words each and differ in only one word:

I am cooking.
I like cooking.

However, the matching sentences in Croatian have 1 word and 2 words respectively – and no words in common. Croatian, generally, uses less words than English in an average sentence.

If you’re now asking why the verb čitati has the first vowel underlined, if the default stress is on the first syllable anyway (e.g. voziti is stressed on the first syllable without any special mark), be patient: you will get the answer in the following chapters.

There are few verbs where you need to change the last vowel in the present tense, from a to i. One of them is:

trčati run  →  trči
If the *pres-3* form is not straightforward, I’ll list it after the infinitive form of a verb, in parentheses. A good Croatian dictionary should list it too:

ležati (leži) lie down, recline  trčati (trči) run

To help you remember all verbs where *pres-3* and other present tense forms are not simply derived by removing -ti from the *inf*, such present tense forms will be underlined with a blue line, and the *inf* forms will be printed on the right margin in pale blue. For example:

Ana trči. Ana is running.
Marko leži. Marko is lying.

There are more verbs where you have to remember the present form, but it’s not a simple change of a vowel; it again should be listed in a dictionary (you can call such verbs ‘irregular’). For such verbs, the *pres-3* form almost always ends in -e:

jesti (jede) eat  plakati (plače) cry
pisati (piše) write  plesati (pleše) dance *
piti (pije) drink  skakati (skače) jump

(Recall that in words like piše, ije is pronounced as two syllables, since it comes at the very end: pi-je.) Let’s put these forms to use:

Ana jede. Ana is eating.
Marko piše. Marko is writing.
Ivana pleše. Ivana is dancing.
Goran plače. Goran is crying.

Instead of names, you can use the following pronouns:

on he  ona she

For example:

Ona jede. She’s eating.
On plače. He’s crying.

You can even leave out the pronoun if it’s obvious who you’re talking about:

Plače. He/she is crying.

That’s fine, but how do you say *I’m eating* or *I’m cooking*? Such sentences are in the 1st person. Croatian does not use personal pronouns (*I, you...*) often, the preferred way is just to use a special verb form. (This is actually common in most languages: English, German and French obligatory pronoun is an exception, from the standpoint of the majority of languages in the world.)

It turns out that for almost all verbs, you just need to add an -m to the *pres-3* form to get the *pres-1* form you now need:

Čitam. I’m reading.
Kuham. I’m cooking.
Učim. I’m studying.

(This is also possible in English, but only colloquially, e.g. hope this helps. However, the sentences above are not considered colloquial at all in Croatian! Croatian simply uses pronouns only in specific circumstances, which will be described later.)

This works regardless of the verbs being ‘irregular’ or not:

Jedem. I’m eating.
Pišem. I’m writing.
Plešem. I’m dancing.
Pijem. I’m drinking.

Since pijem is derived from pije, the pronunciation of ije is the same as in pije – it’s pronounced clearly as two syllables: pi-jem. This holds to all similar verbs as well.

A Croatian dictionary could list either pres-3 forms or pres-1 forms for the ‘irregular’ verbs, but it’s easy to distinguish them, since they end in different letters (almost all pres-1 forms end in an -m: for just two irregular verbs they end in -u).

We can introduce two useful words to add information to such sentences (they are both adverbs):

još still
već already

We can put them in front of the verb to say that something is still ongoing or it has already started:

Ana već spava. Ana is already sleeping.
Goran još plače. Goran is still crying.

The adverb još, when used in this role, is often emphasized as još uvijek, giving it a bit stronger meaning:

Ana još uvijek pleše. Ana is still dancing.

This is a bit colloquial. It’s usually pronounced as u-vjek, since the ije does not appear at the very end (and so I marked it).

If you’re now asking how to say I write or Ana sleeps, there’s no such difference in Croatian: pišem means both I’m writing and I write.

If a verb has an irregular pres-3, please learn the inf as well, even if you don’t need it right now: you’ll need it a bit later, for the past and the future tense.

________

® In most of Serbia, and in the prevailing variant of Standard Serbian, most words that have -ije- or -je- in Croatian, have -e- instead, e.g. instead of pjevati, the verb is pevati. That’s called “Ekavian pronunciation” (the name is misleading – it’s not just a matter of pronunciation, since spelling follows the pronunciation).
However, forms like pjevati, called “Ijekavian” are also standard in Serbian (as another standard variant) and you can occasionally read articles written in “Ijekavian” in newspapers from Serbia. I will not mark all such words. In most cases, if you want to obtain them, just replace -ije- or -je- in Croatian with -e-. Exceptions will be marked: one of them are present forms of the verb piti, which are pijem, pije also in Serbia. You can find more about “Ekavian” in A9 Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin.

In most coastal areas of Croatia, but not in the very south (i.e. Dubrovnik area) most words that have -ije- or -je- in Standard Croatian, have -i- instead, e.g. instead of pjevati, the verb is pivati. That’s called “Ikavian pronunciation”. You will find it in casual writing, some novels, movies and pop songs.

Instead of kuhati, the form kuvati is used in Serbia, and in parts of Bosnia and Croatia (however, it’s not standard in Croatian).

In Serbia, meaning dance is usually expressed with the verb igrati which has other meanings (play) in both Croatia and Serbia.

• Something Possibly Interesting

English is a distant cousin to Croatian and related languages. This will mostly be of interest to language geeks. However, it can also help you remember things.

For example, the -m in the Croatian 1st person is related to the English I am — thousands of years ago, a long lost language which was the common ancestor of both languages had the -m in the first person form of some verbs. This consonant has survived literally thousands of years.

Russian is a much closer cousin. For example, Russian verb meaning write has inf писать, and the pres-3 пишет. If we would spell these words using Croatian characters, it would be p’isat’ (p’išet), which is almost identical to Croatian. However, the pres-1 is p’išu. Russian has overall a bit more complex forms of words when compared to Croatian.
• Exercise

Use the following verbs:

sjediti sit  zijevati yawn

and the verbs you have already learned, to fill in right verb forms and adverbs:

Goran ____________(a). Goran is yawning.

________________(b). I’m crying.

Ana ______(c) ______________(d). Ana is already sitting.

____(e) ____________(f). I’m still sleeping.

____(g) _________(h). She’s running.

____(i) ____ (j) __________(k). He’s already waiting.

Check answers here.
It’s nice to be able to say *Ana is reading* or *I’m cooking*, but it would be even better to be able to say *what* you are reading or cooking!

Croatian is a language with grammatical cases. It means that words change a bit when used in sentences. For instance, when you express *what* you are reading or even *whom* you’re waiting for – that’s called *object*. This ‘role’ requires a form of a noun that’s usually called *accusative case* or sometimes *the object case*. Since *accusative* is a long word, it’s often shortened to just A.

(*Nouns* are words standing for a more or less specific object, person or idea, something that can perform an action, e.g. *sister, cat*, or can be an object of an action, e.g. *you can eat a pizza*).

Not all nouns change in accusative in the same way. Some don’t change at all. A large group of nouns in Croatian end in -a; they all change that ending to -u in accusative. For instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>baka</td>
<td>grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jabuka</td>
<td>apple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juha</td>
<td>soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kava</td>
<td>coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knjiga</td>
<td>book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mama</td>
<td>Mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pjesma</td>
<td>song</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The default, ‘dictionary’ forms listed above are also considered a ‘grammatical case’ and are called *nominative* (just N for short).

We are now able to say:

**Ana čita knjigu.** *Ana is reading a book.*
**Kuham juh.** *I’m cooking soup.*
**Ivan pije kavu.** *Ivan is drinking coffee.*
**Jedem večeru.** *I’m eating supper.*
**Pijem vodu.** *I’m drinking water.*

*Warning.* English prefers using ‘light’ or ‘generic’ verbs like *make* in many circumstances, so you usually *make coffee, make dinner* and so on. Croatian has almost no such verbs, and you have to use always specific verbs – for example, *kuhati* cook if you prepare food or drink by cooking.
In sentences like **Ana čita knjigu**, the word **Ana** is called *subject*. So, the Croatian N case is sometimes called the *subject case*:

```
subject   object
↓          ↓
Ana   čita   knjigu.
N       A
```

In English, the word order is almost always *subject-verb-object*. It’s also the most common order in Croatian, but it’s not always so, as you’ll see later.

If you are now puzzled where the English *a* (in *a book*) got lost – it does not exist in Croatian, there’s no difference between *a book* and *the book* in Croatian. (I’ll show later how you can express *a* or *the* if you really need it.)

The majority of verbs require just objects in accusative. For instance:

- čekati *wait*
- gledati *watch*
- imati *have, possess*
- slušati *listen*
- tražiti *search, look for*
- trebati *need*

Let’s put them to use:

- **Ana gleda televiziju.** *Ana is watching TV.*
- **Ivan čeka baku.** *Ivan is waiting for his grandmother.*
- **Slušam pjesmu.** *I’m listening to a song.*
- **Goran traži knjigu.** *Goran is looking for the book.*

Unlike the English verb *have*, Croatian **imati** is a perfectly regular and simple verb:

- **Ivan ima knjigu.** *Ivan has a book.*

While in English, verbs *listen* and *wait* use prepositions *to* and *for* (you *wait for something*), in Croatian no such special words are needed, you just use nouns in accusative. The same goes for *tražiti*.

You could also see that in English we have *his grandmother* while in Croatian it’s just *baka* (in A). Words like *his, my, her* are less used in Croatian and are often implied. (English also implies possession in some circumstances: it’s enough to say *I’m at home* – it’s implied that you’re at your home, not at home that belongs to someone else. When it’s somebody else’s home, then you would say e.g. *I’m at your home.*)

This change of ending applies to loanwords (that is, words taken from other languages) as well:

- **Goran jede pizzu.** *Goran is eating a pizza.*

There are also a few words that must adapt in English as well, depending on their role: you cannot say “I’m listening to she”, but *I’m listening to her*. It’s just that in Croatian, basically all nouns must adapt.
The accusative change -a → -u applies to personal names as well:

Ivan čeka Anu. Ivan is waiting for Ana.
Goran sluša Ivanu. Goran is listening to Ivana.

Therefore, personal names in Croatian have many forms, as other nouns do, and some of these forms may coincide with other names – as you will later discover. However, there’s always the base, default form – e.g. Ana and Ivana.

Most personal names that end in -a in Croatian are female names. However, there are couple of male names that end in -a as well, e.g. Jakša, Luka, Nikola and Saša. They behave exactly the same:

Ana traži Luku. Ana is looking for Luka.

There are few Croatian female names that don’t end in -a: they don’t change at all, ever. Such names are e.g. Ines and Nives. For example:

Ivan čeka Ines. Ivan is waiting for Ines.

A more exhaustive list of various names, including male names in -a and female names not in -a, can be found in L1 Common Names.

(I’ll explain you how to use nouns not ending in -a, including masculine names like Ivan, as objects in the following chapters.)

Finally, I’ll explain how to ask what someone is doing (at the moment, or generally). While English has the special verb do, Croatian uses the verb raditi work in a generic sense. You should start such questions with the word što what:

Što Ana radi? What is Ana doing? (lit. ‘working’)
— Gleda televiziju. She’s watching TV.

As you can see, there’s nothing special about questions in Croatian: no special word order, no special rules. You just have to start them with the right question-word. I’ve also given the literal (lit.) meaning, in quotes; of course, it really means what is doing.

We can here answer only with a verb, no pronouns (e.g. ona she) are needed, since it’s clear who we’re talking about. Generally, Croatian prefers very short answers.

To ask directly what someone is doing, use the 2nd person form radiš:

Što radiš? What are you doing? (to a single person!)
— Čitam knjigu. I’m reading a book.

This form is used only when you ask a single person, someone you’re familiar with, your family member, co-worker, etc; for your superiors, people you don’t know personally, other forms are used (they will be explained later).

In many regions, šta is used colloquially instead of što, so you’ll very often read and hear šta radiš, etc. (try it with Google™).
One more remark: there are other languages out there that have grammatical cases, and call one of them *accusative*, e.g. Finnish, German, Greek, Latin and so on. The accusative case in all languages tends to be similar, but details can be different. If you know a lot how to use the accusative case in e.g. German, be aware that not all of it applies to Croatian.

* Instead of *kava*, a slightly different word *kafa* is common in most parts of Bosnia and Serbia. In Bosnia, the form *kahva* is used as well. Instead of *juha*, *supa* is common in these countries, and in some regions of Croatia as well.

Standard Serbian insists that the word for *TV* must be stressed as *televizija* (you will hear it on the Serbian Public TV); regardless of it, a great majority of speakers in Serbia uses the same stress in that word as in Croatia. However, you *will* occasionally hear *televizija* in parts of Croatia and Bosnia.

While many names are common in Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Serbia, there are some country-specific names. Actually, there are some names that are specific for a *part* of Croatia, and uncommon elsewhere – despite the total population of Croatia being about 4 millions.

The form *šta what* is considered standard in Serbia, Montenegro and most of Bosnia. It’s very common in Croatia (including the cities of Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, etc) but not standard. In Northwestern Croatia, many people colloquially use *kaj* for *what* (you can hear it in Zagreb too). In parts of the coast, especially islands and Istria, another word is often used colloquially for *what*: *ča*.

**Something Possibly Interesting**

If we would pay attention to tones in words, object forms of some words would be a bit more complicated to create. For instance, the noun *voda water* has the rising tone in the nominative case, but the falling tone in the accusative *vodu*. However, the noun *riba fish* has the falling tone in all forms. This is not a major issue, since many people in Croatia have no differences in tone, or have non-standard tones anyway, so we’re used various ‘accents’.

In Russian, this is a major issue. There are no tones in Russian, but the stress often moves in various forms of one word. For instance, Russian *water* is N *вода*, A *воду*. When written in Croatian spelling, it’s N *voda*, A *vodu* – which seems identical to Croatian, but there’s a catch: since the *o* in N is unstressed, it’s pronounced reduced, much closer to the *a* sound, while in A it’s stressed and pronounced like *o*! Russian pronunciation is more complex than Croatian.
• Exercise

Use the following nouns:

  banana  poruka  message

and the words you have already learned, to fill in right forms of nouns:

  Goran jede ______________(a). Goran is eating a banana.
  Ana piše ______________(b). Ana is writing a message.
  Ivan čeka ______________(c). Ivan is waiting for Ines.
  Josip traži ______________(d). Josip is looking for the book.
  Ona jede __________(e). She’s eating pizza.
  On pije ________(f). He’s drinking coffee.
  Jedem ______________(g). I’m eating an apple.

Next, complete the following sentences:

  ______(h) ______________(i) ______________(j). She’s reading a book.
  Ana ______________(k) ______________(l). Ana has a sister.
  ______________(m) ______________(n). I’m listening to a song.
  ______________(o) ______________(p). I’m reading a message.
  ______________(q) ______________(r). I’m waiting for the supper.
  ______________(s) ______________(t). I’m drinking water.

Check answers here.
04 No, Often, Probably and Again

We now know how to say Ana is watching TV, but how to say Ana isn't watching TV?

It is quite simple: just put a word ne” right before the verb. This is the default and main way to make negation in Croatian (in English, you can also put no right in front of a noun, e.g. I need no coffee, but it does not work in Croatian):

Ana ne gleda televiziju. Ana isn’t watching TV.

Ne trebam kavu. I don’t need coffee.

According to the Standard pronunciation, the word ne” is pronounced together with the verb that follows it, and for many verbs – but not for all – the ne” gets stressed instead of the verb. That almost never happens in the ‘western’ pronunciation, where the stress almost never moves in such circumstances. We could therefore write the above combination as ne-gleda.

If you want to follow the Standard stress scheme, how to find out if the stress moves to ne” or not? Just look if the verb has (in my markings!) any underline. This explains why I have underlined the first syllables of some verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard stress when ne” is before a verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ne + gleda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne + čita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne + razgovara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the ‘western’ scheme, which is much simpler, the stress doesn’t even move from gleda. It that scheme, it moves mostly from the very short verbs, like znati know, and there’s only few of them. In the city of Rijeka and the region around it, the stress usually doesn’t move, even from such short verbs.

The two dots (¨) after the ne” are just a reminder that this word must be placed always right before the verb, and that it gets pronounced together with the verb; they are just my markings, of course they are not normally written, please don’t write them when you write in Croatian.

The verb imati have behaves a bit specially: its present tense forms get always fused with ne” into nema, nemam, etc.:

Nemam čašu. I don’t have a glass.

Croatian has two words that correspond to English glass (to drink from, not what is used for windows) and cup, and they divide the world a bit differently:

čaša glass, (paper) cup (no handle)
šalica cup, mug (has a handle) ®

Basically, čaša is made of glass or some thin material (e.g. plastic, paper) and šalica
is heavy and has a handle.

Back to negative sentences: they can mean that something is not happening *right now* or it *never* happens. If you want to emphasize that something *never* happens, you should add the following adverb in the sentence – the most common place is before the *ne*” – but *without removing* the negation:

nikađa (a) *never* (use with negation!)

This is *different* than in English, where you have to remove negation if you use *never*. The word can appear as either *nikađa* or *nikađa*, there’s no difference in meaning and the shorter form is more common in everyday communication (there are many words in Croatian with this feature). For example:

Ana nikađa ne gleda televiziju. *Ana never watches TV.*
Nikađa ne pijem kavu. *I never drink coffee.*

There are more words like nikađa in Croatian: whenever any of them is used, the verb must be negated. Most of them start with ni-.

There’s another special adverb that emphasizes the negation:

**uopće** + negation *not... at all* ®

As in other Croatian words that have vowels without a consonant between, vowels are pronounced separately. Therefore, the word has three syllables: **u-op-će**. (Besides, the word is stressed on the first syllable in the Standard scheme, and on the second syllable in the ‘western’ scheme.) For example:

Goran uopće ne spava. *Goran isn’t sleeping at all.*

Furthermore, we can use the following combinations of adverbs and *ne*” to express that something is over or still didn’t begin:

još + negation *not... yet*
više + negation *not... anymore*

For example:

Goran još ne spava. *Goran isn’t sleeping yet.*
Više ne pijem kavu. *I don’t drink coffee anymore.*

(It’s *not obligatory* to put the words nikađa(a), uopće, još and više right before *ne*”, that’s just the most frequent position.)

It’s also useful to tell *how often* something happens. There are following useful words:

ćesto *often*  
obično *usually*  
ponekad *sometimes*  
rijetko *not very often*  

staľno *all the time*  
svaki dan *every day*  
uvijek *always*
Such words are often placed before the verb, and **svaki dan** is often found at the end of the sentence as well. Word order is quite free in Croatian and you can place many words as you like.

*Ana rijetko gleda televiziju.* Ana watches TV rarely.

*Ponekad pije kavu.* I drink coffee sometimes.

*Ivan pije kavu svaki dan.* Ivan drinks coffee every day.

There’s another useful word: **skoro** almost (it has other meanings as well). Used with **nikad** (a), it expresses almost never. However, you still have to use negation:

*Skoro nikad ne pije kavu.* I almost never drink coffee.

There are more useful words. For example when you say that someone is doing something, you could be perfectly sure, or just guess. That’s where these words come into play:

- **možda** maybe
- **očito** obviously
- **sigurno** for sure
- **vjerojatno** probably

Such words are again usually put before the verb. For example:

*Goran možda spava.* Goran is maybe sleeping.

*Ivan sigurno pije kavu.* Ivan is drinking coffee for sure.

There are couple of words to indicate that something repeats or happens for the first time:

- **opet** / **ponovo** / **ponovno** again
- **prvi put** for the first time

There’s really no difference among the three words meaning again. The word **opet** is the most frequent one in everyday life:

*Ana opet spava.* Ana is sleeping again.

*Goran prvi put čita knjigu.* Goran is reading a book for the first time.

You will sometimes hear and read **prvi puta**, e.g. in newspapers. (Some people think that form is not acceptable as standard, but it can be seen in publications issued by the Croatian government!) It’s basically the same variation as **nikad** vs. **nikada**.

If you are asked what you’re doing, and you aren’t doing anything in particular, you can answer with:

*Što radiš?* What are you doing?

— *Ništa.* Nothing.

If you want to use **ništa** nothing with a verb, the verb must be negated too:

*Ivan često ne radi ništa.* Ivan frequently does nothing. (lit. ‘isn’t doing nothing’)

This is again quite unlike English. In English, there’s at most one negation in a
sentence; in Croatian, it’s always either all negative – including the verb – or nothing. The following sentence negates the verb and has two additional negative words:

Ivan nikad ne radi ništa. Ivan never does anything. (lit. ‘doesn’t never do nothing’)

Such ‘multiple negations’ in Croatian are mandatory.

® Instead of šalica, šolja is used in Bosnia and Serbia. Instead of uopće, uopšte is used in Serbia and parts of Bosnia. Instead of vjerojatno, vjerovatno is common in Bosnia and Serbia, and colloquially in parts of Croatia.

• Something Possibly Interesting

The word ne” is negative. This is not a coincidence: the English word ultimately comes from Latin, and the prefix ne- in Latin meant negation; Croatian and Latin are (distant) cousins. This is another detail that can help you remember the Croatian word.

• Exercise

Fill in the words:

(a) ______________________(b), gledam ______________________(c). I’m not sleeping, I’m watching TV.

d) trebam __________________(e). I need coffee again.

(f) više ______________________(g). I don’t have a glass anymore.

Ivan ______________________(h) ne __________(i) televiziju. Ivan is not watching TV for sure.

(j) pijem ________(k). I drink coffee sometimes.

Check answers here.
05 Accusative Case

In the previous chapters you’ve learned how to use nouns that end in -a (in their dictionary form) as objects, that is, how to make their accusative (object) form (also called case). But what about other nouns?

First, there are general nouns that end in -o or -e. They usually don’t change at all in the accusative case, that is, they can be used as objects in their dictionary (or nominative) form. For instance:

- auto car
- jutro morning
- meso meat
- mlijeko milk
- nebo sky, skies
- more sea
- pismo letter
- pivo beer
- vino wine
- voće fruit, fruits

We can (and must!) use them as objects without any change:

- Pijem pivo. I’m drinking beer.
- Ana gleda more. Ana is watching the sea.
- Goran pije vino. Goran is drinking wine.
- Jedem voće. I’m eating fruits.
- Ivan pije mlijeko. Ivan is drinking milk.
- Pišem pismo. I’m writing a letter.
- Ivana vozi auto. Ivana is driving a car.

There are two useful and similar verbs:

- vidjeti (vidi) (can) see
- voljeti (voli) like, love

These two verbs change from -jeti in inf to -i in pres-3. That happens for almost all verbs in -jeti, and can be considered regular, therefore, I usually won’t list pres-3 forms for such verbs. Some examples:

- Vidim more. I (can) see the sea.
- Ana voli pivo. Ana likes beer.

Then, there are nouns that end in a consonant (nouns that end in -i or -u are very rare in Croatian). Their behavior depends on what they stand for. If they stand for anything except people or animals, they also don’t change in accusative:

- brod ship
- ručak lunch, dinner
- film movie
- sok juice
- kruh bread
- vlak train

Let’s introduce two more useful verbs:

- poznávati (poznaje) know (someone)
- rezati (reže) cut
Croatian has a special verb for *knowing people* (and cities), like French *connaître*. (Also, this is not an error, the verb *poznavati* has a different stress in infinitive and present. Such shifts specific for individual verbs is what makes stress complex in Croatian.)

Again, we can use the nouns listed above as objects without any change:

**Ana gleda film.** *Ana is watching a movie.*
**Režem kruh.** *I’m cutting bread.*
**Goran pije sok.** *Goran is drinking juice.*
**Ivana kuha ručak.** *Ivana is cooking lunch.*
**Čekam vlak.** *I’m waiting for a train.*

However, nouns that end in a consonant, but *stand for people or animals* do change in accusative. You must *add* an -a to them. This applies to e.g. following nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun (masculine)</th>
<th>Noun (feminine)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brat brother</td>
<td>konj horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čovjek man/human</td>
<td>muž husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>galeb (sea)gull</td>
<td>sin son</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let’s put them to use:

**Ana gleda konja.** *Ana is watching a horse.*
**Ivan čeka brata.** *Ivan is waiting for his brother.*
**Goran vidi galeb.** *Goran sees a seagull.*

The accusative ending applies to names as well:

**Ana čeka Gorana.** *Ana is waiting for Goran.*
**Josip poznaje Ivana.** *Josip knows Ivan.*

This applies to names having more than one word (e.g. with the last name) and to *non-native names as well* – each word in the (masculine) name has to get an -a:

**Čekamo Ivana Horvata.** *We’re waiting for Ivan Horvat.*
**Gledam Brada Pitta.** *I’m watching Brad Pitt.*

When you hear or read a sentence where names are expected to be in the accusative case, you have to be able to work them back to the default (nominative) forms. You simply cannot understand Croatian without understanding cases – that’s why I have introduced them from the start:

**Čekam Ivana.** *I’m waiting for Ivan.* *(Ivan = male)*
**Čekam Ivanu.** *I’m waiting for Ivana.* *(Ivana = female)*

When endings are added to certain nouns ending in a consonant, they don’t get added to their nominative form, but to a usually slightly different form. One example is *pas dog*. In the accusative case, it looks like this:

**Ana gleda psa.** *Ana is watching a dog.*
The accusative ending is *not* added to *pas*, but to a slightly shorter form (*ps*). We can call that form the ‘*case-base*’ and list it after such nouns, in parentheses:

- nominative
- ‘*case-base***’
- magarac (*magarc*-)*donkey*
- pas (*ps*-)*dog*
- vrabac (*vrpac*-)*sparrow*

The *case-base* form has usually just the last syllable shortened, but sometimes there’s a consonant alternation as well. (This form is also called *oblique stem*, or just *stem*; I’ve invented a simple name for it.)

A few nouns have two possible forms of their *case-base*. However, the difference is only in spelling, as in sequences -*dc*- and -*tc*-, only -*c*-; is pronounced. Common ones are:

- sudac (*sudc- / suc*-) *judge*
- svetac (*svetc- / svec*-)*saint* *

A few male names that end in either -*o* or -*e* behave as if they end in a consonant and have a specific *case-base*, usually just without the last vowel (j is added if the word ends in -*io*):

- Darko (*Dark-*) *Dario* (*Darij*)
- Hrvoje (*Hrvoj-*) *Mario* (*Marij*)
- Marko (*Mark-*) *Silvio* (*Silvij*)

For example:

**Ana čeka Marka.** *Ana is waiting for Marko.*

**Josip ne poznaje Hrvoja.** *Josip doesn’t know Hrvoje.*

The j is sometimes carried even to the nominative (that is, dictionary) form: according to the official statistics, there are 32708 *Mario*’s and 4066 *Marijo*’s in Croatia.

Finally, there are common male names that change as if they end in -*a*. They end in -*e* or -*o*, but that’s just in the nominative case. All other forms are like for nouns in -*a*. Such names are historically *nicknames*. For example, *Ante* is a nickname for *Antun* (corresponding to English *Anthony*), but it’s used as an official name as well (there are 35457 *Ante*’s in Croatia).

Two more names that behave like that are *Ivo* and *Kruno*. For a more exhaustive list, check L1 *Common Names*.

To mark such strange names, I’ll use (*A*-*u*) as a reminder that they change like any other nouns in -*a*, i.e. get an -*u* in the accusative case. For example:
Čekam Antu. I’m waiting for Ante.
Ne poznavjem Krunu. I don’t know Kruno.

Now you know how to make accusative case of almost all nouns! We can summarize the rules we have learned in a table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type (N)</th>
<th>A (object)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns in -a</td>
<td>-a → -u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouns in -o or -e</td>
<td>no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouns in a consonant (not people or animals)</td>
<td>no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouns in a consonant (people or animals)</td>
<td>add -a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(These rules are not completely precise, but will work for almost all nouns; I will give you the exact rules a bit later.)

Finally, let me explain how you can ask about objects. Start questions with the following question words:

- **kog(a)** who (as an object)
- **što** what

For example, you can ask what Ana is watching, or who Goran is waiting for. There’s a very important point: the answers must be again in the accusative case, as they are still considered objects:

- Što Ana gleda? What is Ana watching?
  — Film. A movie. (A!)
  — Konja. A horse. (A!)

- Što Ivan pije? What is Ivan drinking?
  — Kavu. Coffee. (A!)

Koga Goran čeka? Who is Goran waiting for?
— Anu. Ana. (A!)

Again, you’ll often hear and read the colloquial word šta instead of što. I’ll explain details of who and what questions later, in 28 Asking Who and What.

You can, of course, answer with just:

— Ne znam. I don’t know.

The verb **znati** know is one of a very few verbs which shift their stress to ne even in the ‘western’ scheme, since its pres-3 has only one syllable (zna). I’ve indicated it with an underline under ne. (People feel it’s pronounced differently than other ne + verb combinations, so you’ll see sometimes non-standard spellings as one word i.e. neznam.)
In Serbia, where “Ekavian” forms prevail, verbs like *vidjeti* have *inf videti*, but the *pres-3* is just *vidi*.

Instead of *kruh*, *hljeb* is used in most of Bosnia, and in the “Ekavian” form *hleb* in Serbia; instead of *vlak*, *voz* is common in these countries.

Standard Serbian spelling allows only *case-bases suc*-* and *svec*-*.

In most of Serbia, *Kruno* has forms like *Marko*, so it would rather be *ne pøznajem Kruna*, but the name is really rare in Serbia.

The form *šta* is Standard in Serbia and most of Bosnia.

**Something Possibly Interesting**

If you think this system is weird and complicated, you might be interested that Russian has the same system. For instance, Russian words for *brother* and *horse* are identical to Croatian ones, they are just spelled with Cyrillic letters as *брат* and *конь* (Russian spells Croatian *nj* as *н* + special ‘softening’ character *ь*). In the accusative case, they get the same ending, -а, since they belong to people and animals.

And then the Russian complications begin. You would expect *A коньа*, but Russian spells the combination *ь* + *а* as a special character: *я*. So it’s rather *коња*, despite that being really just adding an *а*, exactly like in Croatian...

It’s not all: the stress in the Russian word for *horse* shifts to the added -а, making the first *о* unstressed and pronounced similar to *а*, despite the spelling. But the stress in *брат* doesn’t shift: you have to learn by heart which nouns shift the stress... so Croatian is not that bad after all.

Of course, this Russian stress shift corresponds to a change of tone in the Standard Croatian word for *horse* (falling in N, rising in A), but we can ignore tones in Croatian.

**Examples**

*Putujem* *I’m traveling*, a pop song from *Yammat* – a Croatian band, despite its name – uses a really simple grammar in most verses:

*Svaka priča ima kraj*   *Every story has an end*
*Svaki kamen zavičaj*   *Every stone a homeland*
*More ili planina*   *A sea or a mountain*  
(Saša Ljiljak)

The words *svaka* and *svaki* are different forms of the adjective *svaki* *every, each*. Adjectives are quite adaptive in Croatian; they will be introduced in 10 Gender.

The word *zavičaj* (which roughly translates as *homeland*, but the meaning is more
local) is in A, which is equal to N for it, according to the rules above. The following verse has a negation:

Putujem i ne mislim na tebe  I’m travelling and I’m not thinking about you

The construction na tebe is the preposition na on + pronoun in A; we literally say ‘think on something-in-A’. Use of pronouns with prepositions will be introduced later, in 34 Stressed Pronouns.

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

• Exercise

Fill in the sentences below, using the following nouns:

čaj  tea  nož  knife

Pijem ________ (a). I’m drinking tea.
Čekamo ____________ (b). We’re waiting for Damir.
Trebam ________ (c). I need a knife.
_______(d) poznajem ____________ (e). I don’t know Dario.
Čujem ________________ (f). I can hear a donkey.
Čekam ________________ (g). I’m waiting for Kruno.
Damir ________________ (h) čita ________________ (i). Damir is reading the letter again.
Čitam ________________ (j). I’m reading a book.
Igor ne ________ (k) ________ (l). Igor doesn’t drink beer.

Complete the following questions:

_______(m) Ana ________ (n)? What is Ana reading?
_______(o) ________ (p) Goran? What is Goran doing?

Check answers here.
06 Destinations

With the knowledge of the accusative case and a few verbs, we can talk about travel and express destinations. The useful verbs are:

- *dolaziti* come, arrive
- *ići (ide)* go
- *putovati (putuje)* travel
- *odlaziti* leave

There are couple of nouns that we can use with verbs to demonstrate use of destinations:

- *Amerika* America
- *bolnica* hospital
- *hotel* hotel
- *Hrvatska* Croatia
- *grad* city
- *kafić* cafe bar
- *kino* cinema
- *park* park
- *restoran* restaurant
- *škola* school
- *Split* (a city)
- *Zagreb* (a city)

To express destinations, we have to put the preposition *u* in front of the noun in accusative, and then we can make sentences like these:

- *Ana odlazi u Ameriku.* Ana is leaving for America.
- *Ivan putuje u Hrvatsku.* Ivan is traveling to Croatia.
- *Idem u Zagreb.* I’m going to Zagreb.
- *Goran ide u bolnicu.* Goran is going to hospital.

We again see the two dots, introduced with *ne*; their meaning is the same (the word is pronounced with the following word, stress moves to it in some words, for some speakers.).

However, I won’t specially mark words and forms where stress moves to *u*, as it would be too complicated; besides, this feature doesn’t completely overlap with the standard stress area. You can just leave the stress on the noun, but be prepared to hear the stress moved from some speakers (e.g. *u vodu = u vodu.*)

While English *leave* usually uses *for* instead of *to*, Croatian verbs use the same prepositions.

The expression *ide u školu* can mean somebody is a school student, i.e. ‘goes to school’:

- *Goran ide u školu.* Goran goes to school.

However, if you go to an *island* or *mountain*, you must use the preposition *na* instead of *u*. There are names of bigger Croatian islands:

- *Brač*  *Korčula*  *Pag*
- *Cres*  *Krk*  *Rab*
- *Hvar*  *Lošinj*  *Vis*
For instance:

**Ana putuje na Krk.** *Ana is traveling to the island of Krk.*

**Odlazim na Korčulu.** *I’m leaving for the island of Korčula.*

Of course, this applies to the following nouns as well:

- **otok** island
- **planina** mountain

The preposition *na* is used for all destinations that are perceived as *surfaces*, or when the destination is *on top* — it’s usually translated as *onto* or *on*: you would use it for *roofs, tabletops, walls*, etc.

Next, it would be great if we could say not just *I’m*... but also *we’re*! It’s quite simple: Croatian again prefers not to use personal pronouns (*I, we*...) but a special verb form, *1st person plural present* (for short, *pres-1pl*). It’s a form quite simple to make, just add an *-o* to the *pres-1* form (one that ends in a *-m*):

- **idem** *I’m going* → **idemo** *we’re going*

For instance:

- **Putujemo na Lošinj.** *We’re traveling to the island of Lošinj.*
- **Odlazimo u Ameriku.** *We’re leaving for America.*

The preposition *na* also applies to the following popular destinations:

- **plaža** beach
- **trg** (city) square

For example:

- **Idemo na plažu.** *We’re going to the beach.*

The preposition *na* *must* be used with the *cardinal points* when used as directions:

- **sjever** north
- **istok** east
- **zapad** west
- **jug** south

For example:

- **Putujemo na jug.** *We’re traveling south.*

The preposition *na* is used with many *metaphorical* destinations (or rather, activities):

- **na fakultet** to university
- **na praznike** to holidays
- **na more** to the seaside
- **na put** on a trip
- **na posao** to work
- **na selo** to countryside

(I’ve listed nouns in the phrases above in the accusative case; the form *praznike* is in accusative plural, a form that will be explained later.) For instance:

- **Ana ide na posao.** *Ana is going to work.*
- **Idemo na more.** *We’re going to the seaside.*
(Some of these destinations can be used also with u¨ – it makes their meaning literal, e.g. u more means literally into the sea, to swim or dive, throwing something into the sea, etc. Nouns that require the na¨ are marked in the Core Dictionary.)

The metaphorical na¨ includes all activities usually done in company, such as meals, meetings and sport events:

- na čaj to have a tea
- na kavu to have a coffee
- na koncert to a concert
- na nogomet to a football game
- na odmor to vacation/break

When you say na kavu, it requires motion to a destination (where you will have a coffee or more than one), not just drinking coffee wherever you are. The ‘destination’ na nogomet means both playing football or just watching a game (this applies to other sports and public performances as well).

The same holds for celebrations and parties:

- na feštu to a local feast/party
- na rođendan to a birthday party
- na zabavu to a party

For instance:

Idem na kavu. I’m going to have a coffee.
Idemo na sastanak. We’re going to a meeting.

If it’s a bit confusing what ‘activities usually done in company’ are, they are simply not literally places. Consider this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>not true places</th>
<th>true places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>concert</td>
<td>concert hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dinner</td>
<td>restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>football</td>
<td>playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meeting</td>
<td>meeting room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>movie premiere</td>
<td>cinema</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You’ll later see that the preposition na¨ can be regarded as the default preposition in Croatian.

Finally, the ‘destination’ na sunce usually doesn’t imply taking a spaceship, but rather going to an open space, to get exposed to the sunlight:

- na sunce in the sun
- na zrak to (fresh) air

Pay attention: everything I’ve explained here are destinations, and not locations.
If you say idemo na plažu, you aren’t describing where the action takes place, but where you’re heading to (and you may get there or not). To help you distinguish locations vs destinations, consider the following sentences:

I’m running to the gym.
(You aren’t in the gym, just want to get there.)

I’m running in the gym.
(You are in the gym, and running there.)

If you feel that the word to is a better fit in English, it’s definitely a destination. Confusingly, English uses on in e.g. going on vacation, when you’re actually not on vacation yet – but Croatian treats this case as a destination too. While English sometimes uses the same grammar for both, Croatian strongly distinguishes destinations from locations.

So, what about locations? You will have to wait a while, since we have to learn another noun form to express them. Destinations come cheap, if you know how to make the accusative case.

The sentences above can be made more precise if we add one of the following useful adverbs of time:

sad(a) now  prekosutra day after tomorrow
danas today  sljedeće godine next year
sutra tomorrow  sljedeći mjesec next month
uskoro soon  sljedeći tjedan next week

(As in English, you can talk about events in future and still use the present tense.) Such words and expressions are often used to begin sentence with:

Sutra idem na sastanak. I’m going to a meeting tomorrow.
Danas idemo u kino. We’re going to cinema today.
Sljedeće godine putujemo na Hvar. We’re traveling to the island of Hvar next year.

Finally, there are the following often used generic directions:

blizu close, near  ovamo here
daleko far away  natrag / nazad back
dalje further, away  van outside
unutra inside  tamo / onamo there
For example:

**Ana uskoro dolazi ovamo.** *Ana is coming here soon.*

To *ask where to* something or someone goes/travels, just start a question with:

**kamo where... to**

Nothing else except this word is needed, there’s no change of word order:

**Kamo Ana ide?** *Where is Ana going to?*
— Na posao. *To work.*
— Ide na posao. *She’s going to work.*

It’s normal to answer with just a destination, leaving the verb out; you can include the verb if you want to emphasize it. In colloquial communication, especially in some regions, you will hear e.g. *gdje* or *kuda* instead of *kamo* in such questions.®

As you can see, the accusative case is *not* used only for objects. In fact, almost all cases in Croatian have more than one use. If you find somewhere on the Internet a table where each case has one use, and even better, where each case “answers to questions”, bear in mind that explains only a small part of the real use. I will introduce other uses of accusative gradually.

® The following words or phrases are usually not used Serbia and most of Bosnia; words or phrases pointed by arrows are used instead:

- kava → kafa
- kino → bioskop
- nogomet → fudbal
- sljedeći tjedan → sljedeće nedjelje / sljedeće sedmice

In Bosnia, in parts where Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) live, *kahva* is used for *coffee* as well.

The word *napolje* is heard in parts of Croatia as well.

The stress moves to prepositions like *u*” and *na” – only with specific nouns! – in Bosnia, parts of Croatia (Dalmatia and Slavonia), and western parts of Serbia (not including Belgrade) and western parts of Montenegro.

Instead of *sutra*, a slightly different form, *sjutra*, is used in Montenegro.

In Bosnia and Serbia, *kuda* is usually used to ask for destinations, *kamo* is not used. Also, especially in speech, *gdje* (in Serbia *gde*) is frequently used in these countries.

• **Something Possibly Interesting**

Using prepositions with the accusative case to indicate where something is *moving to* is not uncommon: German uses the same system.
You’ve maybe noticed that the ending -mo for the 1st person plural looks a lot like what’s used in Spanish and Portuguese, and the same as in Italian. All these languages descend from Latin, which had a lot of similarities with Croatian (and other Slavic languages). For example, we’re eating is edimus in Latin.

It’s puzzling that some languages that are not considered related to Croatian have similar forms: for example, in Finnish, we’re eating is syömme, where -mme is the ending.

• Examples

This billboard in Zagreb advertises bus lines to various seaside towns and cities, with a line Idemo na more! We’re going to the seaside!

• Exercise

Fill in the right forms of nouns, adverbs and other words:

Idemo u ________(a). We’re going to the cinema.
Danas ne idemo na ____________(b). We’re not going to the beach today.
________(c) putujemo u ______________(d). We’re traveling to Dubrovnik tomorrow.
________(e) ________(f) idem na ________(g). I’m not going to work tomorrow.

Fill in the right preposition (either u or na) and noun:

Ivan odlazi ________(h) ________(i). Ivan is leaving for a beer.
Putujemo ______(j) Split. We’re traveling to Split.
Idemo ______(k) kafic. We’re going to a cafe bar.
Ana vozi ______(l) ______________(m). Ana is driving north.
Goran ide ______(n) ______________(o). Goran is going to a birthday party.
Idem ______(p) ______________(q). I’m going to lunch.
Idemo ____ (r) __________________ (s). *We’re going to the park.*

Check answers [here](#).
07 Verbs with Obligatory Objects

Verbs like čitati read have an optional object: you can either just read or read something. What you actually do is the same in both cases: it’s just not specified what you read in the first case (is it a book, newspaper, contract...)

However, there are many verbs where it’s not so, where you can either do something to somebody (or something), or you can do it to yourself. For instance, you can shave somebody else, or you can shave yourself. If you just ‘shave’, Croatian treats would such sentences as ambiguous! Croatian requires an object with such verbs.

This is an instance where something is implied in English – if you just shave, it’s implied you do it to yourself – but not in Croatian. (There are few English verbs that have a similar property, e.g. enjoy: you can either enjoy something or yourself – but you have to express always what you enjoy.)

Some verbs like that are:

- brijati (brije) shave
- prati (pere) wash
- buditi waken
- svlačiti take off (clothes)
- oblačiti put on (clothes)
- vraćati return

With verbs brijati (brije) and prati (pere) you can shave someone or wash something (or someone, e.g. a child):

Ana pere majicu. Ana is washing a shirt.  
Ana pere lice. Ana is washing her face.

(Notice it’s just lice face: it’s always implied that a body part belongs to the subject.)

However, if you shave or wash yourself, you must use a special word – the ‘particle’ se. With these two verbs, it means ’him/herself’:

Ana se pere. Ana is washing ‘herself’.  
Brijem se. I’m shaving.

Instead of gender specific himself and herself, Croatian has only one word: se. However, the word a bit special, as it cannot be freely moved around, it must be the second word in a sentence, if possible! There are more words like that in Croatian. I will mark them with a small 2 (²), to indicate their strange behavior (e.g. se²). This mark is similar to another mark I’ve already introduced:

° — glued to the following word
² — fixed to a position in a sentence

Such second-position words are usually pronounced together with the word preceding it – there’s no pause between Ana and se² in the example above — but are always considered separate words and spelled as separate words.
Sometimes two words are counted as ‘one unit’ and occupy the first position together. One example is ne¨ + verb:

**Ne brijem**1 se². I’m not shaving. **brijati**

This applies to all words preceded by a word ‘glued’ to it (e.g. u¨, na¨) — they together count as ‘one unit’. (Words marked with ¨ have a fancy name – *proclitics*, and ones marked with ² are also called *enclitics*.)

This can also happen if you have two words that are frequently used together, e.g. **skoro nikad** almost never – they together occupy the first position:

**Skoro nikad**1 se² ne brijem. I almost never shave. **brijati**

However, you will see sometimes that even such groups are split. Such ‘strict placement’ occurs mainly in formal writing and formal speech (e.g. on the news service of the public TV and radio):

**Skoro**1 se² nikad ne brijem. (seen sometimes in writing) **brijati**

Similar verbs are **obračiti** and **svlačiti**. They correspond to two verbs in English. First, you can either put on (or off) something:

**Ana obrači majicu. Ana is putting a shirt on.**

However, when these verbs get a person (or an animal, Croatian treats them more or less always in the same manner) as their object, they get mean *dressing* (or *undressing*) someone:

**Ana obrači Gorana. Ana is dressing Goran.**

Finally, if you want to express that Ana is dressing *herself*, you must use a se², as she does it on her own, to herself, not to anyone else:

**Ana se obrači. Ana is dressing.**

The verb **buditi** is usually translated as *wake (up)*, but it does not have a meaning *be awake*, only *stop sleeping*. You can *wake someone up*, and in Croatian it sounds like this:

**Ana budi Gorana. Ana is waking Goran up.**

But if wake up on your own, you must use a se²:

**Ana se budi. Ana is waking up.**

Finally, the verb **vraćati** means that you either return *something*, or you return *yourself*, i.e. *come back*. You must use a se² for the second meaning:

**Ana vraća knjigu. Ana returning a book.**

**Ana se vraća. Ana is coming back.**

Next, there are some verbs that must be used with an object, but when used with a se², their meaning shifts a bit. Often used ones are:
When they are used with people as objects, they have the meanings I listed above:

**Ana zabavlja Gorana.** Ana is entertaining Goran.

**Zovem Ivana.** I’m calling Ivan.

But with a **se**², their meaning changes:

**Ana se zabavlja.** Ana is having fun.

**Zovem se Goran.** ‘I call myself Goran.’ = My name is Goran.

The second sentence, **zvati (zove)** + **se**² is the normal way to say in Croatian what your name is. Please pay attention that the name is in nominative, no changes to it are made. If you know some French, Italian or Spanish, such sentences should be very familiar to you:

(French)  
Il s’appelle Goran.  
lit. ‘He calls himself Goran.’

(Italian)  
Lui **si** chiama Goran.  
‘He calls himself Goran.’

(Spanish)  
Él **se** llama Goran.  
On se **zove** Goran.

In all four languages, the verbs themselves mean **call**, but the meaning shifts when they’re used with the so-called ‘reflexive’ pronoun (underlined in the examples above). (Also, Spanish has the verb **divertir** that’s very similar to zabavlji.) Unfortunately, English doesn’t use this pattern at all.

We can list these meanings in a nice table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>used with</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>čitati</td>
<td>(A)</td>
<td>read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prati (pere)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>wash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zabavlji</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>entertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>se</strong>²</td>
<td>have fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zvati (zove)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>se</strong>² + N</td>
<td>... name is ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first verb has a non-mandatory object; the second one mandatory, and the last two shift meaning.

Actually, if you consider again the verb **return**, there was also a small change in meaning: it’s not the same to **return something** and to **come back**! There are more such verbs where the meaning changes when they are used without an object. Consider the following:

**Goran opens the window.**

**The window opens.**
While in the first sentence, Goran does something *to the window*, in the second sentence, the meaning is *completely shifted*, as if the window is a subject that ‘does’ something. For all similar verbs (e.g. *break, warm, close* etc.) you *have* to use a *se*² in the sentences of the second type:

Goran *otvara prozor*. Goran opens the window.

Prozor *se otvara*. The window opens.

Another common example:

*Ana is cooking the soup.*

*The soup is cooking, the meat is roasting.*

Again, in the second sentence, obviously the soup is not standing by the stove: English verbs here are used in the alternative meaning. When these sentences are translated to Croatian, the *se*² is mandatory:

*Ana kuha juhu.*

*Juha se kuha, meso se peče.*

(After a comma in Croatian, word-counting restarts: both *se*²’s are in the second position.)

This use of *se*² is common when the action described in a sentence is not performed by the subject (e.g. *juha* above) but by someone else, or just happens "on its own" (e.g. somebody just left the soup to cook). (Also, this explains why *se*² is used when someone wakes up on their own.)

This can be summed up as a simple rule: *if in English meaning of a verb shifts when used without an object, when you use the verb without an object in Croatian, you have to use a *se*².*

If you know any Spanish, everything so far most likely sounded very familiar to you. There are three important differences, though: while in Spanish the ‘reflexive’ pronoun can be either *me, te* or *se*, in Croatian it’s *always se*².

The second difference is that *se*² must go to a fixed place in a sentence in Croatian.

The third difference is that in Spanish, the ‘reflexive’ pronoun is often spelled with the verb when it appears after it (e.g. *lavarse = ‘wash themselves’*), the same holds in Italian (e.g. *lavarsi*) and some other languages. However, the *se*² is *always a separate word in Croatian*.

These are the basics of *se*². I’ll explain details a bit later, in 64 *The Door Opens: Fun with se*².

Finally, there’s a rather strange verb that must use an object or a *se*²:

*igrati* play

You can use it with nouns (as objects, of course, put to accusative) meaning games (or sports):
For example:

Ana igra šah. *Ana plays chess.*
Ivan igra košarku. *Ivan plays basketball.*

However, if someone does not play some sport, or a game, but plays on their own (e.g. with toys...) you *must* use a se²:

Goran se igra. *Goran is playing.*

The verb igrati is *not* used for "playing" musical instruments. For that, another verb is used, svirati. This is the same difference as Spanish *jugar* vs. *tocar*.

There are more verbs that use the se². Some of them, like nadati hope have always a se² with them, so they are usually listed as nadati se². Another such verb is smijati (smije) se² *laugh ®*. You will discover more such verbs as you go.

* You’ll later see an example where Standard Serbian spells some second-position words not as separate words.

Instead of juha, the word supa is used in Serbia, most parts of Bosnia, and in some regions of Croatia as well.

In the “Ekavian” pronunciation, which completely dominates in Serbia, the verb smijati (smije) se² has the unexpected form smejati (smeje) se²; there are more verbs which behave like that; this alternation is *not* predictable – such verbs must be learnt by heart, if you want to know both pronunciations.

• *Something Possibly Interesting*

In many grammars, verbs that have the particle se² are called *reflexive*. I’m not using that term, since it’s not a property of the verb, it just has the ‘reflexive’ particle with it. More precisely, the whole construction could be called ‘reflexive’. However, in many languages, there are uses of such particle (or pronoun) that are not ‘reflexive’ at all. You can check examples in Wikipedia ([Reflexive verb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reflexive_verb)) and you’ll see how Croatian examples nicely correspond to Spanish, French, Italian, German and sometimes Danish ones. Unfortunately (for learners) English grammar is quite different in this aspect.

Words behaving like se² – fixed to the second place in the sentence – are called *second position clitics*. Besides Slavic languages, they appear in a number of Iranian, Native American, Native Australian languages, and some others. Some older languages also had them, including Latin, Ancient Greek, Sanskrit and Hittite. Languages with *second position clitics* are typically quite flexible and have no articles
(words like *the*), as observed by linguist Željko Bošković.

**Examples**

*Smijem se* *I laugh* is a pop song by Jinx, a pop band from Zagreb (note a very non-Croatian name). The song uses a lot of grammar we haven’t covered yet, but these lines are simple:

- I kada letim, kada sanjam
- Kad se dižem, kada padam

*And when I fly, when I dream*
*When I get up, when I fall*

The verb *dizati* (*diže*) means *lift, raise* (something), but when you *lift, raise yourself*, i.e. *get up*, you have to use a *se²*, like in the last line. The word *kad(a)* *when* has an optional vowel, and both versions are used in the verses above. We’ll learn more about this word in the next chapter.

The chorus has some grammar which will be covered later, but it’s not too complicated to understand:

- Samo smijem se i smiješ se
- i sve je isto kao prije
- zamišljam [da ničega se]
- više ne sjećam

*I just laugh and you laugh*
*and everything is the same as before*
*I imagine [I don’t]*
*remember anything anymore*

(Gordan Muratović)

We see again *se²*, but in the first line we have actually two statements joined by *i˝*, so two second positions. In the third line, the *da* and everything after it is a kind of sentence-within-a-sentence, so-called *clause*, and the word *da* holds the 1st position in it; the word *se²* would normally come right after, but here the word *ničega* is put to the 2nd position, likely for rhythmic reasons. I have put the clause into square brackets. Clauses will be explained in later chapters.

The word *ničega* is *nothing*, but in a case we haven’t explained yet: while most verbs use objects in A, some, like *sjećati se² remem*ber want objects in other cases – this verb demands the so-called *genitive* case, which will be introduced later.

Note the *više* + negation: *not anymore*.

You can find various performances on YouTube™. Check the [performance on the Croatian public TV show *A strana A Side*](#) and the [original clip](#) by Jinx.

Note that the song uses the Standard stress.
• Exercise

Use the following verbs:
  grijati (grije) warm    hladiti cool

To fill sentences below:

Ivan igra ______________(a). Ivan is playing football.

Juha ___(b) ______(c). The soup is cooling.

_______(d) ___(e) Ivana. My name is Ivana.

____(f) ______________(g) ____ (h). I’m not having fun.

Dario ___(i) ______(j) svaki dan. Dario shaves every day.

________(k) ____ (l). I’m playing (a game).

Check answers here.
08 Weather and General Statements

Let’s take a look how you can express general statements in Croatian, such as *it’s cold* in English. Such statements are often used for weather conditions.

In English, such sentences use ‘dummy’ *it* and the 3rd person present of the verb *to be* (*is*), and that’s mostly shortened to *it’s*.

In Croatian, *no pronouns* can be used in such sentences, only the 3rd pers. present of the Croatian version of the verb *to be*. It’s quite irregular:

- **biti** (*je² +*) *be*

I have written a plus sign after *je* to indicate that other present tense forms cannot be obtained by the usual rules – the forms of this verb must be learned, as in English. (For example, the 1st person form isn’t "jem" but *sam*.)

There are useful words (called *adverbs*) that can be used with *je²* in such expressions:

- **dosadno** *boring*  
  **rano** *early*
- **hladno** *cold*  
  **sunčano** *sunny*
- **kasno** *late*  
  **toplo** *warm*
- **lijepo** *beautiful*  
  **vedro** *clear*
- **mračno** *dark*  
  **vruće** *hot*
- **oblačno** *cloudy*  
  **zabavno** *entertaining*

There’s another important point: as you can probably see from the mark *²*, the word *je²* behaves like *se²* and wants to be at the second place:

- **Hladno je.** *It’s cold.*
- **Danas je hladno.** *It’s cold today.*
- **Hladno je danas.** *(the same meaning)*

Word order in Croatian is quite free – as you can see, words *hladno* and *danas* can be exchanged – but it does not apply to some words like *se²* and *je²* that *must* go to a predefined place in a sentence! (Therefore, I have introduced a special mark for such words in 7 *Verbs with Obligatory Objects*.)

The adverb *vedro* is opposite of *oblačno* – it means the skies are clear.

There are a couple of useful words (*adverbs of intensity*) that can be placed before adverbs above, and a *prefix* (not a separate word, but something that gets fused with the word following it):

- **malo** *a bit*  
  **dosta** *quite*
- **jako** *very* (not formal)  
  **stvarno** *really*
- **vrlo** *very* (more formal)  
  **pre-** *too*
- **prilično** *considerably*
They must not be placed after the adverb, and are usually placed right before it. For example:

Danas je **jako** hladno. *It’s very cold today.*  
Jako je hladno danas. (the same, less common order)  
Prevrće je. *It’s too hot.*

The adverb **vrlo** is a bit formal, it’s mostly used in formal writing, it’s less often heard in spoken communication.

In the Standard stress scheme, when **pre**- is added to a word, the stress shifts to it; in the ‘western’ scheme, it doesn’t: therefore **prevruće**. You will sometimes see the prefix **pre** spelled as a separate word: that’s not standard.

There are two more *adverbs of intensity* often used in colloquial, spoken communication:

**strašno**  
**užasno**  
*terribly*

For example:

**Užasno je dosadno.** *It’s terribly boring.*

What if you want to say *it’s not cold*? The rule is a bit different than for ordinary verbs: you should add **ni**- to the front of **je²**. The resulting word – **nije** – is *not* restricted to the second position and is, in fact, usually placed before the adverb:

**Nije hladno.** *It isn’t cold.*  
**Uopće nije hladno.** *It isn’t cold at all.*  
**Danas nije hladno.** *It isn’t cold today.*  
**Nije hladno danas.** (the same meaning)

There are useful words to express *where* your statement applies:

**ovdje** here  
**svugdje** everywhere  
**tamo** there  
**u**nutra inside  
**vani** outside

In everyday, colloquial communication, **ovdje** and **tu** are used in the same meaning. These words are often put to the front of sentences:

**Ovdje je toplo.** *It’s warm here.*  
**Vani je oblačno.** *It’s cloudy outside.*

If you want to say *it’s raining* or *it’s snowing*, normally you should use the following verb:

**padati** fall

And these nouns:
**kiša** rain  **snijeg** snow

Therefore, you actually say (in Croatian) the rain is falling or the snow is falling. Words can go in any order, and it’s actually more common to put the verb at front:

**Pada kiša.** ‘Rain is falling.’ = It’s raining.
**Kiša pada.** (the same meaning)

**Pada snijeg.** ‘Snow is falling.’ = It’s snowing.
**Snijeg pada.** (the same meaning)

(Don’t forget ije in snijeg is pronounced by most people in Croatia as just je, according to the normal pronunciation rules outlined before.)

There’s a similar expression about wind, using the noun **vjetar** (vjetr-) wind and the following verb:

**puhati** (puše) blow

Again, words can go in any order, but the verb comes often at front:

**Puše vjetar.** The wind is blowing.

**Vjetar puše.** (the same meaning)

When it’s obvious what you’re talking about, you can use just a verb:

**Pada.** ‘It’s falling.’ (either rain or snow).

**Puše.** The wind is blowing.

You can use adverbs of intensity (except for **vrlo**) to express intensity of rain, snow and wind:

**Malo pada.** ‘It’s falling a bit.’ (either rain or snow).

**Jako puše.** The wind is blowing strong.

The adverb **jako** with expressions for rain, wind and snow also corresponds to English heavily. You can use the same adverbs (but not **vrlo**) to express intensity of any action where it makes sense:

**Jako volim čokoladu.** I ‘strongly’ love chocolate.

In Croatian, you can usually use the present tense to talk about future events (like in English we’re leaving tomorrow). However, with weather expressions, you cannot use the present tense in such a way (it’s hard to do it in English as well). However, you can use adverbs of frequency to talk about things that happen anytime:

**Često puše vjetar.** The wind blows often.

If you want to ask about the weather, you should use:

**Kakvo je vrijeme?** What’s the weather like?
— **Hladno.** Cold.

It can be answered with just an adverb, as above. Such short comments are normal
in casual, even in formal communication. It’s also possible to comment on any such sentence:

**Stvarno je vruće...** *It’s really hot...*
— **Nije jako.** lit. *‘Not very.’ = It isn’t very hot.*

In Croatian, short comments contain only the difference to what the comment is on. For example, since it’s a comment on **vruće**, it’s not necessary to repeat that word.

If you want to ask a more generic questions, that can be answered with *‘boring’*, you should ask just:

**Kako je?** *How is it?*

® In Bosnia and Serbia, the adverb **mnogo** is used in meaning *very* as well; for instance, you can hear and read **mnogo je hladno** in these countries.

Instead of **vani, napolju** prevails in Bosnia and Serbia, and is also occasionally heard in parts of Croatia. Besides **puhati** (**puše**), **duvati** is also used in Serbia.

**• Something Possibly Interesting**

You’ll maybe come across two Croatian verbs which work exactly like the English verbs **rain** and **snow**: **kišiti** and **snijegiti**. However, these verbs are very rare in speech and casual writing, including the Internet: **pada kiša** is some 20 times more common than **kiši**, according to Google™.

**• Exercise**

Fill in the missing words:

**Danas** (a) ______(b) ______________(c). *It’s very cloudy today.*

**Ovdje** ______(d) ______(e). *It’s raining here.*

_______(f) ___(g) dosadno. *It’s boring there.*

_______________(h) je __________(i). *It’s terribly hot.*

_______(j) ________(k) snijeg. *It’s snowing heavily.*

Check answers [here](#).
09 Numbers and Time

Let’s introduce numbers in Croatian. They are actually a diverse group of words, some of them behave like adjectives, others like nouns, most like adverbs. I will show just the simplest use, how to express 59 or some time in a day.

The numbers 0-9 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>nula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>jedan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>dva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>tri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>četiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>šest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>sedam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>osam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>devet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number 0 is never pronounced like the letter o, unlike in English. Numbers 10-19 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>deset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>jedanaest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>dvanaest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>trinaest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>četrinaest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>petnaest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>šesnaest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>sedamnaest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>osamnaest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>devetnaest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They are basically just 1-9 + -naest, with četiri shortened a bit. Most people pronounce just an e in sequences -ae- in the words listed above.

Then, there are special words for 20, 30, etc, made in a similar pattern (but note the stress marks):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>dvadeset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>trideset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>četrdeset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>pedeset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>šezdeset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>sedamdeset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>osamdeset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>devedeset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To express numbers like 35, use the following construction with i" and:

35 trideset i pet

It’s often shortened so these two numbers just get ‘glued together’:

35 tridesetpet

We can use those numbers to tell time. If you want to say that something happens or will happen at some time, use just u" + number that specifies the hour:

Vlak dolazi u tri. The train comes at three o’clock.®

You can, as in English, use the present tense for things that will happen in the near future, especially if their time is known.

To specify where a train/bus/airplane is going to, use the preposition za" + A
(specifying the destination) just after the noun meaning train/bus/airplane:

**Vlak za Rijeku odlazi u pet.** *The train to Rijeka leaves at five o’clock.*

**Autobus za Split odlazi u sedam.** *The bus to Split leaves at seven o’clock.*

If you want to use more precise time, you can specify minutes:

**Vlak dolazi u tri i dvadeset.** *The train arrives at 3:20.*

Officially, Croatian uses 24-hour system, that is, 3 pm is 15:00. In schedules, and *radno vrijeme* *working hours*, time is usually shown as **15:20** or **15.20**, sometimes with appended `h`. Sometimes, in handwriting, time is written as **1520**, that is, with minutes in superscript:

Colloquially, people would just use *tri 3* even without telling is it in the morning or afternoon.

To ask what the time is, use the following expression. It’s normal in Croatian to give a quite short answer:

**Koliko je sati?** *What’s the time?* (lit. ‘How many hours is it?’)
— **Tri i dvadeset.** *It’s 20 minutes past three.*
— **Šest.** *Six o’clock.*

Such *short, basic answers or short comments* are very common in speech, and I will explain them regularly. They are *not* impolite.

The word **koliko** is also frequently pronounced with stress on the first syllable (*koliko*).

The word **skoro** can be used before any time (or more generally, any *measure*). For example:

**Koliko je sati?** *What’s the time?*
— **Skoro pet.** *Almost five.*

(It’s interesting that Standard Croatian prefers another word, **gotovo**, instead of **skoro** which completely prevails in speech and casual writing!)

It’s, of course, possible to ask **when** something will happen; to ask, just put the following word to beginning of a sentence, nothing else is needed:

**kad(a) when**
For example (you should always include a preposition when you answer such questions):

Kada dolazi vlak za Osijek? When does the train to Osijek arrive?
— U četiri i dvadeset. At 20 minutes past four.

There are two common adverbs you can use with time expressions:

- tek not earlier than, only
- već already

The adverbs relate to expectations: tek is having more time than one would expect, while već is having less time than one would expect (i.e. already). For example:

Vlak dolazi već u dva. The train arrives at two o’clock already.
Vlak dolazi tek u osam. The train arrives not sooner than at eight o’clock.

These two words normally cannot be placed after the words standing for time (e.g. u dva).

If you don’t know the precise time, you can use the preposition oko instead of u:

Vlak dolazi oko dva. The train arrives around two o’clock.

A short answer to the previous question could be:
— Oko dva. Around two o’clock.

If you want to emphasize that some time is exact, add točno exactly before the usual expression:

Vlak dolazi točno u tri. The train arrives at exactly 3 o’clock.

There are words for noon and midnight:

- podne noon
- ponoć midnight

Again, use u + A to specify something happening at that time (for both words A = N):

Autobus odlazi u podne. The bus leaves at noon.

You can simply say:

Ponoć je. It’s midnight.
Sad je podne. It’s noon.
Točno je podne. It’s exactly noon.

Of course, the word sad(a) is optional. The word točno cannot be right before the time here, since they don’t make a closely connected expression, so the word je occupies the second position. You cannot use any personal pronouns in such sentences; in fact, podne serves as the subject.

What if you want to tell it’s almost midnight, or already midnight? Again the word
je² will come between two words:

**Skoro je ponoć. It’s almost midnight.**

**Već je ponoć. It’s already midnight.** (not earlier)

**Tek je podne. It’s only noon.** (not later)

As you can see, već here really means you have *less time available* (you lost track of time, and expected it’s only 11 or so). The same happens when it’s used with time references in the future, e.g. već u dva at 2 o’clock already – you expected it leaves later, you have *less time available* than you expected.

Of course, the same holds if you use pet 5 instead of ponoć, etc.

Colloquially, time is often expressed in *halves*:

**Brod dolazi u tri i pol. The ship comes at half past three.** (‘three and a half’)

(In colloquial speech, there are several quite different ways to express time by halves and quarters, and there are different ways according to region; see 58 *Colloquial and Formal*).

Here are *days of week* in Croatian:

- **ponedjeljak (ponedjeljk-)** *Monday*
- **utorak (utork-)** *Tuesday*
- **srijeda** *Wednesday*
- **četvrtak (četvrtk-)** *Thursday*
- **petak (petk-)** *Friday*
- **subota** *Saturday*
- **nedjelja** *Sunday*

The week always starts on Monday. Days of week are normal nouns in Croatian, they are not always capitalized as in English. (As other nouns, they change according to their role, by means of case endings!)

We can simply say:

**Danas je srijeda. Today is Wednesday.**

If you want to say that something happens or will happen on a weekday, use again u¨ + A:

**U srijedu se vraćamo u Zagreb. We’re going back to Zagreb on Wednesday.**

**Kada Ana odlazi u Split? When is Ana leaving for Split?**

— **U subotu. On Saturday.**

This quite familiar word can also be used:

**vikend weekend**

If something is going to happen *on/over the weekend*, use za¨ + vikend:

**Idemo na Brač za vikend. We’re going to the island of Brač over the weekend.**
Finally, if you’re curious how to say e.g. *the train is leaving in 5 minutes*, a small disappointment: it requires some word forms (that, is *cases*) I haven’t introduced yet. We still don’t know how to say *three apples*, actually – it will be explained in 30 *Three Beers: Less than 5 Things* – but I can give you a preview for *minutes* and *hours*:

**Vlak odlazi za... The train is leaving in...**

- jednu minuću 1 minute
- dvije minute 2 minutes
- tri minute 3 minutes
- pet minuta 5 minutes
- deset minuta 10 minutes
- jedan sat 1 hour
- dva sata 2 hours
- tri sata 3 hours
- pet sati 5 hours
- pola sata half an hour

Please don’t draw too many generalizations from these examples, as you’ll see later that the word *sata* (*hour*) behaves a bit specially. Relative references to future time will be explained in 49 *For 7 Hours: Definite Periods*, but you have to cover the ground in between first. And I’ll introduce an important feature dividing the words *minute* and *hour* right in the next chapter.

*® In Serbia and often in Bosnia, a slightly different word *tačno* is used. Instead of *vlak*, *voz* is common in these countries.*

**• Exercise**

Complete the following sentences:

**Ana se vraća (a) ______(b). Ana is coming back at four o’clock.**

**Autobus (c) Zadar odlazi sutra (d) ______(e). The bus to Zadar is leaving tomorrow at one o’clock.**

**Vlak dolazi (f) ______(g) i ______(h). The train arrives at 7:12.**

**_______(i) ____(j) ______(k). It’s almost noon.**

Check answers [here](#).
10 Gender

In many languages, including Croatian, each noun is assigned a gender. This is a slightly misleading term – it simply means what forms of other words you must use whenever you refer to a noun.

For example, in English, when referring to a noun, you must use either he, she or it, depending on the noun, but there’s no difference for most other words.

In German, you must use not only different pronouns, but also different articles (der, die, das) and you have to adapt adjectives (kleiner, kleine, kleines) in some situations.

In Spanish, you have to use different pronouns, different articles (el, la) and different forms of adjectives (rojo, roja).

Since there are three different forms of pronouns in English, and three different forms of articles in German, we can say that English and German have three genders (in singular, there’s no difference in plural). There are two different forms of articles and adjectives in Spanish, therefore Spanish has two genders.

There are four genders in Croatian, but the difference between two of them is very small (and there’s no difference in plural). The gender in Croatian is similar to gender in Spanish: it’s usually assigned according to the last letter of a noun. For instance, kuća house is ‘feminine’ (since it ends in -a) in the same way as Spanish casa!

If you are familiar only with genders in English, this might be a bit surprising. Consider genders simply the way nouns are grouped. Houses are not feminine in real world. The gender that kuća house and sestra sister belong to is called ‘feminine’ simply because a lot of words for really feminine beings (e.g. for woman, sister, daughter) happen to belong to it.

It’s straightforward to tell gender of a noun for almost all nouns in Croatian. The rules are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun ends in</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>some exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-a</td>
<td>feminine (f)</td>
<td>tata m Dad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. riba fish</td>
<td>Luka m (name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-o or -e</td>
<td>neuter (n)</td>
<td>auto m car ®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. pivo beer</td>
<td>Marko m (name)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consonant</td>
<td>masculine (m)</td>
<td>kost f bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. stol table ®</td>
<td>noć f night</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But there are four genders, right? Well, for masculine nouns there’s an additional division. It will be important a bit later.

(In case you’re surprised that one gender is called neuter – that’s a fairly standard
name for a gender that’s neither male nor female.)

There are exceptions – e.g. names Luka and Marko look as if feminine and neuter; in fact, both are masculine, and frequent male names. All personal names (for people and animals) are either masculine or feminine (names ending in -o are typically masculine).

Another exception – the noun tata – is actually masculine, it means Dad.

It’s actually only important to remember (and indicate) gender for exceptional nouns, and there are only 50-100 such nouns used in everyday life. For example:

- **most bridge** — masculine as expected, no need to indicate gender
- **kost f bone** — feminine, contrary to the common rules, so we must indicate its gender (f)

The biggest group of nouns that have unexpected gender are feminine nouns not ending in -a. Almost all of them end in a consonant. Common ones are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mas/heim</th>
<th>plaz/t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bol f pain ®</td>
<td>noct f night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bolest f disease</td>
<td>obitelj f (close) family ®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jesen f fall, autumn</td>
<td>ponoć f midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kost f bone</td>
<td>riječ f word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kriv f bone</td>
<td>sol f salt ®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ljubav f love</td>
<td>večer f evening ®</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To help you with nouns that have unexpected gender, they will be underlined with a bluish line, and their gender will be printed on the right margin. (If more that one hint appears on the right margin, they will be separated with a vertical line.) For example:

**Vidim kr.** I see blood.  
**Vozim auto.** I’m driving a car.

Gender of words for people normally matches their natural sex (there are some exceptions, though). Consequently, many terms represented by only one noun in English have two nouns in Croatian: one for male and one for female (the same holds in Romance languages like French, Italian or Spanish):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>friend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>ami amie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>amigo amiga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>prijatelj prijateljica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Croatian, main words that must adapt to noun gender are adjectives – words that indicate properties like big, red. In Croatian, adjectives also include words like my
and Ivan’s. They all must adapt to noun gender and case.

So, what forms of adjectives do we need to use in each gender? In simple sentences like the house is big, nominative forms of adjectives are used, and they are very simple:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>adj. N</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>velika riba big fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>-o (some -e)</td>
<td>veliko jezero big lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masculine</td>
<td>optionally -i</td>
<td>velik(i) stol big table</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You probably notice that there are two possible endings for the neuter gender. Most adjectives use -o; adjectives that need -e will be shown a bit later. Here’s a list of often used adjectives:

brz fast       poznat well-known
čist clean     pun full
dubok deep     slab weak
dug long       skup expensive
gotov ready, done spor slow
jak strong     star old
jeftin cheap   širok wide
lijep nice, beautiful suh dry
mali small, little  velik big
mlad young     visok high, tall
nov new         zdrav healthy, in good health

We can use them to assemble sentences like these:

**Riba je velika.** The fish is big.
**Velika riba jede kruh.** The big fish is eating bread.
**Sunce nije jakoz.** The sun isn’t strong.
**Jezero je duboko.** The lake is deep.
**Ana je zdravaz.** Ana is healthy.
**Restoran nije skup.** The restaurant isn’t expensive.
**Visoka je.** She’s tall.

You can see that adjectives got an -o regardless of nouns having the final -o or -e: it’s only gender that matters, and both jezero and sunce are neuter.

In Croatian (like in other Slavic and Romance languages) adjectives always adapt to the noun, even if they are not right next to the noun. In German, adjectives in sentences like The fish is big don’t adapt. That’s one detail where Croatian requires words to change and German doesn’t. This makes pronouns mostly redundant, and consequently not used, as in the last sentence, where ona she is implied by the form of the adjective. Pay attention that in Croatian, kuća house and pizza are also she,
so it could be a statement about a house!

It’s possible to put the adjective first in sentences "X is Y", which emphasizes it:

**Duboko je jezero.** The lake is deep. (really deep)

One more detail is still not answered: adjectives have an *optional* -i in the masculine gender. It’s not used when you use adjectives on their own, but it’s usually used when an adjective is placed before a noun:

**Hrast je star.** The oak is old.

**Stari hrast još raste.** The old oak is still growing.

We have here used the verb **rasti** (raste) *grow*; the verb is not used to *grow something* (i.e. *cultivate*).

Some adjectives (e.g. **mali** *small, little*) have always the -i in masculine, regardless where they’re used, and they’re listed so. Its feminine form is **mala** and so on.

The adjective **gotov** is used to express that something is prepared or ready, e.g.:

**Ručak je gotov.** The dinner is ready.

The **adverbs of intensity** are also used with adjectives, and must be placed right before them (or fused, in case of pre-):

**Riba je jako velika.** The fish is very big.

**Jezero jeosta duboko.** The lake is quite deep.

**Restoran nije preskup.** The restaurant isn’t too expensive.

**Sunce je stvarno jako.** The sun is really strong.

**Vlak je strašno spor.** The train is terribly slow. (colloq.)

The adverb of intensity **jako** is exactly the same as the neuter form of the adjective **jak** *strong*, but its meaning is not equal. More about that in the next chapter.

---

**Don’t forget: nouns and adjectives really *don’t have the same endings*. And you should always keep in mind that there are couple of nouns having unexpected genders (from their endings, at least):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tata je zdrav.</td>
<td><em>Dad is healthy.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noć je duga.</td>
<td><em>The night is long.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## In southern parts of Croatia (i.e. in Dalmatia) and parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 
*auto* *car* is very often neuter in colloquial speech, so you’ll sometimes read and hear *novo auto*.

The noun **stol** *table* has the form *sto* (**stol-**) in Serbia and most of Bosnia, but it’s still masculine. Consequently, it’s **velik(i) sto** in Serbia.

The noun **bol** *pain* is almost always masculine in Serbia, and is often understood as
masculine in Bosnia as well.

Instead of *obitelj*, words *familija* and *porodica* are common in most of Bosnia and Serbia, and in some parts of Croatia.

The noun *sol f salt* has the form *so (sol-)* in Serbia and most of Bosnia; its gender and case endings are the same.

The noun *večer f evening* has the form *veče (večer- f)* in Serbia and often in Bosnia, with an additional twist: it’s considered *neuter* in the nominative case (since it ends in -e), and *feminine whenever any ending is attached to it* (as indicated by an f after its case-base)! It changes like other feminine nouns not ending in -a.

Instead of *suh, suv* is used in Serbia, and parts of Bosnia and Croatia (it’s non-standard in Croatia).

### • Something Possibly Interesting

Some people think everything in a language serves some purpose. There has to be some benefit from gender, from case marked by endings, and so on.

However, I don’t think so. There was maybe a purpose once for many features, but now we are just left with relics. For instance, why would the word *noć night* be feminine? We know it’s inherited from very ancient times, since many related languages have a similar word, and it’s usually feminine: German *Nacht*, Latin *nox*, Greek νύξ *nýx*, Albanian *natë*, Lithuanian *naktis* etc. Therefore, the matching word was almost certainly also feminine in the common ancestor of all these languages. But we have no idea why it was feminine at all. Many things in languages are *just so*, and we don’t know why.

In a case you will read a grammar published in Croatia, names of genders in Croatian are *muški rod* (masc.), *ženski rod* (fem.) and *srednji rod* (neut.); for some unknown reason, they are always listed in that order. Unfortunately, Croatian textbooks and grammars written for general population always mention only three genders...

It’s interesting that some Croatian style/grammar manuals (i.e. books and websites suggesting what is “correct”) suggest that *bol*, when meaning *physical pain*, must be masculine. This advice is *ignored by virtually everyone*, including government websites, textbooks, newspapers, scientific papers, etc. This is just in case you find such an advice somewhere: just ignore it.

A small remark: Croatian nouns ending in -a, regardless of gender, are also called *a-nouns*; feminine nouns not ending in -a are also called *i-nouns*.
• Examples

This list of side dishes from a small restaurant in Zagreb contains a number of adjectives:

As you can see, all items are translated to English. Interesting ones are:

zelena salata literally means *green salad* — we don’t have a special noun for *lettuce*, this phrase is used instead. Since *salata* is feminine (it ends in -a) the adjective *zelen green* must go to the feminine form.

ljuta mljevena paprika — again, *paprika* is feminine by the usual rule, so both adjectives before it get an -a. It’s interesting that the adjective *ljut* means both *angry* and *hot* (spice). We don’t use words related to heat to describe how spicy something is!

svježi kupus is literally *fresh cabbage*; the adjective is usually used to distinguish it from the fermented cabbage, i.e. *sauerkraut* (*kiseli kupus*). The adjective *svjež fresh* here got at -i before a masculine noun, which is, strictly speaking, not mandatory, but extremely common.

kiseli krastavci is literally *sour cucumbers*, the noun is here in plural, which will be described later (however, this noun simply gets an -i, as the adjective before it).

urnebes (ljuti/blagi) is likely a specialty of the restaurant. The noun means roughly *mayhem, pandemonium*; the adjectives after it are still attached to the noun, so both – the second one means *mild* – get that -i. Although adjectives normally precede nouns, you will see them after nouns once a while, especially in menus.

ajvar is a condiment made of baked red peppers, common in Balkan cuisine. Also, *kajmak* is not simply *cream*, but something specific for Turkish-influenced regions, all the way to Central Asia and Mongolia (check the [Wikipedia entry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kajmak)).
Exercise

Fill in the sentences below, using right forms of adjectives, and adverbs of intensity, where needed:

Soba je __________(a). The room is big.
Hotel je __________(b). The hotel is full.
Svjetlo je __________(c). The light is weak.
Restoran je __________(d) __________(e). The restaurant is really expensive.
Knjiga je __________(f). The book is well-known.
Jezero je __________(g). The lake is deep.
Riječ je __________(h). The word is long.
Čaša je __________(i). The glass is full.
Plaža je __________(j) __________(k). The beach is very nice.
Doručak je __________(l). The breakfast is ready.
Zima je __________(m). The winter is long.
Pivo je __________(n). The beer is cheap.

Check answers here.
11 Colors, More Adjectives and Adverbs

Words for colors are adjectives as well. The main color adjectives in Croatian are:

- **bijel** white
- **crn** black
- **crven** red
- **ljubičast** violet
- **narančast** orange
- **plavi** blue
- **siv** gray
- **smeđ** brown
- **zelen** green
- **žut** yellow

For example:

**Jabuka je crvena.** The apple is red.
**List je zelen.** The leaf is green.

The adjective **smeđ** is one of adjectives that get an -e in neuter instead of the usual -o:

**Oko je smeđe.** The eye is brown.

There’s a **simple but effective rule** to determine which adjectives get an -e: ones that end in a Croatian-specific letter, that is, a letter that’s not pronounced like in English or even does not exist in English. Beside **smeđ**, often used adjectives that get an -e are:

- **loš** bad
- **vruć** hot

(You’ll encounter more such adjectives as you go.)

If you want to say that something is e.g. *dark green*, put **tamno**- to the front of the color adjective – the result is one, long word. Likewise, **light** + color is expressed with **svjetlo**-:

- **Majica je tamnocrvena.** The shirt is dark red.
- **Auto je svjetlozelen.** The car is light green.

Two color adjectives have a specific meaning with some nouns, quite different from usage in English:

- **plava kosa** blond hair
- **crno vino** red wine

Literally, in Croatian, wines can be ‘black’, and blond-haired people have ‘blue’ hair. (If you want to know why, the adjective **plavi** meant *pale* thousand years ago.)

There’s another adjective for "color" that’s frequently used in Croatian:

- **šaren** multicolored, motley

It doesn’t really translate into English: it’s used when in English you would describe something having colored stripes or many colors, especially bright, live colors:
Majica je šarena. The shirt is multicolored. (has bright colors)

There are two adjectives for colors that are used colloquially. Both have a special behavior – they don’t change their form at all, neither in plural, nor in gender, nor in cases. They have only one form. Such words are called indeclinable (indecl. for short). They are:

- lila pale violet colloquial & indeclinable
- roza pink ®

(The colloqual adjective for pink exists also as a normal adjective rozi.)

With colors and some similar adjectives, you can use the following adverbs that stress completeness:

- potpuno completely, fully
- sasvim

The adverb potpuno is much more common in speech. For example:

Soba je potpuno bijela. The room is completely white.

You can also combine colors: the first one is always in neuter N, and the second one changes; they are usually spelled with a hyphen between:

- crno-bijeli televizor black-and-white TV set
- crno-bijela majica black-and-white T-shirt
- crveno-plava zastava red-and-blue flag

Some adjectives have a slightly different form in the masculine nominative (which is the dictionary form) and whenever anything is attached to them (e.g. when they get an -a for the feminine gender).

For instance, the adjective dobar good has the feminine form dobra, that is dobr + a. Other forms that have any ending are also formed as dobr + ending.

In the same way as for some nouns, can say that dobr- is the case-base of the adjective dobar and list it together with the dictionary form. For most adjectives their case-base is the same as their masculine form, so we list it only when it’s needed. A good Croatian dictionary should list it too (or something equivalent to it, e.g. the feminine form).

Often used adjectives that have a specific case-base are:

- dobar (dobr-) good
- gladan (gladn-) hungry
- hladan (hladn-) cold
- mokar (mokr-) wet
- mračan (mračn-) dark
- opasan (opasn-) dangerous
- prazan (prazn-) empty
- sladak (slatk-) sweet
- sretan (sretn-) happy ®
- strašan (strašn-) terrible
- taman (tamn-) dark
- tužan (tužn-) sad
- umoran (umorn-) tired
- važan (važn-) important
You see that two adjectives have meaning dark. The adjective mračan (mračn-) means not well-lit, or gloomy (e.g. movie), while taman (tamn-) means something painted in a dark paint, or having a dark color (e.g. hair). The ‘case-base’ usually looks like nominative masculine form without the last a, but sometimes there are other kinds of alternations:

boleston (bolesn-) sick   topao (topl-) warm

Warning. Some books give a rough rule that -a- is always lost, whenever anything is added. This is true for most adjectives with more than one syllable – but not for all. Also, it’s not the complete rule, as you can see from additional consonant changes that sometimes apply.

Let’s put the adjectives above to use:

Ivana je žedna. Ivana is thirsty.
Ivan je žedan. Ivan is thirsty.

As I have already explained, adjectives usually get an -i before masculine nouns, especially colloquially; but it doesn’t happen with all adjectives, e.g. dobar (dobr-) good is almost always used without -i:

On je dobar prijatelj. He’s a good friend.

Compare this with:

On je stari prijatelj. He’s an old friend.

Other adjectives with a specific case-base are often used without -i before masculine nouns as well.

The following adjectives are used a bit differently than in English:

deko (debel-) thick   mastan (masn-) fat
lagan light(weight), ‘easy’ nizak (nisk-) low
kratak (kratk-) short težak (tešk-) heavy, ‘hard’

Croatian uses težak heavy and lagan light in the literal sense:

Kamen je težak. The stone is heavy.
Kutija je lagana. The box is light.

Croatian also uses these two adverbs to indicate difficulty, in a quite different fashion than in English (the word dost is here just to practice adverbs a bit):

Knjiga je dost teška. The book is quite ‘heavy’. (= hard)
Problem je lagan. The problem is ‘light’. (= easy)

Next, the adjective nizak (nisk-) low is used to specify low height of things in Croatian:
Polica je niska. *The shelf is low.*

Unlike English, it’s also used for short people (who are ‘low’ in Croatian):

Ana je niska. *Ana is ‘low’. (= short)*

The adjective kratak (*kratk-*) *short* is used in Croatian only to describe movies, bridges, roads, pieces of wood, etc.

In a similar fashion, books and people can be debeo (*debel-*) *thick*:


Ivana je debela. *Ivana is ‘thick’. (= fat, plump)*

Furthermore, Croatian has two adjectives corresponding to English *free*:

- besplatan (*besplatn-*) *free* (of charge)
- slobodan (*slobodn-*) *free* (of restrictions), *unoccupied*

You would use the first adjective only when something is offered without payment, e.g. a free sample, free show etc., and the other adjective in all other circumstances. This is basically the same difference as German *kostenlos* vs. *frei*, or Spanish *gratuito* vs. *libre*.

You will notice that neuter forms of adjectives are often used as adverbs, i.e. words that modify verbs and other adjectives. For example, the adjective spor *slow* in the neuter form sporo means *slow* (before a neuter noun, or when describing it) or *slowly* when used without a noun:

Ana vozi sporo. *Ana drives slowly.*

Many adjectives are used like that, and it usually corresponds to English -ly, e.g. užasno is the neuter form of *terrible*, but also stands for English *terribly*.

However, some adjectives when used as adverbs *change meaning*. They are best remembered as separate words. The most often used ones are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>adverb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jak</td>
<td>jako very / very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pun</td>
<td>puno a lot *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For instance, the first sentence contains an adjective, but the others contain adverbs of intensity:

Vino je jako. *The wine is strong.* (about vino *wine* = a noun)

Jako je vruće. *It’s very hot.* (about vruće *hot*)

Auto je jako brz. *The car is very fast.* (about brz *fast*)

Goran jako voli čokoladu. *Goran likes chocolate very much.* (about the verb)

When used with another adverb or adjective, jako corresponds to English *very* (e.g. *very hot*); with a verb, it corresponds to *very much.*
There’s one more useful, but very colloquial word, mostly used by younger people. It can be used as an adjective and as an adverb of intensity with another adjective or a verb. (Its use with verbs is very colloquial!) When used as an adjective, it’s indeclinable:

\[\text{super (colloq.)} \begin{array}{c}
\text{adj. indecl. great, excellent, superb} \\
\text{adv. super, very}
\end{array}\]

For instance, you’ll hear and sometimes read:

**Imam super majicu.** (colloq.) *I have a great shirt.*
**Auto je super brz.** (colloq.) *The car is super fast.*
**Ana super pjeva.** (colloq.) *Ana sings great.*

Finally, there’s one very useful word used for comparisons:

\[\text{kao like, as}\]

While English has two words used to compare against something else, Croatian has one multipurpose word. It’s used like this:

**More je hladno kao led.** *The sea is cold as ice.*

The word kao doesn’t affect the case of the following word, and never changes case etc. In speech, it’s often shortened to ko, spelled also as k’o.

© Instead of *narančast*, a slightly different adjective is used in Serbia: *narandžast*. It’s also common in Bosnia. Besides smeđ, there’s another, but indeclinable adjective for *brown*, used in Bosnia and Serbia: *braon*. It completely prevails in Serbia, where smeđ is really only used to describe eyes, hair and color of pets.

Instead of *roza*, a slightly different word *roze* is common in Serbia and Bosnia. It’s very uncommon in the regularized form *rozi* there.

Instead of *sretan* (*sretn-*), a slightly different word *srećan* (*srećn-*) is used in Serbia and most of Bosnia.

Some style guides in Serbia discourage using *puno* as an adverb and advise *mnogo* is used instead.
• Examples

This sign at the parking lot near an entrance to the Krka National Park says that the parking is free of charge:

The noun parking is simply taken from English, and understood as masculine, according to the default rules.

Another example: this label on a package of cut ham says super cijena great price:
• Exercise

Fill in the sentences below:

Riba ____ (a) ______________(b). *The fish is gray.*
Knjiga je ______________(c). *The book is good.*
Goran je ______________(d). *Goran is happy.*
Ines ____ (e) ______________(f). *Ines is happy.*
More je ______________(g). *The sea is cold.*
Film je ______________(h) ______________(i). *The movie is quite short.*
Kutija ____ (j) ______________(k). *The box is heavy.*
Kava je ______ (l) ______________(m). *The coffee is very sweet.*

Fill in the missing words, using **med honey** and **lubenica watermelon**:

_______________(n) ____ (o) slatka ______(p) ______(q). *The watermelon is sweet like honey.*

Check answers [here](#).
12 Simple Conversations

Let’s see how a simple conversation looks in Croatian. First, when you meet someone, enter a shop, etc. you should greet people. The formal greetings are:

- **dobro jutro** good morning
- **dobar dan** good day/afternoon
- **dobra večer** good evening

The noun **večer** is a feminine noun ending in a consonant, so the feminine form of adjective should be used. (You will also often hear a slightly corrupted form **dobar večer**, and other worn out variants; in Dalmatia, you’ll often hear **dobra veče**.)

The informal greetings vary. The most common ones are:

- **bok** (Zagreb, Northwestern Croatia)
- **ćao** (coast, other areas)
- **ej** (Dalmatia, other areas)
- **haj**

*Warning*. These words are not colloquial: they are informal, i.e. used among friends and in the family. You cannot enter a random shop and address people working there with **bok**. You can use informal words only with people you’re close with.

The conversation would proceed depending on the level of familiarity. For example, you can greet your grandmother with a formal **dobar dan**, but proceed in the familiar mode.

Croatian has two second person forms of the verb and two pronouns: one for (familiar) singular and another for plural. The forms are easily obtained from the **pres-3**; the forms for the verb **biti** (**je² +**) are listed as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>regular verbs</th>
<th>pres-2</th>
<th>pres-2pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>biti</strong> (<strong>je² +</strong>)</td>
<td><strong>si²</strong></td>
<td><strong>ste²</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

- **Čekaš vlak.** You’re waiting for the train. (one person)
- **Čekate vlak.** You’re waiting for the train. (a group, or with respect)

When you are talking formally to persons you don’t know very well, to your superiors, etc., you should address them in plural, as if you were talking to a group.

You can then ask about how is someone doing. This is a real question, not just formal as English *how do you do*: 
Kako si? (fam.)  Kako ste? (resp./group)

(Colloquially, you’ll often hear other questions with this meaning, e.g. šta ima, kako ide, di si etc., depending on the region.) You can answer with e.g.:

Dobro, hvala. Fine, thank you.

Since the word hvala is very common in speech, it’s often simplified to fala.

It’s common to ask about family and close persons; the usual way is:

Kako je ... (N) ? How is ... doing?

This is quite simple, since you don’t have to do anything with the name of person you are asking about – the nominative, default case is used. You can answer with a short sentence, giving just the most important information, or a whole story:

Kako je Damir? How is Damir doing?
— Dobro je. He/she’s fine.
— Bolestan je. He’s sick.
— Ne znam. I don’t know.

To ask back (after you have answered) you have to use personal pronouns (I will explain them fully in the next chapter):

Kako si ti? (fam.)  Kako ste Vi? (resp./group)

Why do you have to use personal pronouns now? It’s mandatory when you switch the subject, and someone else becomes the subject. It’s also common to start such back questions with A kako... (actually, the word a emphasizes the change of topic).

English has only one pronoun for both meanings – you – and verb forms are always the same. However, English once had such a difference, but it was lost. Southern US varieties have now colloquially you (singular) vs. y’all (plural). It’s important to remember that Croatian vi is used also to address single people you respect or you’re not familiar with, while ti is used only for individuals you’re close with.

You can use the word kako to ask about someone’s name. The sentence uses the same grammar as French, Italian or Spanish, and it’s actually simpler – se² is always used:

(French)  Comment t’appelles-tu?
(Italian)  Come ti chiami?
(Spanish)  ¿Cómo te llamas?

Kako se zoveš?

lit. ‘How do you call yourself?’

All sentences above are informal, of course: you would use them with e.g. children. For adults you’re not familiar with – and you wouldn’t ask for their name if you were familiar with them – you need plural: kako se zovete.

You can comment how somebody looks. The most common way is to use the verb:
izgledati (izgleda) appear, seem, look

This verb has – only in the Standard scheme – a different syllable stressed in the present compared to the infinitive: one syllable to the left. Actually, such shift in the present tense happens to many verbs, about 13% of verbs listed in the Core Dictionary.

Since it would be too much to list all pres-3 forms that differ from infinitives just by a stress mark, I’ve invented the following shorthand notation: instead of writing a completely regular pres-3 form with just a shifted Standard stress, I’ll simply write the symbol «:

Shorthand for Standard stress shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>instead of</th>
<th>izgledati (izgleda)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ll write just</td>
<td>izgledati («)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That symbol means: in the Standard scheme, the stress moves one syllable left in the present tense forms, compared to infinitive. In the ‘western’ scheme, the stress does not move (I personally pronounce it on the same syllable in both inf and pres-3).

Therefore, I’ll list such verbs simply as:

izgledati («) appear, seem, look

The verb izgledati («) is used with adverbs or adjectives in neuter singular (they are quite similar in Croatian anyway). For example:

Izgledaš odlično. You look great. (fam.)

More adverbs that are commonly used with this verb are super (colloq.) great, lijepo nice and umorno tired.

If you are asking someone to give you something, you should use the verb moliti kindly ask (which covers English meaning please):

Molim te... (fam.) Molim Vas... (resp./group)

After that, a word in accusative should be used, e.g.:

čašu vode a glass of water jedan sendvič a sandwich
jedan čaj a cup of tea kartu za vlak a train ticket
jednu kavu a cup of coffee kartu za Zadar a ticket to Zadar

(I listed words and phrases in A, for convenience; some of them use grammar features that will be explained a bit later. Also, forms te and Vas above are accusatives of ti and Vi; they will be explained in the next chapter.)

When you are introduced to someone, you can say:

Drago mi je. I’m glad (to meet you).
When you are in company, and the others are about to start eating, you can say:

**Dobar tek.** (like French *bon appétit*)

If you are giving a thing to someone (a gift, whatever) you should use one of the following words:

**Izvoli.** (fam.) **Izvole, izvolite.** (resp./group)

The word *izvole* also means *how can I help you.* For instance, if you come to a bank, a clerk will use the word to ask you what he or she can do for you. The same word will be used by a waiter in a bar, restaurant, etc.

If you are given something, you should respond with:

**Hvala. Thank you.**

It’s often strengthened and made even more polite with *lijepo* (sometimes *lijepa*) or a bit more colloquially, *puno*:

**Hvala lijepo. Thank you.** (politely)

If you want to say that someone is *welcome*, use the following expressions (they depend on the gender of the person you’re talking to, unless you’re talking formally or to a group:

**Dobro došao.** (to a male you’re familiar with)

**Dobro došla.** (to a female you’re familiar with)

**Dobro došli.** (to someone you aren’t familiar with, or to a group)

(The words *došao*, etc. are adjective-like forms of the verb, which are otherwise used to form the past tense; it will be explained a bit later.)

If you want to express *where* someone is welcome to, use *destinations*, i.e. *u* / *na* + A (English uses *to*, i.e. destinations as well):

**Dobro došli u Hrvatsku! Welcome to Croatia!** (to a group / not fam.)

You will often see the two words are spelled together, e.g. *dobrodošao* and like.

When leaving, you can use the following farewells:

**do viđenja goodbye**

**laku noć good night**

The farewell *do viđenja* – often spelled as *dovidenja* – is quite formal. The following expressions are a bit less formal:

**vidimo se see you**

**čujemo se** (the same, but over the phone)

**pozdrav bye**

The following words are quite informal:

**bok** (Zagreb, Northwest Croatia)
ćao (coast, other areas)
adij (Dalmatia, other areas)

(These geographical differences are not absolute, you will hear ćao occasionally from people in Zagreb, bok in Dalmatia, etc.)

If someone is not just leaving, but departing, that is, he or she will travel, you should always use:

**sretan put** nice journey (French bon voyage)

® Instead of **dobra večer, dobro veče** is common in most parts of Bosnia and Serbia, and heard in Croatia as well; **zdravo** is a common greeting in these countries, and sometimes it’s heard in Croatia as well. The greeting **ćao** is very common in Serbia.

Instead of **dobar tek**, in Serbia and Bosnia usually **prijatno** is used, also heard in some parts of Croatia.
13 She Loves Me: Pronouns and Properties

Let me introduce more pronouns and continue with uses of adjectives and of the verb biti (je² +) be.

We have learned some personal pronouns (ti, vi, on...) but not all. Also, we’ve seen only their subject forms, i.e. the nominative case. What if we want to use pronouns as objects? What if we want to say I am? How to say I love you? How to say she loves me?

As in English, the forms of pronouns are not regular and have to be learned. Fortunately, they are not too complicated (and two of them are similar to English pronouns). Here are the forms for the first two persons (I, you, we):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pers.</th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>ja</td>
<td>mi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>ti</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To help you learn various forms of pronouns, they will be underlined with a pale blue line, and information about them will be printed on the right margin (e.g. 2 = 2nd person, 2pl = 2nd person plural, 3f = 3rd person, feminine gender).

Like the word se², personal pronouns in accusative must be put to the second position in a sentence (check 7 Verbs with Obligatory Objects.) For example:

Ana¹ me² čeka. Ana is waiting for me.

As usual, the second position should not be understood mechanically. Two or more words, if they form a phrase, can occupy the first position. It’s normal to say:

Moj prijatelj¹ te² čeka. My friend is waiting for you.

(I’ll explain the possessive adjective moj my in the next chapter. It’s a bit special, e.g. it never gets an -i in masc.)

Again, you’ll find sometimes in books and newspapers that the second position is forced, even splitting combinations adjective + noun. That’s never used in speech (except maybe in very formal speeches, e.g. in the news on the public radio, or in some rural areas):

Moj¹ te² prijatelj čeka. (the same meaning, very formal, in writing)

Then, of course, there’s the famous example:

Volim te. I love you. (to someone you’re familiar with)

As I’ve already explained, Croatian vi/vas stands both for plural (y’all, you guys) and respect (you sir/madam). The second use is usually distinguished by using a capital V
in writing:

**Ana vas čeka.** *Ana is waiting for you (guys).*

**Ana Vas čeka.** *Ana is waiting for you (sir/madam).*

(There are also longer, ‘stressed’ forms of personal pronouns, but they are used only in specific circumstances, and will be introduced later.)

And here are the forms in the 3rd person singular (*he, she, it*):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd person</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>ona</td>
<td>je² / ju²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>ono</td>
<td>ga²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, the 3rd person accusative pronouns have one form for all genders except the feminine. You’ll see that pronouns have much fewer forms than you have maybe expected. For example:

**Volim ga.** *I love him/it.* (depending on the context)

**Ona ga ne poznaje.** *She doesn’t know him/it.* (depending on the context)

The accusative case of *ona* *she* has two forms which are used interchangeably. For example, if you’re talking about a *knjiga* *book* – a feminine noun – both are acceptable and used:

**Čitam je.** *I’m reading it.* (lit. ‘reading her’)

**Čitam ju.** (the same meaning)

(Since the form of pronoun *je²* coincides with the pres-3 of *biti* (*je² +*) *be*, it’s avoided when the verbal *je²* appears in the same sentence; we’ll see such sentences a bit later).

*Pay attention*: the noun *knjiga* *book* is feminine. The same goes for *voda* *water* and *kuća* *house*. And the same goes for *noć* *night* and *obitelj* *family*. You have to use feminine pronouns (*ona, ju², je²*) when referring to them, as you would use for your sister.

Likewise, *nož* *knife* and *auto* (*aut-*) *car* are masculine nouns. You have to use same pronouns to talk about a knife, a car and your brother.

Pronouns are often used to describe what something is. Both what’s described and the description should be in the default, dictionary form – the nominative case. For example:

**Ivan je student.** *Ivan is a (university) student.*
**On je student.** *He’s a (university) student.*

English has only one word – *student* – for both male and female students. For most such roles, Croatian has two words, one for male, another for female.

There’s no straight rule how male and female words relate, but most often, the word for female is made by adding *-ica* to the word for male (the suffix *-ica* has other uses as well):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>male</th>
<th>female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>singer</td>
<td>pjevač</td>
<td>pjevačica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professor</td>
<td>profesor</td>
<td>profesorica 🅱️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(univ.) student</td>
<td>student</td>
<td>studentica 🅱️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>učitelj</td>
<td>učiteljica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, if a female person is a student, you would say:

**Vesna je studentica.** *Vesna is a (university) student.*

Croatian has two words that correspond to English *man*:

- **čovjek** *man/human*
- **muškarac (muškarc-)** *man (focus on masculinity)*

You would use **čovjek** in all normal circumstances (you can and should use it in generic sense, for someone you don’t know sex of), and the other word is used only when it’s *important* that someone is male, e.g. when talking about how he looks:

**Ivan je marljiv čovjek.** *Ivan is a hard-working man.*

**On je zgodan muškarac.** *He’s a handsome man.*

For most animals (humans included) the *default* gender is masculine: you can use masculine nouns when you have a mixed group, if you simply don’t know someone’s sex or you want to speak about people or some animals in general. The masc. gender is so generic that it can be sometimes used for women too:

**Ana je dobar čovjek.** lit. *‘Ana is a good man/human.’*

**Ona je novi profesor.** *She’s the new professor.*

It’s all nice, but how to say *I’m a student* (male or female)? For that, we need another personal pronoun introduced above (the N form, of course), and the right verb form:

- **biti (je² +)** *be* → **pres-1 sam²**

For example:

**Ja sam student.** *I’m a student.* (male)

**Ja sam studentica.** *I’m a student.* (female)
Croatian does not use personal pronouns as subjects often, but in such sentences, they are used.

However, when you are describing a condition at the moment, something that can change in any minute, using adjectives, pronouns are usually omitted. Instead of ja sam..., this is the most often used form:

**Gladan sam.** I’m hungry. (male)

**Gladna sam.** I’m hungry. (female)

*Pay attention:* although ja and ti don’t distinguish gender, you still have to adjust the adjective to the gender ‘hidden’ behind them. This is similar to Romance languages like Italian and Spanish:

(Sp.) *Estoy cansado.* I am tired. (male)

(Sp.) *Estoy cansada.* I am tired. (female)

If you know some Spanish, it could interest you that the use or dropping of personal pronouns in Croatian sentences like *I am...* basically matches Spanish verbs *ser* vs. *estar* (but there are some exceptions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Soy estudiante.</em></td>
<td><strong>Ja sam</strong> student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Estoy cansado.</em></td>
<td><strong>Gladan sam.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you would add an adverb (i.e. *opet* again, *možda* maybe, *jako* very etc.), it never behaves as attached to the adjective, so second position words easily come in between.

**Goran je jako gladan.** Goran is very hungry.

**Jako sam gladan.** I’m very hungry. (male)

(Normally the adverb comes left from the adjective, but it can be tweaked too to emphasize the adverb.)

What about saying you’re *not hungry*? The same principle works as for other forms of present of the verb *biti* – just add *ni-* ®; the resulting form is not restricted to the second position and in fact, usually comes before the adjective (but adverbs modifying the adjective usually come in between):

**Nisam gladan.** I’m not hungry. (male)

**Uopće nisam gladna.** I’m not hungry at all. (female)

**Nisam jako gladna.** I’m not very hungry. (female)

The second person pronoun is *ti* in singular and *vi* in plural (also used for polite addressing). The corresponding forms of verb *biti* we have already learned.

**Nisi gladan.** You are not hungry. (male)

**Gladna si.** You’re hungry. (female)
In nominative plural, adjectives get ending -i in the masculine gender, for mixed-sex groups, but also in all polite sentences, regardless of the real gender of person you’re addressing:

**Gladni ste.** (all-male group)
**Gladni ste.** (mixed group)
**Gladni ste.** (politely to one person, male or female)

All sentences above, of course, translate to English as just *you’re hungry*. Feminine plural adjectives get -e in nominative; it’s used only for groups where all members have feminine gender:

**Gladne ste.** (all-female group)

The same rule works for 1st person plural (*we are*) where the personal pronoun is **mi** and the verb *to be* has the following form:

\[
\text{biti } (\text{je}^2 +) \text{ be } \rightarrow \text{pres-1pl smo}^2
\]

(This is an exception to the rule that pres-1pl is simply pres-1 + o.)

For instance:

**Umorni smo.** *We’re tired.* (all-male group)
**Umorni smo.** (mixed group)
**Umorne smo.** (all-female group)

® In Serbia and usually in Bosnia, the accusative form **ju** in^2 is used only if there’s the pres-3 form **je** in^2 in the same sentence.

In Serbia, instead of **profesorica** and **studentica**, **profesorka** and **studentkinja** prevail, but **učiteljica** is used everywhere.

In Montenegro, negative present tense forms of the verb **biti** (*je* ^2 +) *be* have always **nije-**, i.e. **nijesam**, **nijesi** etc., but the 3rd pers. is just **nije**.

**Something Possibly Interesting**

It’s not a coincidence that Croatian words **ja** and **me** are similar to their English counterparts *I* and *me*: English and Croatian are distant cousins. Even more similar are Latin 1st and 2nd pronouns in A – they’re almost identical to Croatian ones:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pers.</th>
<th>A (sg.)</th>
<th>A (pl.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>mē</td>
<td>nōs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>tē</td>
<td>vōs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(This can help you remember Croatian pronouns if you already know Latin, and help
you learn Latin pronouns if you know Croatian and decide to learn Latin one day.) But it’s surprising how many languages in Europe and Asia have first pers. pronouns starting with m- and 2nd person with t-. You can find more in this map in the World Atlas of Language Structures: M-T Pronouns.

The particle se² comes historically from a pronoun in A.

Second-position pronouns are pronounced with the word before them, but spelled as separate words. It means čeka te he/she’s waiting for you is pronounced exactly the same as čekate you (guys) are waiting. Therefore, some people will mix them up in spelling, usually spelling verb endings as separate words, since they are taught that spelling separate words together is a mistake. Be prepared.

• Exercise

Fill in the missing words:

Vidim _____(a). I can see her.
Ne ______(b) ______(c). I can’t hear you. (with respect, to someone you’re not familiar with)
____(d) ______(e) voli. She loves me.
Vidim ______(f). I see it. (it = the train)
Ne __________________(g) ______(h). I don’t know him.
Ana ______(i) ______(j) voli. Ana doesn’t love him.
_______(k) ______(l). We’re waiting for you. (a single person familiar with)
Vozim ______(m) ______(n) ______(o). I’m driving you (guys) to the seaside.
____(p) je ________________(q). She’s a professor.
____(r) ________________(s). You’re not thirsty. (to a female)
____(t) ______(u) još __________(v). We’re still young. (all-male or mixed group)

Check answers here.
14 My and Adjectives in Accusative

We now know how to say:

**Jedem jabuku.** *I’m eating an apple.*
**Jabuka je crvena.** *The apple is red.*

But we still don’t know how to say *I’m eating a red apple!* If you want to put an adjective before a noun in accusative, you have to put the adjective into the accusative as well. To put an adjective into the accusative case, you have to take into the account the gender of the noun beside it. **Jabuka** is feminine, so what’s the feminine accusative ending for adjectives? Not really complicated, it’s **-u**, so we have:

**Jedem crvenu jabuku.** *I’m eating a red apple.*

In this example, the adjective gets the same ending as the noun, but consider it a coincidence. If you would take a weird feminine noun that ends in a consonant (e.g. **krv** f **blood**) the adjective would still get the **-u**:

**Imam crvenu krv.** *I have red blood.*

This is what gender means: what adjective or pronoun forms you have to use. Nouns have fixed gender — **jabuka** is ‘feminine’ because its default, nominative form ends in **-a**, and **krv** blood just simply is — but adjectives adapt to the ‘class’ the noun belongs to, and that ‘class’ is called ‘gender’ by tradition.

And now we’re going to see the four genders in Croatian. The masculine gender is really two genders: one for masculine people-and-animals, another for everything else masculine. Adjectives for masculine people-and-animals will get **-og**:

**Imam crnog psa.** *I have a black dog.*

These are all accusative adjective endings you need to remember. For neuter nouns, and masculine other than people-and-animals, adjectives are the same as in the nominative — of course, the N form depends on the gender. This table summarizes the scheme (I’m here using p/a for ‘people and animals’):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>adj. A</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>-u</td>
<td><strong>veliku ribu</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>big fish</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>same as nominative</td>
<td><strong>veliko jezero</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>big lake</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. (not p/a)</td>
<td>same as nominative</td>
<td><strong>velik(i) zid</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>big wall</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. (p/a)</td>
<td>-og (some -eg)</td>
<td><strong>velikog konja</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>big horse</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Usually, the two masculine genders are called *masc. animate* (the gender for masculine people and animals) and *masc. inanimate* (the gender for everything else ‘masculine’).

You might ask: why is the gender of nouns like *zid wall* called ‘masculine’ at all, when it has no people or animals in it? How is a *wall* masculine? Name of that gender is simply a tradition; also, looking at the endings in the nominative case, adjectives referring to these nouns get the same endings as for the nouns *konj horse* and *brat brother*. The pronoun referring to a *table* will be *on*, usually translated as *he*.

If your brain still short circuits because of the term *masculine inanimate*, shorten it to just ‘inanimate’.

Strictly speaking, the gender of *masculine people and animals* includes also beings that are neither, e.g. *gods, angels, ghosts*, all creatures from *Lord of the Rings, snowmen* – and robots! It’s important that something is perceived as having *its own will* (or mind), even if it’s a microscopic worm. Such ‘genders’ are not at all uncommon among world languages.

Something interesting: only in accusative (singular) adjectives have different endings for all 4 genders. In most cases – I will introduce them later – there’s one adjective ending for the feminine gender, and another for everything else. This makes everything much simpler than it could be.

Examples for all 4 genders:

**Imam** crnu mačku. *I have a black cat.*

**Vozim** crni auto. *I’m driving a black car.*

**Vidim** crnog konja. *I see a black horse.*

**Vidim** žuto sunce. *I see the yellow sun.*

(The noun *auto*, despite ending in -o, is a masculine inanimate noun, one of exceptions I have already listed when I introduced genders.)

Since in the masculine inanimate gender adjectives have the same form in N and A, the -i is optional in A as well – but it’s almost always used when adjectives are placed before nouns, as here. (Standard Croatian insists on a small difference in meaning between adjectives with -i and without; it will be described later.)

There’s an alternative ending in masculine-people-and-animals (-eg). It’s attached to adjectives that get an -e in the neuter nominative (and accusative) – i.e. to adjectives that end in a Croatian-specific letter:

**Vidim** smedeg konja. *I see a brown horse.*

You will sometimes see (in books and newspapers) adjectives having the ending -oga or -ega instead of -og or -eg. There’s no difference in meaning: it’s just an older form that’s sometimes still preferred in writing.

As promised, here are the exact rules for the accusative case of nouns (instead of
As promised, here are the exact rules for the accusative case of nouns (instead of ‘same as nominative’, or ‘no change’, I wrote just ‘= N’):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type (N)</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns in -a (≈ fem.)</td>
<td>-a → -u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter nouns (≈ in -o, -e)</td>
<td>= N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masculine not in -a (not p/a)</td>
<td>= N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>add -a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)</td>
<td>= N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(They differ from the previous, approximate rules only for a few nouns, e.g. kokoš f hen and zvijer f beast – the approximate rules didn’t take the gender into account.)

I’ve included the approximate rules (≈) for gender in the table, e.g. nouns that end in -a in N are usually feminine, etc. The important criteria have nothing to do with the approximate rules: all nouns than end in -a change it in A to -u. As some masc. nouns end in -a, I’ve stressed that the masc. endings apply only to nouns not ending in -a.

I will introduce here a very useful adjective, moj my. This is simply an adjective in Croatian, but it’s not so in English. For example, you can say:

*the red apple; the apple is red*

If you try to replace the word red in the sentences above with my, you’ll see the problem. Not so in Croatian, where you simply say:

*moja jabuka*

*Jabuka je moja.*

While moj is used as any other adjective, it still has two peculiarities:

*First*, unlike other adjectives, it never has the optional -i in masc. N.

*Second*, in masculine (also in neuter gender, we’ll see later) it has special, shorter forms. There’s absolutely no difference in meaning, use, you can use longer or shorter forms wherever you like, but shorter forms are much more frequently used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>moja</td>
<td>moju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>moje</td>
<td>= N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. (not p/a)</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. (p/a)</td>
<td>mog</td>
<td>mojeg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There’s nothing special about forms for the feminine gender, they are in the table.
above just for completeness sake. (There’s nothing special about neuter forms either, since j is Croatian-specific.)

In fact, you’ll see that some adjectives and adjective-like words in Croatian tend to have specific forms, but never in the feminine gender: all specific forms of any adjective are limited to masculine and neuter genders.

For example:

Ana vozi mog brata na posao. Ana is driving my brother to work.
Ana vozi mojeg brata na posao. (the same meaning, but rarely used)

(As with other adjectives, you will sometimes find the form in A mojega, and the shorter form moga – there’s no difference in meaning, such forms are just a bit archaic.)

In the previous chapter, I’ve explained how there are two words for man in Croatian. It’s interesting there’s only one word for both woman and wife:

žena woman, wife

If you use that word with a possessive adjective like moj (or any of the possessive adjectives we’ll learn later) it’s understood as wife:

Vidim ženu. I (can) see a woman.
Poznaješ moju ženu. You know my wife.

There is a word meaning precisely wife in Croatian, but it’s very formal and used only in official records, in very formal speech and so on.

If this all sounds overwhelming to you, here are nouns and adjectives in a nutshell – just learn this like a poem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>example</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>big fish</td>
<td>velika riba</td>
<td>veliku ribu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>big lake</td>
<td>veliko jezero</td>
<td>no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>big sea</td>
<td>veliko more</td>
<td>no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. inan.</td>
<td>big wall</td>
<td>velik(i) zid</td>
<td>no change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. anim.</td>
<td>big brother</td>
<td>velik(i) brat</td>
<td>velikog brata</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There’s an interesting rule:

If the majority of nouns (in a gender) have the same form in two or more cases, adjectives (in the same gender) have identical forms as well. If they have different forms, adjectives have different forms as well.

For instance, neuter nouns have the same form in N and A. Therefore, the adjectives in neuter gender have the same form in N and A (you can check the table above). Masculine nouns representing people and animals have different forms (they get an
-a in A), so adjectives in masculine gender for people and animals have different forms in N and A (they get -og in A).

You’ll later see that nouns ending in -a – by and large feminine – have the same form in nominative plural and accusative plural. Therefore, you can immediately conclude that adjectives in the feminine gender have the same form in nominative plural and accusative plural.

Adjectives follow the pattern (but not the endings) of the majority of nouns in a given gender. For instance, feminine nouns in a consonant (e.g. noć f night, sol f salt) have some cases identical (e.g. N and A singular), but it has absolutely no effect on the pattern of adjectives, since such nouns are really a minority.

(You’ll often see that in textbooks only three genders are mentioned and the difference in the accusative case is not called gender. The division to four genders is the simplest explanation, in my opinion at least.)

Finally, you’ll see sometimes, in writing, that certain adjectives in A have endings like nouns, e.g. vidim crna konja. This is never used in everyday life and casual writing. Such indefinite adjectives will be briefly described in 99 Aorist Tense and Other Marginal Features. You can safely ignore them for now.

Such longer endings are extremely rare in Serbia and Bosnia.

• Something Possibly Interesting

The word rak means both crab and cancer, but when it refers to an animal, it’s treated as masculine animate, and when it refers to the disease, it’s masculine inanimate.

However, the name of a football club from Split, Hajduk, is usually treated as masculine animate, even when referring to the club: it means highwayman, outlaw.

Very few Croatian grammars treat gender in Croatian in a consistent way, by having 4 genders. It’s much more common in Czech grammars (Czech is a close cousin to Croatian, with essentially the same system). However, Russian (which has essentially the same system as well) is always described with three genders. There are even people who claim that there have to be three genders, since it’s ‘natural’, and ‘this is what we were taught in schools’.

If we want to be precise, we can say there are basically 6 types of nouns in Croatian, based on how they change (i.e. what endings they get) and what forms of adjectives and pronouns they require:
Forms of adjectives are called ‘genders’ by tradition (the problem is, many people usually consider only forms in N, so they see only 3 genders), and patterns of noun endings are called ‘declension classes’. While everyone heard about gender, very few people are aware of declension classes. They are much less clear-cut than genders: for instance, nouns like konj horse and sin son seem to belong to the same class, but we’ll see they form plural a bit differently. Should we split them to two classes? It depends on your viewpoint.

(I’ve invented the names of patterns in the table above, I’m quite sure nobody ever used Greek letters for these patterns. You’ll find various names in various books: they are ultimately unimportant. However, i-nouns and a-nouns are worth remembering.)

• Examples

Crno-bijeli svijet Black-and-White World is one of the most popular songs by Prljavo kazalište Dirty Theater, a rock band from Zagreb. The song opens with the famous line:

Moje ime je Davorin Bogović My name is Davorin Bogović
a ovo sve oko mene and all this around me
to je crno-bijeli svijet... it’s a black-and-white world...
Crno-bijeli televizori Black-and-white TV’s
rijetki noćni tramvaji rare night trams
moja bijela djevojka my white girlfriend
uvozni ekskluzivni program imported exclusive shows
mama, tata, pas i kravata... Mom, Dad, a dog and a tie...
(Jasenko Houra)

See how mojN my and other adjectives adapt to the gender of nouns after them. All the forms are in N, just different genders.

The second line has ovo sve, lit. these all; such forms will be explained later. It also
uses *oko mene*, where the form *mene* will be explained later (it’s in the so-called *genitive* case).

The fourth and the fifth line use plural forms, which are not yet explained, but for masculine adjectives and many masculine nouns, it’s simply -i in N plural.

The sixth line has no racist implications whatsoever: everything around the guy is black and white, no colors – and colors are perceived as good, i.e. color TV’s were new and better than old black-and-white ones – and the girlfriend is just a part of the black-and-white world, i.e. she isn’t anything extraordinary. The seventh line uses *program* which can mean many things; my translation as (TV) *show* is only one possibility.

You can find various performances on YouTube™. Check the performance on *A strana A Side* and the original clip.

**Exercise**

Fill in the right forms of adjectives and other words (a hint: all forms use the accusative case):

Čekamo ______(a) ________(b). *We’re waiting for my sister.*

Sutra idemo ___(c) __________(d) ________(e). *We’re going to a big beach tomorrow.*

Ivan pije __________(f) ______(g). *Ivan is drinking cold beer.*

Damir ima ________(h) ________(i). *Damir has a little brother.*

Imamo ______(j) __________(k). *We have a black cat.*

Ana __________(l) __________(m) *auto*. *Ana is driving my car.*

Idemo ____ (n) _____(o) __________(p). *We’re going to my apartment.*

Jedem ___________(q) ___________(r). *I’m eating a cold pizza.*

Check answers [here](#).
15 Locations

We are able to say that we are going to school or to work, but what about being in school, or at work?

It turns out we again need the prepositions u” and na”, but with another noun form – the dative or locative case (just DL for short). Most books list them as separate cases, but they are really the same in all everyday situations. (There’s a difference in tone of some words in Standard Croatian, but most people don’t have it in their speech.)

This table summarizes rules to put nouns into the DL case, starting from the nominative (dictionary) form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type (N)</th>
<th>DL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns in -a (= fem.)</td>
<td>-a → -i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter nouns (= in -o, -e)</td>
<td>-o or -e → -u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. nouns not in -a</td>
<td>add -u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)</td>
<td>add -i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, all nouns get an ending now, and there’s no distinction for people and animals – that applies only to the accusative case. There are again only two endings to remember: one for nouns in -a and feminine nouns not in -a, and another for all other nouns. Let’s take the following nouns:

- kolač cake
- ormar closet, wardrobe
- kuća house
- peć oven, furnace
- kuhinja kitchen
- soba room
- ladica drawer
- stan apartment

With them, and other nouns we have already learned, can make sentences like these:

Ana je u kući. Ana is in the house.
Ivan je u Zagrebu. Ivan is in Zagreb.
Spavamo u hotelu. We sleep in a hotel.
Riba pliva u moru. A fish is swimming in the sea.
Ivan je u školi. Ivan is at school.
Kuhamo u kuhinji. We’re cooking in the kitchen.
Kolač je u peći. The cake is in the oven.

Of course, we can use objects as well:

Kuham čaj u kuhinji. I’m cooking tea in the kitchen.
Gledamo televiziju u sobi. We’re watching TV in the room.
You will find this verb useful:

živjeti (živi) live

Verbs having infinitives ending in -jeti have almost always -i in their pres-3, so they are not really irregular. Let’s put it to use:

Ana živi u Zagrebu. Ana lives in Zagreb.
Živim u Splitu. I live in Split.

As you hopefully remember, some nouns when used as destinations require na¨ instead of u¨. When they are used as locations, you still have to use na¨ with them:

Živimo na Braču. We live on the island of Brač.
Ivana je na plaži. Ivana is on the beach.
Ana je na trgu. Ana is on the (main) town square.

With locations, Croatian u¨ roughly translates as in, and na¨ as on or at. Here are a couple of ‘activities’ – you finally know how to say on vacation or at university:

Ivan je na fakultetu. Ivan is at university.
Ana je na odmoru. Ana is on vacation.
Goran je na večeri. Goran is on dinner/supper.
Ivan je na putu. Ivan is on a trip.

Don’t forget that certain Croatian nouns require na¨ where English uses in (the Core Dictionary marks such nouns). For example (nouns are here listed in DL, of course):

na nebu in the sky na svijetu in the world
na slici in the picture na ulici in the street

It also applies to appearing on electronic media, including movies and phone:

na filmu in the movie na telefonu on the phone
na radiju on the radio na televiziji on TV

The preposition na¨ also applies to weather conditions – being exposed to blowing wind, sun, etc:

na hladnoći in cold na suncu in sun, exposed to sun
na kiši in rain na vjetru exposed to wind
na snijegu in snow na zraku in (fresh) air

Some nouns can be used with both u¨ and na¨ – then the u¨ gives an ordinary meaning, and na¨ a derived, metaphorical one:

u moru in the sea (below surface / swimming)
na moru at the seaside; on the sea (sailing)
u selu in the village
na selu in countryside

So, when you tell in Croatian that someone’s na moru he or she can be just on
vacation; when somebody is **u moru**, it’s swimming or diving.

What about **at work**? Again, we use **na** with activities like these:

- **posao** (posl-) m work, job
- **ručak** (ručk-) lunch
- **sastanak** (sastank-) meeting

For example:

**Ivan je na poslu.** Ivan is at work.

**Ana je na sastanku.** Ana is in a meeting.

**Damir je na ručku.** Damir is at lunch.

Croatian doesn’t distinguish *in a meeting* from *at the meeting*. In fact, Croatian doesn’t have anything similar to English *at* – it’s always ‘*in the park*’, ‘*on the beach*’ etc.

To **ask where** something or someone is, just start a question with the following word (this word varies a lot in everyday speech, e.g. you can hear **di** colloquially in some parts of Croatia, including cities of Zagreb, Split and Rijeka):

**gdje where**

Nothing else is needed, there’s no change of word order; as usual in Croatian, it’s normal to answer with just a location, or you can give a longer answer if you want to emphasize the rest of the sentence:

**Gdje je Ivan?** Where is Ivan?

— Na putu. On a trip.
— Na putu je. He’s on a trip.

**Gdje je Damir?**
— Na telefonu. On the phone. (i.e. talking)

Standard Croatian (and many people in speech) **always** distinguishes **gdje where** from **kamo where... to**, but many people in speech use **gdje where** for both.

If you have examined the sentences above very carefully, you might have noticed that the stress of **fakultet** changed in DL. The same happens to **kolač, telefon**, and to many other nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>+ DL ending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kolač</td>
<td>kolaču</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fakultet</td>
<td>fakultetu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telefon</td>
<td>telefonu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koncert</td>
<td>koncertu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
That’s the rule for virtually all nouns ending in a consonant that have the ‘western’ stress on the last syllable and the Standard stress on the last but one (e.g. fa-kul-tet): whenever they get any ending (e.g. the DL ending -u), the Standard stress shifts right, to the ‘western’ position.

You can recognize such nouns easily – they have their last two vowels underlined in this course. However, if such nouns end in two consonants (e.g. koncert concert), there’s no stress shift. (Since it’s completely predictable, I will not specially mark it in a way I do it for verbs.)

There’s another change in DL that applies only to nouns that end in -ka or -ga. For most of them, their ending changes to -ci or -zi, but only in DL. For example:

Živimo u Americi. We live in America.
Ivan je na slici. Ivan is in the picture.
Goran ima ranu na noži. Goran has a wound on his leg.

It does not apply to all nouns, there’s no such change in personal names and family terms like baka grandmother. (Note again how we used just the noun noga, and English always likes a possessive, e.g. his, before parts of body.)

Unfortunately, we are still not able to say that we’re in Croatia, but I will explain it in a short while, don’t worry.

® In informal speech in Montenegro, locations are often formed as destinations, i.e. with A. For example:

Zoran živi u Podgoricu. (A) Zoran lives in Podgorica.

This is not standard in Montenegro, but you will find it in popular songs, movies and writing.

While ladica is used in Serbia as well, the word fioka is much more common there for the drawer.

Besides ormar, orman is also used in Bosnia, Serbia and parts of Croatia, mostly in speech.

In Montenegro, the form de where prevails and is used as standard.

• Something Possibly Interesting

Some people claim that dative and locative are really two cases, despite having identical forms, since they have different functions. However, the accusative case has more than one function as well, but nobody wants to split it into several cases. (We’ll later see that other cases have more than one function too.)

Still, in all modern Croatian grammars published in Croatia (the same holds for Serbian grammars published in Serbia) the dative and locative cases are listed
separately in tables of noun and adjective endings. I mean, really separately – D is in the third row, and L in the sixth row. (In Serbia, L is often in the last, seventh, row!) Incredibly, even some web pages intended for foreigners who try to learn Croatian list these cases separately, having maybe just a small remark somewhere “these two cases have the same endings”.

It’s as if some people are trying to make the language more complex than it really is. For instance, this table I found on the Internet has the D and L cases separately, but it also has an error – it says that the D of nouns in -a (‘Class II’ in the table) has the ending -u, which is, of course, wrong (it has -i):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Class I (Mas)</th>
<th>Class I (Neut)</th>
<th>Class II (Fem-a)</th>
<th>Class III (Fem.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nominative</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>~i</td>
<td>~a</td>
<td>~e</td>
<td>~i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitive</td>
<td>Reflexive, Poss</td>
<td>~a</td>
<td>~a</td>
<td>~e</td>
<td>~i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accusative</td>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>~e</td>
<td>~a</td>
<td>~e</td>
<td>~i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dative</td>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>~u</td>
<td>~ima</td>
<td>~ima</td>
<td>~i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument</td>
<td>Means of Action</td>
<td>~om</td>
<td>~ima</td>
<td>~ima</td>
<td>~i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative</td>
<td>Location of Noun</td>
<td>~u</td>
<td>~ima</td>
<td>~ima</td>
<td>~i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocative</td>
<td>Direct Address</td>
<td>~e</td>
<td>~i</td>
<td>~o</td>
<td>~i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, ‘functions’ listed in the table are quite misleading in many ways. (Just in a case somebody might find this table here and share it, I’ve added the overlay don’t use this.) Such things are some of reasons I’ve decided to write this small ‘course’.

It’s also interesting that this distinction of D and L applies to modern grammars. In Institutionum linguae illyricae libri duo – a grammar published in 1604 by Bartholomaeus Cassius, usually known in Croatia as Bartol Kašić – there’s only one case listed in singular.

Swedish also distinguishes where (var) from where... to (vart).

• Exercise

Fill in the right forms of adjectives and other words:

Igor živi ____ (a) ______ (b). Igor lives at the seaside.
Ana kuha ____ (c) ___________ (d). Ana is cooking in the kitchen.
Mi ____ (e) ____ (f) _______ (g). We’re at the beach.

________ (h) ___________ (i) Goran? Where’s Goran?
Slušam pjesmu ____ (j) ____ (k). I’m listening to a song on the radio.
Dubrovnik ____ (l) ____ (m) _______ (n). Dubrovnik is in the south.
Mi smo ____ (o) ___________ (p). We’re at lunch.

Check answers here.
16 Giving to Someone, Going to Someone

There’s another use of the dative/locative case (DL), but without any prepositions: you can state recipient of some action, for instance if you write a letter to someone, you must express someone in DL in Croatian:

Ana\textsuperscript{N} piše pismo\textsuperscript{A} Ivanu\textsuperscript{DL}. Ana is writing a letter to Ivan.  
Ana\textsuperscript{N} piše pismo\textsuperscript{A} Ivan\textsuperscript{DL}. Ana is writing a letter to Ivana.

When you rearrange words in English, you don’t need to use to anymore, but case forms in Croatian don’t change at all:

Ana\textsuperscript{N} piše pismo\textsuperscript{A} Ivanu\textsuperscript{DL}. Ana is writing a letter to Ivan.  
Ana\textsuperscript{N} piše Ivanu\textsuperscript{DL} pismo\textsuperscript{A}. Ana is writing Ivan a letter. (a bit less common order)

Since words can be shuffled, to help you recognize cases, there are offline versions (i.e. PDF and Kindle file) which mark cases in examples with superscript letters (N, A, DL...) – they are recognized by ‘an’ in the file name. There are also versions without these additional marks. Pick the version you prefer. Online, cases are marked by colors.

Such use of DL is quite common with the following verbs, where something is given (or shown, or offered) to someone:

davati (daje) give  
prodavati (prodaže) sell  
nuditi offer  
vraćati return  
pokazivati (pokazuje) show  
slati (šalje) send

The following nouns are also useful:

čestitka (DL -ci) greeting card  
poruka (DL -ci) message  
dar gift  
poklon gift  
razglednica (picture) postcard

The verbs are used simply: what goes/is offered/shown to another person (gift, postcard, whatever) is put in the accusative case, and the recipient in DL:

Ana\textsuperscript{N} šalje čestitku\textsuperscript{A} Ivanu\textsuperscript{DL}. Ana is sending a greeting card to Ivan.  
Ana\textsuperscript{N} daje poklon\textsuperscript{A} Goranu\textsuperscript{DL}. Ana is giving a gift to Goran.

Croatian has two more verbs that have a very similar meaning to davati (daje), but with them what’s given is a gift, possibly for a special occasion:

darivati (daruje)  
poklanjati  
make a gift, donate

The verb poklanjati is a bit more common in speech, and the other verb in formal writing and newspapers. For example:

Ana\textsuperscript{N} poklanja knjigu\textsuperscript{A} Goranu\textsuperscript{DL}. Ana is giving a book to Goran (as a gift).
There’s a very rough but often effective rule: when an English verb takes two objects – and you order them without the word to – the first object corresponds to the Croatian DL case, and the second one to the A case:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m writing</td>
<td>Ana a letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He told</td>
<td>Ivan the truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She will buy</td>
<td>Goran a new bike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish</td>
<td>you a nice day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Croatian:</td>
<td>DL A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, I haven’t explained past and future tenses yet, and I haven’t shown forms of pronouns in various cases – but it doesn’t matter, case use doesn’t depend on the tense, and whether you use nouns or pronouns. It’s always the same scheme.

There are two more useful verbs that use DL, but it does not have anything to do with receiving something – it’s just the way the verbs are. They are:

- **pomagati** (pomaže) help
- **pripadati** belong

For example:


(German uses here the same grammar as Croatian: German verbs gehören and helfen use the German Dative case. However, keep in mind that German cases are really not identical to Croatian cases!)

The DL case is used in thanking, which is useful when you get something. The phrase is:

- **hvala na**[^DL] thanks for

Croatian za[^z] usually corresponds to English for, but not in this phrase. For example, you could say:

- **Hvala na...** Thanks for the...
  - ... čestitci[^DL]...greeting card.
  - ... poruci[^DL]...message.
  - ... poklonu[^DL]...gift.
  - ... pomoći[^DL]...help.

Here we’ve used another feminine noun that doesn’t end in -a: **pomoć**[^f] help, assistance.

The DL case is also involved with possession, especially with body parts and related people (e.g. family or friends). I already explained how in Croatian, words like my...
are less often used and possession is implied:

\[ \text{Ana}^N \text{ pere} \text{ kosu}^A. \ 'Ana \ is \ washing \ hair.' \ (= \ her \ hair) \]

However, if she’s washing someone else’s hair, a common way – very common in speech – to express it, is to add the person in the DL case:

\[ \text{Ana}^N \text{ pere Goran}^D \text{L} \text{ kosu}^A. \ Ana \ is \ washing \ hair \ ‘to \ Goran’. \ (= \ Goran’s \ hair) \]

This is the preferred word order in such sentences – it’s, of course, possible to rearrange words if you want to stress something. This is \textit{the same structure as} with the verb \textit{send} or \textit{write} – Goran will ‘get’ his hair washed, in the same way as he will get a message, letter or gift.

\textit{Pay attention} that in the sentence above, \text{kosu} is in A – it is the object, after all – while \text{Goran} is in DL. These two words are \textit{not} attached to each other, don’t depend on each other: this is just the most common word order in such sentences.

Croatian \textit{has} possessive adjectives – I’ve already shown \text{moj} my, others will be shown a bit later – but with body parts, this is the preferred way. If you are familiar with German, you’ll notice it uses the same system: the sentence above would translate exactly as \textit{Ana wäscht Goran die Haare}. Dutch and Romance languages do it in the same way.

In fact, English is famous for using a lot of possessive adjectives, while a great majority of European languages use them much less often. In most languages, possession of body parts and many other things is simply implied – it’s expressed only if something belongs to someone else, often by dative or something equivalent.

\textit{If your brain is spinning now failing to comprehend how DL can mean possession of a body part, here’s another way to look at the sentence above: Ana is washing the hair, and doing it to Goran.}

The accusative case of neuter nouns is equal to their default, nominative form. It’s not so for the DL case, and it becomes important that some neuter nouns have specific \textit{case-base} as well, not shortened (like masculine ones) but \textit{lengthened}:

\text{dijete (djetet-)} child \text{ pile (pilet-)} chicken

Pay attention how \text{i}je in \text{dijete} changes to \text{je} in its \textit{case-base} (such alternations are a cause of misspellings for many native speakers).

The next two verbs have a obligatory \text{se}^2 always with them (as explained already, it must be the second word, if possible):

\text{diviti se}^2 marvel, admire
\text{smijati (smi}je) \text{se}^2 laugh

For example:

\text{Goran}^N \text{ se divi Ivanu}^D\text{L}. \text{Goran marvels at Ivan.}
Ana
se smije Goran
DL. Ana is laughing at Goran.

So in Croatian – if the DL case kind of corresponds to English to — you literally ‘marvel to someone’ and ‘laugh to someone’... (which sounds wrong in English, of course).

There’s another, completely different use of the DL case. It is possible with verbs of motion:

ići (ide) go  trčati (trči) run

If you are going or running to someone, it’s expressed in Croatian with DL:

Ana
ide Ivanu
DL. Ana is going to Ivan. (where he is)

Trčim mami
DL. I’m running to my Mum.

(You see again that it’s implied whose Mum it is.)

It’s often used when you go to some shop or office held by someone, e.g.:

frizer hairdresser  zubar dentist

For example:

Ivan
sutra ide zubaru
DL. Ivan is going to the dentist tomorrow.

As with other masculine nouns that have two last vowels underlined (in my notation), the stress moves — you can see it in the example (zubar → zubaru).

As a very special use, the DL of the noun kuća house can be used as destination: it means home, even if you live in an apartment:

Ana
danas ide kući
DL. Ana is going home today.

The same meaning, especially in western and northern regions of Croatia, can be expressed with the following adverb:

doma home (as destination)

There’s yet another use of the DL case, with certain nouns and adjectives. For example, this adjective is often accompanied by a noun in DL (this again corresponds to English to):

sličan (sličn-) similar

For example:

Višnja
je slična trešnj
DL. Sour cherry is similar to cherry.

In the previous sentence, trešnja cherry was put in DL.

________

* In the “Ekavian” pronunciation, which completely dominates in Serbia, the verb smijati (smije) se² has the unexpected form smejati (smeje) se².
The use of DL of persons to express destinations seems to be much less common in Serbia, especially in speech.

• Something Possibly Interesting

There is a common idea that Croatian and similar languages can reorder words almost freely (like in the examples above, Ana piše pismo Ivanu or Ana piše Ivanu pismo) because they have case markings, so it’s obvious what you write and who will get it.

However, e.g. Icelandic has case endings that distinguish accusative and dative, but such reordering is not possible in Icelandic! It just seems that Germanic languages are rigid in various ways, for an unknown reason. Most languages in the world are much less rigid than e.g. English.

• Examples

You’ll often see the message hvala na posjeti written in restaurants, cafe bars and hotels, literally thanks for the visit. For example:

Doviđenja!
Hvala na posjeti!
Good bye!
Thank you for visiting!

The noun posjeta visit is considered somewhat colloquial by many language manuals (i.e. books and web pages telling Croatians how they should speak) but it’s very widely used.
• Exercise

Fill in the sentences below, using right forms of nouns (A or DL case):

Goran piše __________ (a). Goran is writing to his grandma.
Goran čeka __________ (b). Goran is waiting for his grandma.
Ana sutra ide __________ (c). Ana is going to the hairdresser tomorrow.
Danas idemo ______ (d). We’re going home today.
Knjiga pripada ______ (e). The book belongs to Ana.
Ivan čeka __________ (f). Ivan is waiting for Ana.
Ivan piše _____________ (g). Ivan is writing a message.
Ivan šalje _____________ (h). Ivan is sending a message.
Ivan piše ________ (i). Ivan is writing to Ana.
Goran pomaže __________ (j). Goran is helping Marko.
Hvala na ______________________ (k). Thanks for the (picture) postcard.

Check answers here.
17 Adjectives in Dative/Locative

If we want to use adjectives with nouns in dative/locative (DL), we must put them to the DL form as well. Their endings are quite simple, but really different from the noun endings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>adj. DL</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>-oj</td>
<td>velikoj ribi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>big fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>-om</td>
<td>velikom jezeru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(some -em)</td>
<td>velikom zidu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>big lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>big wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I wrote before – there’s no difference between the two masculine genders (one for people and animals, one for others) – it applies to accusative only. Actually, in most cases (N and A are exceptions), there are only two forms of adjectives: one for feminine gender, another for all others. So, adjective forms are much simpler than they could be: you need to remember only two endings for adjectives in DL.

For example:

**Ivan**

N živi u maloj kući⁴⁸. Ivan lives in a small house.

**Ana**

N živi u velikom stanu⁴⁸. Ana lives in a big apartment.

The ending -em applies to adjectives that end in a Croatian-specific letter, in exactly the same way as in the accusative case, and neuter nominative.

As in other cases of adjectives, you’ll see sometimes, in writing, longer endings: -omu, -ome and -emu.

The ending -oj is very specific for fem. DL: if you see it on an adjective, you can be quite sure that it – and the nouns following it – are in DL. Of course, there are few nouns that end in -oj in N (e.g. broj number, stroj machine, etc.)

Like in A, the possessive moj my, besides the expected form mojem in the masc. and neut., has a shortened form mom, which is much more frequent, without any difference in meaning.

**Bus and train stations and stops** are frequently used locations: terms for them in Croatian combine an adjective (sometimes left out if it’s obvious what kind of station it is) and a noun:

- autobusni adj. **bus**
- željeznički adj. **train**
- kolodvor station, terminal
- stanica stop

They are always used with the preposition na⁴⁹. For instance:
Čekamo na autobusnom kolodvoru. We’re waiting at the bus station.

The train terminal in Zagreb is called Glavni kolodvor (Main station, again adj. + noun), and a tram stop is tramvajska stanica. Instead of stanica, the word postaja is sometimes used, especially in official announcements.

We can finally solve the mystery of how to say in Croatia in Croatian! The problem is that the word Hrvatska is really an adjective. It’s used as a country name, but it still changes like an adjective (put to the feminine gender). Therefore, we should say:

Ana živi u Hrvatskoj. Ana lives in Croatia.

Some other countries that have a name that’s really a (feminine) adjective are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Češka</td>
<td>Nizozemska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engleska</td>
<td>Njemačka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francuska</td>
<td>Poljska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grčka</td>
<td>Španjolska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irska</td>
<td>Švedska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mađarska</td>
<td>Švicarska</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For instance:

Madrid je u Španjolskoj. Madrid is in Spain.

This applies to all country names that end on either -ska, -čka or -ška. Such nouns are historically just shortened forms of e.g. poljska zemlja Polish country. Not all countries have such names, many behave as normal nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bosna</td>
<td>Italija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Kina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srbija</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certain place names in Croatia and neighboring countries behave like adjectives, e.g.:  

Makarska → DL Makarskoj
Novi Vinodolski → DL Novom Vinodolskom

Occasionally, a name can consist of two adjectives (e.g. the seaside town Novi Vinodolski above).

Some countries (and cities!) have names that consist of an adjective + a noun. Each will get specific endings. Such names are e.g. Crna Gora Montenegro and Velika Gorica, a city next to Zagreb:

Ivana je u Velikoj Gorici. Ivana is in Velika Gorica.
Predrag živi u Crnoj Gori. Predrag lives in Montenegro.

Names of lakes, seas and oceans in Croatian are also often made of an adjective and a noun:

Jadransko more Adriatic sea → u Jadranskom moru
**Atlantski ocean** *Atlantic ocean* → **u Atlantskom oceanu**

There are more nouns in Croatian that are (historically) adjectives and therefore change as adjectives. For example, the name of the month of November in Croatian changes as an adjective. To inform you about it, I will indicate such behavior with (adj.) after the noun:

*studeni* (adj.) *November*

Another very frequent use of nouns-that-are-actually-adjectives are names of languages. The full name of a language is e.g.:

*engleski jezik* *the English language*

*talijanski* (adj.) *the Italian language*

They are very often shortened just to adjectives (e.g. *engleski, talijanski*) which keep the gender of the noun *jezik* – *masculine inanimate*. Such adjectives that stand for countries of origin and languages are:

- češki *Czech*
- engleski *English*
- francuski *French*
- hrvatski *Croatian*
- njemački *German*
- ruski *Russian*
- srpski *Serbian*
- španjolski *Spanish*
- švedski *Swedish*
- talijanski *Italian*
- švedski *Italian*

If you compare them to the country names above, you can verify that the country names are actually just feminine versions of these adjectives. For a comprehensive list of country names and associated adjectives, check L2 [Countries and Nationalities](#).

To say that something is *in some language*, you should use **na** + adjective in masc. DL:

**Knjiga** *The book is in German.*

If you want to ask how to say some word on some other language (including Croatian) you should use a sentence like this:

**Kako se kaže „carrot” na hrvatskom?**

(Such sentences exactly correspond to Italian *come si dice* and Spanish *cómo se dice*, so you will find another similarity to those languages.)

If you want to say that you *speak or don’t speak* a language, you should use the verb *znati* *know*:

**Učim hrvatski.** *I’m learning Croatian.*

**Znam engleski.** *I ‘know’ English. (= I speak*

**Ana ne zna ruski.** *Ana doesn’t ‘know’ Russian. (= doesn’t speak)*

(I hope you remember that this verb shifts the stress to **ne** in both Standard and ‘western’ stress scheme.)
Adjectives in the three sentences above were in the accusative case; it’s here identical to the nominative, since the noun jezik is a masculine noun, not standing for an animal or people (parts of people don’t count!) so it has accusative identical to the nominative case.

Adjectives listed above can be used anywhere where you want to express that something belongs or originates from a country, e.g.:


Adjectives like njemački are often used with the preposition na¨, to mean language lessons: either as directions (going to) or locations (attending):

Goran [N] je na engleskom [DL]. Goran is in the English class/lesson.
Sutra idem na engleski. I’m going to the English class/lesson tomorrow.

The usual distinction of na¨ + A vs. na¨ + DL applies, of course, and adjectives are in the masculine inanimate gender.

However, such adjectives cannot be used on their own to describe persons, you cannot use the word hrvatski for people (e.g. for Croat, or Croatian, a person from Croatia)! Croatian uses specific nouns for that. Here are just ones for Croat, Bosnian and Serb; as you maybe expect, there are specific words for males and females:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>male</th>
<th>female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Hrvat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnian</td>
<td>Bosanac (Bosanc-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serb</td>
<td>Srbin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a comprehensive list of names of persons of various nationalities, check L2 Countries and Nationalities.

® Such longer endings of adjectives are extremely rare in Serbia and Bosnia.

Instead of autobusni⁴, a slightly different adjective is used in Serbia: autobuski. Both forms are used in Bosnia.

The word kolodvor is specific to Croatia: in Bosnia and Serbia, just stanica is used.

Instead of ocean, a slightly different word okean is used in Serbia and most of Bosnia (note that Croatian c is a completely different sound than k).

The word studeni for the month of November is used only in Croatia (rarely in Bosnia).

Instead of Nizozemska, Španjolska and Švicarska, words Hollandija, Španija and Švajcarska are used in Serbia and most of Bosnia, and the first two words behave as normal nouns; instead of španjolski, adjective španski prevails there.
• Exercise

Fill in the right forms of words, observing destinations vs. locations (i.e. prepositions + A vs. DL):

Janet ______ (a) u __________________ (b). Janet lives in Scotland.
Ana putuje ____ (c) __________________ (d). Ana is traveling to France.
Mi ____ (e) u ______________ (f). We’re in America.
Pismo je ____ (g) __________________ (h). The letter is in English.
Sarajevo je ____ (i) ______________ (j). Sarajevo is in Bosnia.
Berlin je ____ (k) ______________ (l). Berlin is in Germany.
Mi smo ____ (m) ____________ (n) _______ (o). We’re at the big beach.
Knjiga ____ (p) u ______________ (q) __________ (r). The book is in my room.
Pismo je u ____________ (s) džepu. The letter is in my pocket.

Check answers here.
18 This and That

Croatian has three useful demonstrative adjectives. Let’s list them and compare with not only English, but also Spanish demonstratives (as they are more similar to Croatian); I’ll list with them another adjective with a related meaning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ovaj (ov-)</td>
<td>this</td>
<td>este/esta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taj (t-)</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>ese/esa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onaj (on-)</td>
<td>that over there (yonder)</td>
<td>aquel/aquella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drugi</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>otro/otra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They can be used as normal adjectives:

Ona kućaN je velikaN. *That house is big.*
MarkoN živi u ovom stanuDL. *Marko lives in this apartment.*

Unlike most other adjectives, the three adjectives listed above – ovaj (ov-), taj (t-) and onaj (on-) – cannot get -i in masculine nominative singular. (Recall that the same restriction applies to moj my).

As in English, it’s quite common in Croatian to use certain adjectives on their own, without any noun, as pronouns (compare to English each, others, and so on). However, regardless how they are used, words that are originally adjectives still change as adjectives, that is, get case endings for adjectives.

Demonstrative adjectives, in the neuter gender (i.e. ovo, to, etc.) are often used as generic pronouns, in questions, explaining things, etc.; the adjective-used-as-pronoun to is frequently translated with English it:

ToN je mačkaN. *It’s a cat.*
OvoN je pasN. *This is a dog.*

I’ll call such sentences demonstrative. They behave a bit strange: nouns in them (e.g. mačka, pas) are subjects, so the verb biti (je² +) be agrees with them. It applies to using to with another pronoun as well:

ToN sam jaN. *It’s me.* (lit. ‘It I am.’)

If you use to + adjectives, it’s a different type of sentence: you are talking about something else, already known. Now the word to is the subject, be careful that you use the neuter gender of adjectives:

OvoN je teškoN. *This is heavy/hard.*

This is completely different from how e.g. pronouns ja I or ti you (singular) behave: with them, you have to think what the pronoun represents, and adjust the gender accordingly. With to you have to use the neuter gender, regardless of what the
pronoun represents!

This is very often used to express that something belongs to someone, using possessive adjectives:

**To^N je moje^N.** *It’s mine.*

(Recall that *moj* gets -e in neuter, since it ends in a Croatian-specific consonant.)

Croatian has the 3rd person neuter pronoun *ono* *it*, but demonstrative adjective/pronoun in the neuter gender – *to* – prevails in use instead.

You can use *to* (or *ovo*, etc.), with the verb *zvati* (*zove* *call* + se^2* to express what is the name or word for something:

**Ovo^N se zove džep^N.** *This is called a pocket.*

To ask what is something called, use *kako* *how* (again, as in Spanish or Italian):

**Kako se to^N zove (na hrvatskom^{bl})?** *What is that called (in Croatian)?*

Although Croatian has no articles – words like English *the*, *a* or *an* – you can use *taj* (*t-*) or *onaj* (*on-*) as an adjective, if you want to emphasize that something is strictly defined, already known:

Čekam taj vlak^A. *I’m waiting for that train.*

**Ona žena^N je ovdje.** *That/The woman is here.*

The opposite can be expressed with two adjectives that express that something is not really known:

**jedan (jedn-) one**  
**neki** *some*

For instance:

**Neka žena^N je ovdje.** *A woman is here. (or some woman...)*

The adjective *jedan* (*jedn-*) *one* also serves as a number – for instance, you can say that you have one son (recall, masculine nouns standing for people or animals change in accusative):

**Imam jednog sina^A.** *I have one son. (or a son)*

In Croatian, demonstrative and possessive adjectives can be combined freely, unlike in English, so you can say:

**jedna moja knjiga** *one of my books* (lit. ‘one my book’)

**jedan moj prijatelj** *one of my (male) friends* (lit. ‘one my friend’)

**ta moja knjiga** *lit. ‘that my book’*

The last phrase is hard to translate, but the meaning is obvious: a specific book that belongs to me. For example:

**Poznaješ jednog mog dobrog prijatelja^A.** *You know a good friend of mine. (lit. ‘one my good friend’)*
The normal order of adjectives in such phrases is demonstrative-possessive-descriptive, but it can be changed in principle.

There’s another, very subtle way to express indefiniteness of the subject in sentences without objects – put the subject after the verb:

**Dolazi vlak**. *A train is coming.*

(This explains the common order of words in sentences like *pada kiša* lit. ‘a rain is falling.’)

The adjective **drugi** is often translated as English *another*. While English e.g. *another apple* is a bit ambiguous, Croatian **drugi** means *not this one*, and Croatian uses **još** + **jedan** (jedn-) in meaning **one more**:

*Želim drugu olovku*. *I want another pencil. (a different pencil)*

*Želim još jednu olovku*. *I want another pencil. (one more)*

We have used here the following noun and verb:

**olovka** pencil    **željeti** (želi) want

The adjective **jedan** (jedn-) *one* can be negated, by appending **ni-**:

**nijedan** (nijedn-) + negation *not even one*

Like with other negative words starting with **ni-**, the verb must be negated too:

**Nemam nijednu olovku**. *I don’t have a single pencil. (lit. ‘I don’t have not even one pencil.’)*

**Ne znam nijednu riječ**. *I don’t know a single word. (lit. ‘I don’t know not even one word.’)*

While **jedan** (jedn-) usually translates as *one*, Croatian has no “*noun*” like English *one*. When you would use *this one, another one* in English, only the adjective-as-pronoun corresponding to *this* or *another* is used in Croatian – but don’t forget to adjust its case and gender! For example:

*Želim ovu jabuku*. *I want this apple.*

*Želim ovu*. *I want this one. (lit. ‘this’, fem. A)*

*Želim drugog učitelja*. *I want another teacher.*

*Želim drugog*. *I want another one. (lit. ‘other’, masc.anim. A)*

*Želim još jedno pivo*. *I want one more beer.*

*Želim još jedno*. *I want one more. (lit. ‘one’, neut. A)*

This is one instance when it’s clear why adjectives show gender in Croatian – they are more specific when used without nouns.

The words **jedan** (jedn-) and **nijedan** (nijedn-) are often used in short replies, buy pay attention that they of course adjust to the gender of the thing they refer to (here **olovka** pencil = feminine):
Trebam olovku. I need a pencil.
— Imam jednu. I have one.
— Nemam nijednu. I don’t have any. (lit. ‘I don’t have not even one.’)

The neuter form to (properly changed for case, of course) is also used to refer to facts, statements, events and actions:

Kuham čaj. I’m making tea. (lit. ‘cooking tea’) 
— To je dobro! That’s good!

Here, the word to refers to what is previously said. Only to can be used in such references, ovo or ono cannot be used.

Croatian has specific demonstrative adverbs for manner (how) and quantity (how much/many) that don’t have exact English counterparts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>manner</th>
<th>quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ovako</td>
<td>ovoliko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in this way, like this</td>
<td>this much/many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tako</td>
<td>toliko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in that way, so</td>
<td>so much/many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onako</td>
<td>onoliko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in that way, like that</td>
<td>that much/many</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of them, ovako, tako and toliko are most often used. For example:

Ovaj auto je tako brz. This car is so fast.

In fact, Croatian has a wide array of demonstrative adverbs, covering every category of adverbs: destination, origin, reason, location, time, etc. Some of them are frequently used, others less so.

However, certain meanings are expressed with a demonstrative + noun, and the whole phrase gets a special meaning. The noun put (meaning way on its own) is often used in such phrases:

ovaj put this time (around)
taj put that time

Croatian has also demonstrative adjectives corresponding to quality and size:

ovakav (ovakv-) such, like this
ovolik this big

Don’t forget these words are adjectives, that is, change in gender, case and number. For example:

Imam ovakvu majicu. I have such a shirt.

Other forms are derived in the same way as for other types of demonstratives, i.e. by replacing ov- with t- or on-.

Don’t worry too much about the difference between ovakav (ovakv-) and takav (takv-) – they are often used interchangeably by Croatians.
English has specific time adverbs for ‘on, during this day’ (today) and ‘this night’ (tonight). Croatian has a bit expanded scheme. They all end in -s:

- **dan**as today      jutros this morning
- **no**ćas tonight   večeras this evening

For example:

*Večeras idemo u restoran*. We’re going to the restaurant this evening.

The word *to* is also used in the phrase *to jest* (where *jest* is an archaic form of *je*², the pres-3 of *biti*).

Another demonstrative, *tako*, is used in another frequent phrase, *i tako dalje*. Both are very common expressions, so they have standard abbreviations (the periods are mandatory; matching English abbreviations are also given):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>phrase</th>
<th>abbreviated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to jest that is</td>
<td>tj. i.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i tako dalje and so on</td>
<td>itd. etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*®* Instead of *vlak* train, the word *voz* is used in Serbia and most of Bosnia. Instead of *kuhati*, the form *kuvati* is used in Serbia, and in parts of Bosnia and Croatia (however, it’s *not standard* in Croatian).

In Serbia, instead of *trebam olovku*, the construction *treba mi olovka* is used. It’s also used in Croatia. It will be explained in the following chapters.

### Something Possibly Interesting

English *the* is basically just a worn down, reduced version of *that* that somehow became obligatory before many nouns and so became an ‘article’. Many languages, from Croatian to Hindi and Korean, have no articles whatsoever. This map in the *World Atlas of Language Structures* illustrates the distribution of languages with and without articles: [Definite Articles](#).

In Italian, you *have* to use an article before *my friend* — either indefinite *un mio amico* or definite *il mio amico*. Overall, Croatian grammar is much closer to Romance languages than to English.
• Exercise

Fill in the right forms of words:

Ona živi u __________(a) __________(b). She lives in that house.

Imam __________(c) auto. I have such a car.

Vidim __________(d) pticu. I see one bird.

Ovo ____ (e) __________(f) __________(g)! This is so expensive!

To ____ (h) ____ (i). That’s us.

Želim ____ (j) __________(k) sendvič. I want one more sandwich.

Check answers here.
19 Your, Ana’s: Possessives

We know how to say the red apple, even my apple, but not your apple or Ana’s apple. So, let’s learn it.

As I have already explained, words like my (or Ana’s) are simply adjectives in Croatian (more accurately, possessive adjectives). They are not adjectives in English, where you cannot say the my apple, but you can say the red apple. That’s one example where Croatian is simpler than English.

As the rule, possessive adjectives never get the optional -i in masc. N.

Each possessive adjective corresponds to one pronoun. There are three sets of pronouns with similar forms; the first set is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pronoun</th>
<th>possessive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ja /</td>
<td>moj my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ti you (sg.)</td>
<td>tvoj your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>svoj</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All three end in -j, so they get -em and -eg instead of -om and -og, but, like moj, the other two adjectives above have additional, shortened forms in neuter and masculine genders as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>alt. endings for moj, tvoj, svoj</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masc. / neut. DL:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ojem = -om</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. p/a A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ojeg = -og</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can use them as any adjective:

Čekamo tvog brata\(^{\text{A}}\). We’re waiting for your brother.
Čekamo tvojeg brata\(^{\text{A}}\). (the same meaning)
Pišem poruku\(^{\text{A}}\) tvojoj sestri\(^{\text{DL}}\). I’m writing a message to your sister.

The following two adjectives don’t have any special forms, they change as normal adjectives (of course, since they end in an -š, they get -em and -eg in neuter and masculine):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pronoun</th>
<th>possessive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mi we</td>
<td>naš our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi you (pl./resp.)</td>
<td>vaš your (i.e. y’all’s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last set contains the 3rd person pronouns. Here Croatian does not distinguish neuter from masculine possessive:
For example:

Knjiga je njihova. The book is ‘their’. (= theirs)
Čitam njegovu poruku. I’m reading his message.

There are two possessive adjectives that correspond to ona she. Both are used, you can use any you like.

If you were careful, there was a mysterious possessive svoj. It should be used when something belongs to the subject of the sentence. For instance, if Ana is writing a letter to her brother, you would use it:

Ana piše pismo svom bratu. Ana is writing a letter to her (= Ana’s) brother.

In real life, it’s not always used in 1st and 2nd person, so you will hear and sometimes read e.g.:

Pišem pismo mom bratu. (colloq.) I’m writing a letter to my brother.

The main purpose of svoj is distinguishing between two or more possible possessors in a sentence – it always points to the subject:

Ana vraća Ivani svoj ključ. Ana is returning her (= Ana’s) key to Ivana.
Ana vraća Ivani njen ključ. Ana is returning her (= Ivana’s) key to Ivana.

The reflexive possessive svoj doesn’t distinguish owner’s gender and number, i.e. it’s the same in masc. and fem., singular and plural – and that elegantly solves a classic problem in English, obvious in these three sentences:

Everyone loves his mother. or
Everyone loves his or her mother. or
Everyone loves their mother. ?

The first option is problematic since everyone includes women too; the second option is too long, and the third option is condemned by some. Croatian simply uses:

Svatko voli svoju majku.

(The indefinite pronoun svatko will be explained in 41 Somewhere, Nobody,
How to make possessives out of names? In English, you just add ’s, but it’s slightly more complicated in Croatian. It’s simplest for names ending in -a: just replace it with the -in, and (usually) you’re done. It works also for nouns in -a standing for people (e.g. tata Dad):

- Ana → Anin
- mama Mom → mamin
- Ivana → Ivanin
- sestra sister → sestrin
- Luka → Lukin
- tata Dad → tatin

For nouns and names that end in -ca, the c changes to č when -in is added:

- Anica → Aničin
- prijateljica friend (f) → prijateljičin

The noun majka mother also has a change in consonants, but not other nouns ending in -ka:

- majka mother → majčin
- baka grandmother → bakin

What about male names that change as if ending in -a, like Ante? They also make possessives with -in:

Čekamo Antinu sestru. We’re waiting for Ante’s sister.

This also usually applies for female names that don’t end in -a and therefore don’t change at all (however, some people use alternative methods, to be described a bit later), e.g.

- Doris → Dorisin
- Ines → Inesin

For male names ending in a consonant or names like Marko, you should add an -ov (or -ev after Croatian-specific letters). It works for nouns standing for people as well:

- Goran → Goranov
- Hrvoje → Hrvojev
- Ivan → Ivanov
- sin son → sinov
- Marko → Markov
- prijatelj friend (m) → prijateljev

If a noun ends in -c (or its case-base), it turns to č when -ev is added:

- otac (oc-) father (formal) → očev
- princ prince → prinčev

All these words are adjectives, they change in case and gender! For example:

Čekamo Aninu sestru. We’re waiting for Ana’s sister.
Sjedim u Hrvojevoj kuhinji. I’m sitting in Hrvoje’s kitchen.
Ana je Goranova mama. Ana is Goran’s mom.

Since they are adjectives, they are more flexible than English possessives:
Auto$^n$ je Anin$^n$. The car ‘is Ana’s’. (= belongs to Ana)

I’ve already explained that possession of body parts is usually expressed with the DL case. Is there any difference in meaning when possessive adjectives are used? Usually, there’s no difference, and DL is preferred with such nouns. However, here’s a difference in some circumstances: DL implies a kind of close possession, while possessive adjectives don’t. Compare these sentences:

(1) Ana$^n$ pere Goranu$^{DL}$ kosu$^a$. Ana is washing Goran’s hair. (lit. ‘washing the hair to Goran’)
(2) Ana$^n$ pere Goranovu kosu$^a$. (lit. ‘washing Goran’s hair’ – the same meaning?)

They don’t mean exactly the same. The sentence #1 implies that the hair is growing from Goran’s head, while the sentence #2 could also apply to cut hair being washed for whatever reason.

This is a very fine distinction not important in most circumstances. (The ‘close possession’ is sometimes called ‘inalienable’, but the name is not precise – the hair can be cut.)

Pay attention: in the DL possession, used for body parts, the noun for person is simply in DL (Goran → Goranu). When you use a possessive adjective – which you have to do to express possession of a ball, dog, house etc. – you have first to turn the person into a possessive (Goran → Goranov) and then add the right ending for case and gender to it (e.g. Goranov → Goranovu for feminine A).

With relatives, it’s normal to use poss. adjectives, as above (check the sentence about Ana’s sister). I’ll explain later when it’s more common to use DL for relatives as well.

Possessives in Croatian are often used in street names, for example Branimir street – one of major streets in Zagreb – is actually Branimirova ulica Branimir’s street. The word ulica street is often dropped when it’s obvious what we’re talking about. (With specific streets, you should use the preposition $u^1$):

Ivan$^n$ živi u Branimirovoj ulici$^{DL}$. Ivan lives on ‘Branimirova’ street.
Ivan$^n$ živi u Branimirovoj$^{DL}$. (the same meaning, but shorter)

There’s just one problem: you can create a possessive adjective in Croatian from a single noun only. In English, you can just turn the last word into a possessive, but not so in Croatian. Here’s what I mean:

mačka cat → mačkin cat’s
crna mačka black cat → ? black cat’s

Croatian uses a completely different construction for the latter phrase, and we’ll learn it immediately.

________
The possessive adjective njezin is considered archaic outside Croatia.

Something Possibly Interesting

Now you know why so many last names in Russia end in -ov, -ev or -in: they are just former possessive adjectives. Such last names are common in Croatia too, but even more common is to add -ić, which will become clear later.

Exercise

Fill in the right forms of nouns:

Čitam ____________ (a) knjigu. I’m reading his book.
____________(b) ____________(c) je ovdje. Hrvoje’s sister is here.
Poznajem __________(d) __________(e). I know Ana’s brother.
Auto pripada ________(f) _________(g). The car belongs to my son.
Imam _________(h) tanjur. I have my plate.
Kišobran je ____ (i) __________(j) autu. The umbrella is in your car.

Check answers here.
20 At My Friend’s: Genitive

There’s another case to learn, and it’s a very useful case. It’s used in constructions like *my sister’s apartment* and *car keys*, but also in measuring, counting, with many prepositions, etc. It’s called *genitive* (just G for short). In some other languages (e.g. German) the genitive case is mainly associated with possession. In Croatian, expressing possession is just one of many uses of the genitive case, and it’s not its main use!

Nouns get the following endings in genitive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type (N)</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns in -a (= fem.)</td>
<td>-a → -e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter nouns (= in -o, -e)</td>
<td>-o or -e → -a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. nouns not in -a</td>
<td>add -a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)</td>
<td>add -i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the DL case, the endings of most masc. nouns and or neuter nouns are the same, and there’s no distinction for people and animals.

We can put it immediately to use. First, it’s used when English uses *something-of-something*, e.g.:

- **kraj filma** end of the movie

The second word is always in G, *regardless of the role the whole phrase gets*. If you use the phrase when e.g. the DL case is required, only the first word changes:

To\(^N\) je na kraju\(^{DL}\) filma\(^G\). *That’s at the end of the movie.*

This construction is frequently used when something ‘belongs’ to something, but it’s not possession:

- **broj telefona** phone number
- **ključ auta** car key
- **vlasnik bicikla** bicycle owner
- **vrh planine** mountain top

While in such expressions in English, *phone* and *car* are used like adjectives, in Croatian they are nouns in genitive (lit. *number of the phone, top of the mountain*, etc.) If you want to describe a noun (e.g. **vrh peak**) with an *adjective*, you need to adapt the adjective to the noun gender and case, and normally place it in front of the noun (in poetry and some other circumstances, the adjective can be after the noun):

- **visoki vrh** (N, N)
- **na visokom vrhu** (DL, DL)

But if you describe a noun with *another noun*, you should put it after the noun, in the G case, and it stays in the G case, no matter what! (Another way is to turn the noun
into an adjective and follow the previous procedure: it’s described in 33 School Yard: Relational Adjectives:

- vrh planine (N, G)
- na vrhu planine (DL, G)

Now, there’s a problem. The form planine also means mountains (that is, plural, as you’ll see very soon). So, is it on the top, followed by the plural noun mountains, or the noun + G construction on the top of the mountain? In such cases, always assume it’s noun + G, of course, if it makes sense.

The G case is also used by several verbs. The often used ones are:

- bojati (boji) se² be afraid
- sjećati se² have memories, remember

The first verb always uses the particle se². For example:

GoranN se boji mraka⁶. Goran is afraid of dark.

Perhaps the most common use of the genitive case in Croatian is with prepositions. In fact, only a limited number of prepositions in Croatian demand cases other than G. You’ll see that the genitive case is the default case if a preposition, adverb or number is used before a noun. A very common preposition is:

- kod” + G (roughly) at/by

This preposition covers many meanings. It’s very often used to specify location by a prominent feature, or someone’s home, shop or office:

Čekam Anu² kod mosta⁶. I’m waiting for Ana by the bridge.
AnaN je kod zuba⁶ra. Ana is at the dentist’s.
Goran⁶ je kod tete⁶. Goran is at his aunt’s. (place)

If you refer to someone’s house or apartment as a location, it’s normal just to use such an expression, without stating is it a kuća house or a stan apartment, or something else. In this manner, the Croatian preposition kod” is very similar to the French chez.

Also, if you know some German, you’ll see it’s also very similar to e.g. German beim Zahnarzt; however, the German preposition bei requires the German Dative case – Croatian and German cases are not equivalent in some constructions.

When kod” is used before people, the ‘location’ can be understood figuratively – including inside someone’s pocket or purse – so it sometimes corresponds to English have:

Ključ⁶ je kod Ane⁶. (roughly) Ana has the key.

However, this can be used only for temporary possession of movable things. You cannot use such expression to say Ana has a brother or Ana has a new house, but you can use it for e.g. cars:
**Tvoj auto**^N^ je kod Ane^G^. (roughly) *Ana has (= is using) your car.*

There’s a special phrase *kod kuće* – it means simply *at home*, regardless if you’re living in a house or not:

**Nisam kod kuće**^G^. *I’m not at home.*

We must not forget adjectives in G; they get quite different endings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>adj. G</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td><strong>velike ribe</strong> big fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>-og</td>
<td><strong>velikog jezera</strong> big lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>(some -eg)</td>
<td><strong>velikog konja</strong> big horse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The endings -og vs. -eg in neut. and masc. follow the usual rule as in other cases in neut. and masc. genders. Again, you will sometimes see longer endings -oga and -ega, mainly in writing.

The G case is used when something is related to descriptions or teaching a language. Recall that languages are usually referred to simply by adjectives:

- **gramatika španjolskog** *Spanish grammar*
- **udžbenik hrvatskog** *Croatian textbook*

With nouns **rječnik** *dictionary* and **gramatika** *grammar* you can also use just adjectives before them – then adjectives change case as nouns do:

- **španjolska gramatika** *Spanish grammar*

The possessive adjectives similar to **moj** *my* have a specific, shortened form in neut. and masc. genders in the G too:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>moje</td>
<td>mog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>moj</td>
<td>mojeg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This example combines a preposition, possessive adjective and a noun:

**Ana**^N^ je kod moje sestre^G^. ‘*Ana is at my sister’s.*’

We can finally say *your sister’s apartment*. In Croatian you can make a possessive only out of *single nouns*. If you want to express possession by something expressed by more than one word, you must put them to G, regardless of the case of the possessed noun and place them *after the possessed noun*. Here **tvoja sestra** *your
sister (G tvoje sestre) owns the apartment:

Ovo\textsuperscript{N} je stan\textsuperscript{N} tvoje sestre\textsuperscript{G}. ‘This is an apartment of your sister’ (= your sister’s apartment)

Ivan\textsuperscript{N} je u stanu\textsuperscript{DL} tvoje sestre\textsuperscript{G}. Ivan is in your sister’s apartment.

Observe how changing case of stan apartment doesn’t affect the words tvoje sestre at all. Here I’ve put the matching Croatian and English possessive phrases in square brackets:

Ivana\textsuperscript{N} je sestra\textsuperscript{N} [moje žene\textsuperscript{G}]. Ivana is [my wife]’s sister.
Čekam sestr\textsuperscript{A} [moje žene\textsuperscript{G}]. I’m waiting for [my wife]’s sister.
Pišem poruku\textsuperscript{A} sestr\textsuperscript{DL} [moje žene\textsuperscript{G}]. I’m writing a message to [my wife]’s sister.

(Croatian has precise words for wife’s sister etc. but you can always use expressions like these.)

There’s something interesting with street names. We have already encountered Branimirova ulica, lit. Branimir’s street. However, the official name of the street is Ulica kneza Branimira (knez is a title, roughly prince).

People are talking about the same street either as Branimirova – often leaving out ulica – or as Ulica kneza Branimira, e.g. when writing their address, even business address, some people prefer one form over another. If you’re not aware of the grammar behind it – as foreigners often aren’t – you can get an impression these are two different streets! Here I took a photo of a shop door and an official street sign few meters away from it:

There’s one more issue: with possessives (e.g. Anin), you could say:

Auto\textsuperscript{N} je Anin\textsuperscript{N}. The car ‘is Ana’s’. (= belongs to Ana)

You cannot do it when something belongs to someone expressed by more than one word (e.g. moja sestra). There are two other ways.

The formal way is to use the verb pripadati belong (introduced in 16 Giving to Someone, Going to Someone). You can use it with any expression that stands for possessor. Keep in mind that this verb requires the DL case:
Auto^N pripada mojom sestri^{DL}. The car belongs to my sister.

Auto^N pripada Ani^{DL}. The car belongs to Ana.

Another universal way – but very colloquial – is to use the verb biti (je^2 +) be with the preposition od^u + G:

Auto^N je od moje sestre^G. (colloq.) The car ‘is of my sister’.

Auto^N je od Ane^G. (colloq.) The car ‘is of Ana’.

• Something Possibly Interesting

In Croatian and Serbian grammatical traditions, the G case is always listed second, after the nominative case. In some Serbian grammars, it’s even called ‘the second case’. When the traditional N-G-… order of listing cases in primary school textbooks in Croatia was changed to N-A-… – about a decade ago – a lot of Croatians complained: they have learned the N-G… order in school, often memorizing it like a song (and mostly not thinking what the cases really are, which is expected for 11-year-olds).

The use of kod^u + G for possession is kind of opposite of using DL (or possessive adjectives), and it’s really a different kind of possession: kod^u + G indicates really having something (e.g. tickets in the pocket), while D indicates some intrinsic bond – body parts, personal items, especially when “on” someone. Different kinds of possession can be combined, as in tvoj auto je kod Ane – the car is yours, but Ana has it (at the moment). In Russian, the first way – a preposition + G (Russian uses the preposition u) – is the main way to indicate any kind of possession, including having brothers. The Russian verb meaning have is rarely used.

• Exercise

Fill in the missing words:

Goran ____ (a) ______ (b) ______ (c). Goran is at his mother’s place.

Mačka ____ (d) ______ (e) ______ (f). The cat is afraid of water.

Tražim ___________ (g) ___________ (h). I’m looking for the key of the wardrobe.

___________(i) je kod ______ (j). Ana has the book.

Ivan je _____ (k) vrhu ___________ (l) ___________ (m). Ivan is on the top of a high mountain.

Goran se boji ___________ (n) ________ (o). Goran is afraid of the black dog.

Ne sjećam ____ (p) ____ (q) ________ (r). I don’t remember that night.

Nismo ______ (s) ________ (t). We’re not at home.

Check answers here.
21 Origins

We continue with uses of the genitive case (G), with more prepositions. There are several prepositions that indicate origins, where something or someone comes or came from – opposite to destinations.

The following two prepositions are opposites to u¨ + A and na¨ + A – they represent origin of motion:

iz¨ + G from, off (opposite to u¨ + A)
s¨ / sa¨ + G off of, from (opposite to na¨ + A)

If you express going to a destination with u¨ + A, you should use iz¨ + G for a motion in the opposite direction:

Goran ide u školuA. Goran is going to school.
Goran dolazi iz školeG. Goran is coming from school.

This preposition is often used to express someone’s origins:

Josip je iz RijekeG. ‘Josip is from Rijeka.’ (i.e. born and raised there)

However, if you express a destination with na¨ + A, you must express the opposite direction with s¨ / sa¨ + G:

Idem na posaoA. I’m going to work.
Idem s poslaG. I’m going from work.

Odlazimo na plažuA. We’re leaving for the beach.
Vraćamo se s plažeG. We’re coming back from the beach.

This preposition has 2 forms: the longer form is used before words starting with s-, š-, z- or ž- (in colloquial Croatian, that rule is not always respected, you will hear and read sa¨ before other words as well).

If you’re now scratching your head, guessing how to pronounce s posla, the s¨ is normally pronounced with the following word, e.g. ‘sposla’, but always written separately.

(German has also two ‘from’ prepositions – von and aus; however, they are not really equivalent to Croatian ones; besides, they use the German Dative case. Croatian uses the genitive case much more often than German.)

English has another possibility – the preposition off, expressing simply that you’re not at some location. Croatian has no such preposition, you’ll have to use negation:

Nisam na posluDL. I’m off work.

There’s yet another preposition used in a very similar meaning:

od¨ + G from

It’s used if you’re going from someone, actually from a location that’s described
with kod” + G:

AnaN odlazi od zabaraG. Ana is leaving the dentist’s office.

To ask where from something or someone goes/comes, just start a question with one of these two words:

odakle / otkud(a) where... from

As usual, nothing else except this word is needed, no change of word order:

Odakle si? Where are you from?
— Iz RijekeG. From Rijeka.

Odakle dolazi ta bukaN? Where is that noise coming from?
— S plažeG. From the beach.

This table nicely summarizes three types of destinations, locations and origins, and the various question-words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>u¨ + A</th>
<th>u¨ + DL</th>
<th>iz¨ + G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sobu</td>
<td>u sobuA</td>
<td>u sobiDL</td>
<td>iz sobeG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to the room</td>
<td>in the room</td>
<td>from the room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>na¨ + A</td>
<td>na¨ + DL</td>
<td>s¨ / sa¨ + G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plažu</td>
<td>na plažiDL</td>
<td>at the beach</td>
<td>s plažeG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to the beach</td>
<td></td>
<td>from the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>kod¨ + G</td>
<td>od¨ + G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zubaru</td>
<td>kod zabaraG</td>
<td>od zabaraG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to dentist’s</td>
<td>in dentist’s</td>
<td>from dentist’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will hear quite often kod” + G used colloquially ® for destinations as well instead of just DL:

AnaN ide kod zabaraG. (colloq.) Ana going to the dentist’s.

There’s an often used adverb of space standing for a specific origin:

odavde from here

It’s always used to express that meaning, you cannot say "od ovdje".

Prepositions od¨ and do¨ are frequently used to indicate start and end points. They are also used to indicate when something starts and when ends, that is, origin and end in time:

Radim od osam do četiri. I work from 8 to 4.

With time adverbs, there are the following very often used combinations for time
origins:

- **otkad(a)** ‘since when’, from what time
- **odsad(a)** from now, now on
- **otad(a)** from then
- **odavno** since a long time ago
- **odnedavno** recently (since a recent moment)

You will sometimes see the first three spelled separately – **od kada, od sada, od tada** – that’s not strictly standard in Croatian, but often used.

The adverbs **odavno** and **odnedavno** have no exact English equivalents, but they are easy to understand – something started either a long time ago or a short time ago (of course, the ‘short time’ depends on the context).

The question-word **otkad(a)** has also no exact English equivalent: it’s used when we want to ask when something ongoing has started (such questions are much more precise than generic "how long", so Croatian prefers them):

**Otkada Goran** spava? lit. ‘Since what time is Goran sleeping?’
— **Od podneva**. *Since noon.*

Here, we used the noun:

- **podne** (podnev-) noon

It’s sometimes used as indeclinable, so you’ll hear also **od podne**.

There are matching time end points as well:

- **dokad(a)** ‘until when’
- **dosad(a)** until now
- **dotad(a)** until then
- **donedavno** until recently

(As for origins, the first three adverbs are sometimes spelled separately.) For example:

**Odavno ne jedem meso**. *I haven’t been eating meat ‘since long time ago’.*

**Dokad radiš?** lit. ‘Until which time do you work?’

The adverb **odavno** points to a start point in time. The action or state might still be ongoing: Croatian uses the present tense then.

The second sentence cannot be translated to English without rephrasing: it simply asks for the end point in time for **raditi** work... Even the first sentence sounds awkward for many English speakers – for a long time is preferred. Croatian, however, has a single word meaning "from a distant moment in the past", so it’s often used.

There’s another, very frequent use of the preposition **od”** – to indicate material (understood broadly) something is made of. English uses nouns-as-adjectives
frequently for that purpose, but Croatian does not. For example:

Ovo je sok od jabuke. *This is apple juice.*
Kuća je od kamena. *The house is of stone.*

There are two more very useful words (they can be used on their own, but also with nouns in G):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word + G</th>
<th>on its own</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>prije</td>
<td><em>before</em> <em>earlier</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poslje</td>
<td><em>after</em> <em>later</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word *poslje* is an exception from the usual pronunciation rules: many people pronounce it *pos-lje*. Both words are very common:

Poslje plaže idemo na večeru. *After the beach, we’re going to supper.*
Jedem doručak prije posla. *I eat breakfast before work.*

Instead of *poslje*, the word *nakon* can be used, but it’s always used with a noun in G, while *poslje* can be used on its own:

Poslje idemo na večeru. *Later, we’re going to supper.*

Note: these words don’t completely correspond to English *before* and *after*. I’ll explain the details later, in 49 *For 7 Hours: Definite Periods*.

________

® Use of *kod* + G for destinations is standard in Serbia and Bosnia. Spelling *od sada*, as two words, is acceptable in Standard Serbian.

● **Something Possibly Interesting**

In Russian, which is a close cousin to Croatian, there’s basically the same three-way table; of course, some prepositions have a bit different shape. Besides, the dative case (D) is not equal to locative (L) in Russian – and the locative case is usually called ‘prepositional’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>kuda</th>
<th>gd’e</th>
<th>otkuda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>where... to</em></td>
<td><em>where</em></td>
<td><em>where... from</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v + A</td>
<td>v + L</td>
<td>iz + G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na + A</td>
<td>na + L</td>
<td>so + G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k + D</td>
<td>u + G</td>
<td>ot + G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have here just spelled Russian using Croatian Latin characters, to show you how similar the system is. You can find more in this link: *Motion and Location*. 
There is the preposition k in Croatian as well – used with DL – but it’s mostly obsolete, especially in speech.

**Exercise**

Fill in the sentences below:

Josip se vraća (a) __________ (b). Josip is returning from Zagreb.

Goran je u školi (c) (d) (e) (f). Goran is in school from eight to two.

Ana dolazi (g) __________ (h). Ana is coming from a meeting.

Goran se vraća (i) __________ (j). Goran is coming back from school.

Vraćamo se (k) __________ (l). We’re coming back from the concert.

Idemo (m) __________ (n). We’re going from the park.

Ivan putuje (o) __________ (p). Ivan is traveling from the island of Krk.

Na __________ (q) smo __________ (r). We’re at the seaside until Sunday.

Check answers [here](#).
22 Here I am: More Pronouns

Let’s check now the pronouns in genitive (G) and dative/locative (DL). It’s less to learn than it might seem, since the forms for the genitive case are identical to the accusative forms, with one partial exception. And we’re going to learn pronouns in plural. In all, 8 pronoun forms to learn.

Here are the personal pronouns for the 1st and 2nd persons in singular. Since forms for the genitive and accusative cases are identical, I have grouped them to a single column:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pronouns in singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DL forms in singular have just a different end vowel.

I’ve put forms in the nominative case into parentheses to remind you that they aren’t actually often used. In fact, they can be considered stressed forms – you use them only if you want to emphasize the subject (or sometimes, you have to use them, e.g. in constructions like ja sam Amerikanac I’m American).

Here are the forms for plural:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pronouns in plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, the DL forms have just a different final consonant.

Bear in mind that A, G and DL forms of pronouns must be placed in the second position:

Pišem ti²DL pismo. I’m writing a letter to you.
Ana¹nas⁴ čeka. Ana is waiting for us.

Now, you’re maybe scratching your head: how to distinguish e.g. ti (you, singular, N) from ti² (the same pronoun, but in DL)? How to tell mi (we, N) from mi² (I, DL)? How to understand this:

Ti mi pišeš. ???

Look at the verb. The verb is in the second person singular (-š) therefore ti is a subject pronoun. Since there can be only one subject, mi must be in some other
case, and the only other form is 1st person DL.

Another clue that ti in the sentence above cannot be anything else than N is its place: if it would be in any other case, it would be in the second position. It’s not, so it’s in N. The sentence means you’re writing to me.

Finally, here are the 3rd person forms. They are quite unlike forms for the 1st and 2nd person:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd person pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m pl.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can see it’s again only feminine against everything else in G and DL, and in plural, genders are not distinguished at all (except in N). While the 3rd person feminine A was either je² or ju², in the genitive case, only je² is used.

Maybe you have noticed a small problem: what if someone uses two second-position pronouns? I mean, something like this:

Šaljem ti³³ gaœ. I’m sending it to you.

In such sentences, the word order is always such that pronouns in DL come before ones in the accusative or genitive case!

There’s one more fine point. You noticed that neuter pronouns are in brackets. That’s because they are used not often: it’s much more common to use demonstrative adjectives (i.e. ovo, to...) instead.

This is maybe a convenient place to introduce two very similar verbs:

razumjeti (razumije) understand ®
shvaćati understand ®

The first verb has inf like živjeti, but a special form in the present tense – there are only few verbs like that.

They are usually used interchangeably, except when you don’t understand something because of the bad phone line, you are not familiar with the word, or you poorly know the language – you cannot use shvaćati then. Only razumjeti includes recognizing of words and sounds, either spoken or written. (You’ll see later that razumjeti behaves a bit specially in some aspects.)
For example:

**Ne razumijem te**. I don’t understand you.

**Ne shvaćam pitanje**. I don’t understand the question.

In the second sentence, speaker really says *I understand the words, but the whole question doesn’t make sense to me*. You could use **razumjeti** in the second sentence as well – but **shvaćati** is more specific in this case.

The DL of personal pronouns is often used when you say **thanks** to someone:

**Hvala ti**. Thank you. (to someone you’re close with)

**Hvala Vam**. Thank you. (to someone you’re not close with)

There are two special constructions which frequently use pronouns. Both use the genitive case. The first one is:

**evo + G** here’s / here are

It’s used when you want to emphasize that something is now ‘here’, visible, e.g. when you show up somewhere, or when you find something. The word starts a sentence and it followed by a noun (with optional adjectives) or a pronoun in genitive:

**Evo moje sestre**. Here’s my sister!

The most common use is when you see someone or you come somewhere where you’re expected. It’s used mainly in spoken language:

**Evo me**. Here I am!

**Evo ga**. Here he/it is!

**Evo Ane**. Here’s Ana!

It’s also used when you give something to someone, but it’s neither formal nor polite, it’s used only when you are quite familiar to someone:

**Evo piva**. Here’s the beer!

(You will sometimes even hear **eto + N** in the last use, when giving something to someone.) Similar words are **eto** and **eno**, used for more distant things, but they are much less often used.

Another construction expresses *there’s no...*; it uses negative pres-3 of **imati** have with genitive:

**nema + G** there’s no

For example:

**Nema piva**. There’s no beer.

**Nema soli**. There’s no salt.

This construction is much more versatile than the English one: like with **evo**, you can
use personal names, any nouns and pronouns, but they always have to be in G:

Nema Aně. lit. ‘There’s no Ana.’
Nema ga. lit. ‘There’s no him.’ = He’s not here. (or it, depending on the context)
Nema ih. lit. ‘There’s no them.’ = They’re not here.

This is the negative existential construction. These sentences don’t say really here, but there’s no way to translate them accurately to English (if you know, please tell me). It always uses nema in the present tense (check the last sentence).

This construction is used in several frequent phrases. One of them is:

\[
\text{nema veze} \quad \begin{array}{l}
\text{never mind} \\
\text{it doesn’t matter}
\end{array}
\]

The word veza normally means connection, so this is clearly a non-trivial meaning. (This phrase can be also used within larger constructions that will be explained later.)

How to distinguish two possible meanings of nema ga – there’s no him/it and he/she doesn’t have him/it? The first meaning is impossible if there’s a subject. So, people use on ga nema (or ona ga nema) to avoid confusion.

You cannot use the pronoun forms above with prepositions. If you want to use prepositions with pronouns, you have to use the stressed forms, explained in 34 For Them: Stressed Pronouns.

® “Ekavian” forms, which dominate in Serbia, apply to the verb razumjeti (razumije) understand: its “Ekavian” form is razumeti, and the verb is fully regular.

Instead of shvaćati, a slightly different form of the verb, shvatati, is used in Serbia and most of Bosnia.

• Examples

The song U svakom slučaju te volim In any case, I love you, performed by Ibrica Jusić (a masculine name, despite ending in -a) is, without any doubt, among the very best love songs from Croatia in the last 100 years:

Volim te uvijek
I kad se budiš
I kad na licu šminke nemaš
I kad si ljuta
I kad se čudiš
(Luko Paljetak)

I always love you
Even when you’re waking up
Even when you don’t wear any makeup
Even when you’re angry
Even when you’re wondering
The first two verses use grammar and words I’ve already explained. Almost each verse starts with *i kad*, literally *and when*. The third verse translates literally as *and when you don’t have any makeup on your face*: it uses G instead of A (i.e. *šminke* instead of *šminku*) – it’s a way to express *any*, i.e. indefinite quantity. Such use will be described in 45 *Quantities and Existence*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uvijek te³ volim</th>
<th>Always I love you</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hoću da znaš</td>
<td>I want you to know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volim te³</td>
<td>I love you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne znam kako da odolim</td>
<td>I’m unable to resist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U svakom slučaju⁴ te³ volim</td>
<td>In any case, I love you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The construction *hoću da znaš* *I want you to know* uses a so-called *desire clause*. Such things will be described in 56 *Desires and Demands*. (It uses the verb *htjeti* *want*, which has irregular *pres-1*).

The part *ne znam kako da odolim* literally translates as *I don’t know how to resist*. Such expressions will be also described later.

Check how in the verse *u svakom slučaju te volim* the word *te²* is actually the *fourth* word – the first three words count as one, they form a closed phrase. The word *slučaj* *case* is one of few nouns that can shift stress in DL – to the second syllable from the end – when used with a preposition. The adjective *svaki* means actually *each, every*, but often corresponds to English *all* or *any*.

Putting the word *uvijek* to the first place is emphasizing it.

The next verses contain the DL form *mi²*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volim te³ uvijek</th>
<th>I always love you</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I kada sanjaš</td>
<td>Even when you’re dreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kad ne pišes mi⁶</td>
<td>When you don’t write to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kad te⁶ nema</td>
<td>When you’re not here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word *mi²* is here in an unusual place (there’s a lot of liberty in poetry). In speech, you will only hear *kad mi ne pišeš*.

Both *kad* and *kada* are used in this song for rhythmic reasons – there’s no difference in meaning.

The last verse uses the negative existential construction, explained above.

You can listen to it on YouTube™.
• Exercise

Complete the following sentences:

Ana ______(a) čeka. Ana is waiting for them.
______(b) ______(c). Here we are!
Marko ______(d) šalje poruku. Marko is sending a message to her.
Pišem ______(e) pismo. I’m writing a letter to him.
Evo ______(f)! Here’s Ana!
_______(g) ____ (h). She’s not here.
_______(i) ____ (j)! Here are they!

Check answers here.
I’m Cold: Basic Impressions

Croatian has a special way of expressing feelings and subjective opinions that’s quite unlike how it’s done in English. However, if you know some German, this will all likely be very familiar to you.

First, we can start with a general statement, such as:

**Hladno je. It’s cold.**

It’s a general statement, it’s *simply* cold. This statement is *impersonal.*

But what if *someone* (e.g. Ana) feels it’s cold? Croatian then adds *one who feels* something into such sentences, but in the dative/locative case (DL):

**Ani DL je hladno. ‘It’s cold to Ana.’ = Ana is cold.**

The one who feels it, the ‘experiencer’ (here: Ana, DL Ani) is usually put to the beginning of the sentence, as above.

In such sentences, pronouns in DL are very often used, when you want to express what you personally feel:

**Hladno mi DL je. ‘It’s cold to me.’ = I’m cold.**

If you pay attention, you might have noticed that we again have two words trying to get to the second position: mi² and je² (the pres-3 form of the verb biti). If something like that happens, je² always comes after any pronouns.

Such words with fixed second-place position always come in a ‘block’ and cannot be rearranged:

**Često mi DL je hladno. ‘It’s often cold to me.’ = I’m often cold.**

Gramatically, the sentence is still impersonal: there’s no subject anywhere. The ‘experiencer’ is in the 1st person, but the verb is the 3rd person, singular. The verb je² doesn’t change, regardless of who feels cold:

**Hladno nam DL je. ‘It’s cold to us.’ = We’re cold.**

This use of impersonal je² with DL is frequently seen with the following adverbs:

- bučno noisy
- dosadno boring
- hladno cold
- lijepo nice
- loše bad
- toplo warm
- vruće hot
- zabavno entertaining

These words don’t adapt to the gender of subject. Actually, there’s no subject in such sentences – they have quite different form in English and Croatian:

**Dosadno mi DL je. ‘It’s boring to me.’ = I’m bored.**

If you would translate literally from English, you could say something completely
different:

**Dosadan sam.** *I’m boring.* *(not how you feel!)*

With the adverb **loše,** there’s a slightly shifted meaning when used with DL:

**Ani**^{DL} **je loše.** *Ana is sick.*

It’s interesting that German uses exactly the same construction: in sentences like these, the pronoun *mir* is in the German Dative case, and the verb is in the 3rd person:

- *Mir ist kalt.* *(German)*
- *Mir ist langweilig.* *(German)*
- *Mir ist schlecht.* *(German)*

All three sentences translate word-for-word from Croatian, the only difference is word order, which follows quite different rules in German.

You can freely use **adverbs of intensity,** including the prefix **pre-**:

- **Prevruče nam**^{DL} **je.** *(for us)* *(It’s too hot)* *(= for us)*
- **Jako mi**^{DL} **je dosadno.** *I’m very bored.*

There’s also a verb that means *feel*:

**osjećati** *feel*

When used just with an object in A, it means *feel something,* an object, or something more abstract, e.g. pain. But when used with a se and an adverb, it describes *how someone feels:*

- **Ana**^{N} **se osjeća odlično.** *Ana feels great.*
- **Osjećam se grozno.** *I feel terrible.*

This verb with se is used only for internal states. You cannot say “**osjećam se bučno**” if you’re in a loud environment, but you can say **osjećam se loše** if you don’t feel well. Note that for some feelings, there is more than one way to express them:

- **Umoran sam.** *(I’m tired.)*
- **Osjećam se umorno.** *(I feel tired.)*

To ask *how* someone feels, use **kako,** but don’t forget se:

- **Kako se osjećaš?** *(How do you feel?)*
- **— Dobro.** *(Alright.)* *(‘Good.’)*

There’s an interesting way to ask about ‘situation’:

- **Kako je?** *(lit. ‘How is it?’)* *(lit. ‘How is it going?’)*

Such questions mostly mean *how are you (doing).* However, if we add a place, then we’re asking about a general information somewhere:
Kako je na poslu^{DL}? How is it going at work? 
Kako ide na poslu^{DL}? (more or less the same meaning) 

An answer can be a general description, what is done there, nothing necessarily personal. But if we add a person in DL, the questions become specific, about someone’s experience there:

Kako ti^{DL} je na poslu^{DL}? How are you doing at work? 
Kako ide Ani^{DL} na poslu^{DL}? How is Ana doing at work? 

It seems to me there’s a subtle difference in these two questions: ones with iči (ide) go are more specific about the work done, while ones with biti are a bit more about everything, (e.g. co-workers, salary, etc.). The sentences are impersonal, verbs are always in the 3rd person, singular, no matter what we add in DL (if anything):

Kako im^{DL} ide na poslu^{DL}? How are they doing at work? 

There are two often used expressions that cannot be used without someone in DL:

Drago mi^{DL} je. I’m glad. 
Žao mi^{DL} je. I’m sorry. 

Of course, instead of mi^{2}, other pronouns and nouns in DL can be used:

Ani^{DL} je žao. Ana is sorry. 

The first expression is used when you are introduced to someone (like I’m glad to meet you) and the second one is the usual way to express that you are sorry (when something bad happens to someone else).

This construction with DL is used only for statements that can be either general or subjective. For instance, you cannot say gladno mi je since there’s no statement gladno je – hunger is not an objective, external situation (at least in Croatian language).

However, it’s possible to take statements like these:

Obitelj^{N} je važna^{N}. The family is important. 
Knjiga^{N} je dosadna^{N}. The book is boring. 
Majica^{N} je lijepa^{N}. The shirt is nice. 

And convert them into personal opinions, using DL in the exactly same way:

Obitelj^{N} mi^{DL} je važna^{N}. The family is important to me. 
Ani^{DL} je knjiga dosadna^{N}. The book is boring ‘to Ana’. = Ana finds the book boring. 
Majica^{N} mi^{DL} je lijepa^{N}. (colloq.) The shirt is nice ‘to me’. = I find the shirt nice. 

While English uses such expressions only with certain adjectives (e.g. important) in Croatian, they are much more widely used, especially in the spoken language. (It’s seen less often in formal writing, with adjectives like lijep beautiful, nice, such use of DL is regarded as colloquial.) We again see that the Croatian DL case often corresponds to English to + noun or pronoun.
Such expressions are often used to express what English expresses with *favorite*:

- **Ovo**[^1] je omiljena knjiga[^N]. *This a beloved book.*
- **Ovo**[^mDL] je omiljena knjiga[^N]. *This is my favorite book.* (*beloved to me*)
- **Ani**[^DL] je ovo[^N] omiljena pjesma[^N]. *This is Ana’s favorite song.*

The adjective *omiljen* doesn’t really mean *favorite*, it’s more *beloved, popular, preferred*.

You can express the same using a possessive adjective, but it’s less common in speech:

- **Ovo**[^N] je Anina omiljena knjiga[^N]. *This is Ana’s favorite book.*

Instead of the adjective *omiljen*, you’ll hear also these adjectives in this role:

- **najbolji** best  **najdraži** most liked, most dear

For example:

- **Ovo**[^mDL] je najdraža pjesma[^N]. *This is my most favorite song.*

(The use of **najbolji** best in these expressions is quite colloquial. These two adjectives, starting with **naj-**, are *superlatives*; they will be described in 63 Bigger and Better: Comparatives.)

There are a couple of verbs that behave kind of similar to expressions above. The most important one is:

- **trebati** need/should

When used with the meaning *need*, it can be used simply as any verb that uses the accusative case:

- **Trebam** čašu[^A]. (A) *I need a glass.*

However, it’s a bit more common to use this verb with *what you need* as the subject (in N) and *one who needs* in DL:

- **Treba** mi[^DL] čaša[^N]. (N) (the same meaning!)[^1]

Observe how the verb in the second sentence is in the **pres-3** form, since **čaša glass** is its subject.®

Then, there are two verbs which express something or somebody is *lacking* or *missing*:

- **nedostajati (nedostaje)**  **faliti** (colloq.)  
  
  lack/miss

The verb *faliti* is quite colloquial, but you’ll see it in fiction books. These verbs are used with what is missing as the subject:

- **Jedan dio**[^N] **nedostaje**. *A part is missing.*

[^1]: Easy Croatian (rev. 47b) / 23 I’m Cold: Basic Impressions
Both are very often used with experiencers in DL, one who feels something is missing, or is affected by it:

**Jedan dio**[^1] **nedostaje.** You’re missing a part.  
**Nedostaje mi**[^2] **Igor.** I miss Igor.

What or who is missing is always the subject, in N (which is usually not expressed, if it’s a pronoun), which is completely unlike in English:

**Nedostaješ mi**[^1]. I miss you. (you = one person)  
**Fališ mi**[^1] (the same, but colloquial)  
**Nedostajete joj**[^1]. She misses you. (you = group/formal to one person)  
**Falite joj**[^1] (the same, but colloquial)

This is the same as in French, where the verb *manquer* also uses what is missed as the subject. The same happens with the Italian verb *mancare*. In German, the verb *fehlen* behaves in the same way:

(French)  
Tu *me* manques.  
(German)  
Du fehlst *mir*.  
(Italian)  
Mi manchi.  
**Nedostaješ mi.** I miss you.

German here uses the Dative case (*mir*), which matches the Croatian grammar exactly. However, in French and German, subject pronouns are mandatory, while Italian is more like Croatian. The French verb *manquer* also covers meanings *miss the bus, miss the chance*; the Croatian verb doesn’t.

Finally, there’s a way to express that there’s enough of something, or too little or too much:

- **dosta je**[^2] + G there’s enough G  
- **previše je**[^2] + G there’s too much G  
- **premalo je**[^2] + G there’s too little G

This is used mainly with uncountable nouns (e.g. *salt, sugar, coffee*) and persons. For example:

**Previše je šećera u kavi.** There’s too much sugar in the coffee.

Again, you can add who feels it in DL. The expression **dosta je** + DL usually translates as *had enough (of)*:

**Ani je dosta kave.** *Ana had enough (of) coffee.*

As in English, this also implies negative emotions:

**Ani**[^2] **je dosta Damira**[^6]. *Ana had enough of Damir.*  
**Dosta mi**[^2] **ga je.** I had enough of him.

Pay attention how words **mi**[^2] (DL), **ga**[^2] (G) and **je**[^2] (a verb) are ordered in the second
sentence – there’s only one possible order.

For countable nouns, the same expression will work, but you must use genitive plural – the form I didn’t explain yet. (Such use of the genitive case is explained in a greater detail in 45 *Quantities and Existence*; for the genitive plural, see 44 *Genitive Plural*.)

So far, we have seen three uses of the DL case (without prepositions, on its own). One was a recipient of something (1), another was person who is somehow involved in the action, usually because he or she is connected to the object (a body part, a personal item, kin) (2), and this one is about personal impressions and feelings (3):

(1) Ana\(^N\) daje šalicu\(^A\) Goranu\(^DL\). Ana is giving a cup to Goran. ® davati
(2) Ana\(^N\) pere Goranu\(^DL\) kosu\(^A\). Ana is washing Goran’s hair. ® prati
(3) Goranu\(^DL\) je hladno. Goran is cold.

As you can see, in all these uses, DL represents a person who is not causing something to happen, but who is somehow affected while not being really an object. (The object in (1) is a cup, and the object in (2) is the hair.)

® Using *trebati* with DL seems preferred in Standard Serbian.

Instead of šalica, in Serbia and Bosnia, šolja and šoljica are used for cup.

### Exercise

Fill in the right forms of pronouns and other words:

Žao ______(a) je. We’re sorry.

Nije ______(b) hladno. I’m not cold.

__________(c) je vruće. Goran feels hot.

__________(d) ______(e) je. We’re glad.

________________(f) ___(g) umorno. I feel tired.

Check answers [here](#).
The past tense is completely different than the present tense in Croatian. First, it’s always formed from two words, the past form of the verb and present of the verb **biti** (je² +) *be*. The past form varies according to the *gender of the subject* and whether it’s *singular or plural*.

The endings of the *past form* (also known as *past participle*, or *l-participle*) are not too complicated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>past</th>
<th>past pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>-la</td>
<td>-le</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>-lo</td>
<td>-la</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>-o ‡</td>
<td>-li</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, here are the past forms the verb ċitati *read*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>past</th>
<th>past pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>čitala</td>
<td>čitale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>čitalo</td>
<td>čitala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>čitao ‡</td>
<td>čitali</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(I have dropped the underline on the first vowel, since it’s only important for the present tense anyway.)

Again, there’s no difference between the two masculine genders. Even better, the past forms are simply created by adding their endings to a verb after the -ti is removed. It works for many verbs with ‘irregular’ presents as well – their past is *perfectly regular*. It holds even for the verb **biti** (je² +) *be*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>past-f</th>
<th>past-m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biti (je² +) be</td>
<td>bila</td>
<td>bio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pisati (piše) write</td>
<td>pisala</td>
<td>pisao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piti (pije) drink</td>
<td>pila</td>
<td>pio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plesati (pleše) dance</td>
<td>plesala</td>
<td>plesao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slati (šalje) send</td>
<td>slala</td>
<td>slao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trčati (trči) run</td>
<td>trčala</td>
<td>trčao</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, for almost all verbs, past forms are stressed on the same syllable as the infinitive, e.g. izgledati → izgleda-la.

Past forms are similar to adjectives, and for few verbs, they can be used as true
adjectives: then they get case endings, etc.

How to use it? Well, you take the right past form and the right form of the present of biti (je² +) be (keeping in mind that it should go to the second position):

Ana⁹ je plesala. Ana was dancing.
Ivan⁹ je čitao knjigu. Ivan was reading a book.

You can use personal pronouns as subjects, but it’s common not to use them:

Spavali smo u hotelu. We were sleeping in a hotel.

There’s nothing special about the verb biti (je² +) be in the past – its past is formed as for any other verb:

Ana⁹ je bila gladna. Ana was hungry.

Even if you are talking in the 1st or 2nd person, you must respect the gender of the subject (as with adjectives, the principle is identical):

Spavala sam. I was sleeping. (I = female)
Spavao sam. I was sleeping. (I = male)
Bila sam umorna. I was tired. (I = female)
Bio sam umoran. I was tired. (I = male)
Bili smo umorni. We were tired. (we = males/mixed)

Since the past form indicates gender of the subject, even if pronouns are omitted in the 3rd person, we know the subject gender:

Spavala je. She was sleeping.
Spavao je. He was sleeping.

If there are personal pronouns in A, G or DL that require the second position, of course they somehow clash with forms of the verb biti (je² +) be that require the same position. The rule is that present forms of the verb biti come first, except in the 3rd person, where je² comes last in the chain of second-position contenders:

Čekao sam ga. I was waiting for him. (I = male)
Čekala si ga. You were waiting for him. (you = female)
Čekala ga je. She was waiting for him.

If there’s a particle se², it behaves like other pronouns in A (me², ga², etc.). There’s a special rule: if je² (pres-3 of biti) would come after se², it’s almost always left out:

Bojao sam se. I was afraid.
Goran⁹ se je bojao. Goran was afraid.
Goran⁹ se bojao. (this form is usually used)

The verb je² – when used to form the past tense – is sometimes left out in newspaper headlines, on billboards, etc.

Don’t think about the past tense as čuo sam and like. Think about it as čuo +
sam², where the auxiliary verb goes to the second position, and the past form can, in principle, be anywhere:

Goran⁴ je jednog hladnog zimskog dana⁴ čuo...

(Expressions like jednog hladnog zimskog dana will be explained later.) When you see an auxiliary verb, the matching past form (or an adjective) can be sometimes far away!

You have to be careful with the impersonal use of verbs. That’s whenever English uses “dummy” it, but also in impressions. From now on, I will mark all impersonal verbs in the present tense with a small circle (°):

Hladno je°. It’s cold.
Hladno mi⁴ je°. I’m cold. (lit. ‘It’s cold to me.’) 1
Drago nam⁴ je°. We’re glad. (lit. ‘It’s dear to us.’) 1pl
Dosta mu⁴ je°. He has had enough. 3m/n

All such sentences in the past tense always use neuter singular past forms:

Bilo je hladno. It was cold.
Bilo mi⁴ je hladno. I was cold. (lit. ‘It was cold to me.’) 1
Bilo nam⁴ je drago. We were glad. (lit. ‘It was dear to us.’) 1pl
Bilo mu⁴ je dosta. He has had enough. 3m/n

Now you see why I have marked impersonal verbs in present tense with a °: it reminds you that you have to use the neuter singular in the past tense – a form that ends in -o. Of course, this is just a reminder I’ve invented for this work, nobody else uses it. Please don’t use it when you write Croatian words and sentences!

I repeat: impersonal sentences have no subjects. There have no nouns or pronouns in the nominative case. The last sentence translates literally as ‘it was enough to him’. They are always in neuter singular in the past tense. As there’s no subject, the past form defaults to its neutral, kind of genderless form.

The following sentences at the first glance look impersonal too, but they aren’t:

Ponoć⁴ je. It’s midnight. (lit. ‘Midnight is.’) f
Jutro⁴ je. It’s morning. (lit. ‘Morning is.’)

While English sentences are impersonal, Croatian ones aren’t: in these sentences, subjects are ponoć f midnight and jutro morning, so in the past tense, past forms will get gender of subjects:

Bila je ponoć⁴. It was midnight. (lit. ‘Midnight was.’) f
Bilo je jutro⁴. It was morning. (lit. ‘Morning was.’)

Another likely unexpected behavior is for sentences of the form ovo je..., to je... + noun. In such sentences, the subject isn’t to, but the noun, so the past tense adjusts
to its gender:

\[ \text{To}^N \text{ je mačka}^N. \text{ It's a cat.} \]
\[ \rightarrow \text{To}^N \text{ je bila mačka}^N. \text{ It was a cat.} \]

\[ \text{To}^N \text{ je problem}^N. \text{ That's a problem.} \]
\[ \rightarrow \text{To}^N \text{ je bio problem}^N. \text{ That was a problem.} \]

To **negate** sentences in the past tense, just use the negative forms of present tense of \textit{biti} (that is, \textit{nisam}, \textit{nisi}, \textit{nije}, etc.):

\[ \text{Ana}^N \text{ nije bila gladna}^N. \text{ Ana wasn’t hungry.} \]
\[ \text{Nisam spavao. I wasn’t sleeping.} \ (I = \text{male}) \]
\[ \text{Nije nam}^{DL} \text{ bilo dosadno. We weren’t bored.} \]

As usual, forms \textit{nisam} and so on are not restricted to the second position and are commonly found right before the past form.

A special case is the **negative existential construction**. While it uses impersonal \textit{nema} in the present tense, in the past tense, impersonal \textit{nije bilo} is used:

\[ \text{Nema}^G \text{ piva}^G. \text{ There’s no beer.} \]
\[ \rightarrow \text{Nije bilo piva}^G. \text{ There was no beer.} \]
\[ \text{Nema}^G \text{ ih}^G. \text{ They aren’t here/here.} \]
\[ \rightarrow \text{Nije ih}^G \text{ bilo}. \text{ They weren’t here/here.} \]

There are useful **adverbs of time** often used with verbs in the past tense:

\[ \text{davno a long time ago} \quad \text{nedavno recently} \]
\[ \text{jučer yesterday} \quad \text{nekad(a) some time ago} \]
\[ \text{malo prije moments ago} \quad \text{ranije earlier} \]

The adverb \textit{nedavno} means that some action or state happened at a recent period; the adverb \textit{odnedavno} means start something started at a recent moment (and might still be ongoing).

For example:

\[ \text{Ivan}^N \text{ je jučer bio u kinu}^{DL}. \text{ Ivan was at the cinema yesterday.} \]

Sadly, some verbs are irregular even in the past tense; this includes all verbs having infinitives ending in \textit{-ći} and most with inf. in \textit{-sti}. Therefore, when such verbs are listed, they will have past-\textit{m forms} listed as well after their \textit{pres-3}:

\[ \text{jesti (jede, jeo) eat} \]
\[ \text{plesti (plete, pleo) knit} \]

(I will list the past-\textit{m} and not e.g. past-\textit{f} simply due to tradition of listing verb forms, and because you will find past-\textit{m}’s listed in printed and online dictionaries.) The past-\textit{f} is listed if it cannot be regularly obtained from the past-\textit{m}; luckily, all other past forms can always be deduced from the past-\textit{f}. That’s how most verbs in \textit{-ći} are listed:
ići (ide, išao, išla) go
peći (peče, pekao, pekla) bake
vući (vuče, vukao, vukla) pull

Some verbs with infinitives in -sti have a bit specific past-f form as well:

gristi (grize, grizao, grizla) bite
rasti (raste, rastao, rasla) grow

Verbs like vidjeti see — actually, all verbs ending in -jeti, including razumjeti understand — always have the following forms in the past: *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>past-m</th>
<th>past-f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>vidjeti</td>
<td>vidio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand</td>
<td>razumjeti</td>
<td>razumio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For instance:

**Vidio sam Anu.** I saw Ana. (I = male)
**Vidjela sam Anu.** I saw Ana. (I = female)
**Razumio sam ga.** I understood him. (I = male)
**Nismo ih razumjeli.** We didn’t understand them.

This is yet another instance where past forms are more regular than the present tense. I will normally list the past forms for such verbs too, but sometimes I omit them and write just ... to make the text more compact.

Once in a while, you’ll see and hear another past tense, the aorist tense ®. It’s most common used in the first person, and its forms are just one word; for instance, the 1st person aorist form is usually obtained by replacing the infinitive -ti with -h, e.g. vidjeh I saw. For a fuller description, see 99 Aorist Tense and Other Marginal Features.

For a full discussion of various verb types, check A3 Verbs.

Finally, there are many verbs in Croatian which mean some action was brought to completion. Such verbs are rarely used in the present tense, since present tense is understood as ongoing, but they are frequent in the past tense. For example, the verb pročitati means read completely. In the past tense, such verbs usually correspond to simple English tenses, while normal verbs often correspond to continuous tenses:

**Čitao sam knjigu.** lit. ‘I was reading the book.’
**Pročitao sam knjigu.** lit. ‘I’ve read the book completely.’

Such verbs — implying completion — are called perfective: they will be explained in depth in 37 Complete Reading: Perfective Verbs and later chapters. You will encounter some of them in examples in the following sections. For now, it’s enough
to keep in mind they aren’t normally used in the present tense.

The endings for past forms listed above are Standard Croatian (and Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin). In the colloquial use, many people pronounce past-m forms that end in -ao (e.g. čekao, išao, and so on) with only -o (that is, čeko, išo, etc.). You will hear such forms, and see them spelled sometimes with an apostrophe (i.e. ček’o, iš’o).

In many regions, especially in smaller towns and villages, there are other forms of past-m, e.g. ending in just -l; for more information, check A8 Dialects.

Instead of jučer, a slightly shortened juče is used in Serbia and Bosnia. Instead of kino, the word for cinema used in Serbia and Bosnia is bioskop.

“Ekavian” forms, which dominate in Serbia, are much simpler for verbs in -jeti: from e.g. videti, past forms are video, videla, from razumeti – razumeo, razumela, etc.

In parts of Croatia and Bosnia, you often hear (and sometimes read) generalized “Ikavian” forms, where such verbs have all past endings in -i-, e.g. vidio, vidila, vidili, etc.

The aorist tense is much more common in Bosnia and Serbia.

• Examples

Imala je lijepu rupicu na bradi She had a nice little hole on her chin is a popular song from 1980’s performed by late Oliver Dragojević, a very popular Croatian pop singer. Most songs he performed were in various “Ikavian” dialects, but this basically standard.

Observe how the name of the song implies she from using the past-f form imala. The song is basically all in the past tense. The first verse contains osobito particular transformed into an adverb osobito particularly. The second verse contains druge, which is the feminine plural form of drugi other, another, here used as a pronoun (like other ones) but feminine, which cannot be exactly translated to English: it can be understood as other women, other girls, basically other female ones (recall 18 This and That). Plural forms will be explained in the next chapter.

Nije bila osobito lijepaN ali nije bila kao drugeN pa je ljubavN, kao uvijek slijepaN zbog njeG razneA prelazila prugeA

She wasn’t particularly beautiful but she wasn’t like other women so love, blind as always crossed various tracks because of her

The third verse literally has ‘like always blind’. The fourth verse has razne pruge various tracks split by the verb! This is not common in speech, but not ungrammatical; it’s here for rhythmic reasons. You know the adjective refers to the noun since they match in gender (feminine), number (plural) and case (A). The word
**Exercise**

Fill in the right forms of verbs and pronouns:

Ana ____ (a) ________ (b). Ana was sleeping.

Goranu ____ (c) ________ (d) hladno. Goran was cold.

____ (e) ____ (f) ____ (g) žao. They were sorry.

Ivan ____ (h) jučer ________ (i) juhu. Ivan cooked a soup yesterday.

____ (j) ____ (k) dosadno. It was boring.

____________ (l) ____ (m) ____ (n). We were waiting for you. (we = all male/mixed)

____________ (o) ____ (p) kiša. It was raining.

_______ (q) ____ (r) noć. It was night.

Check answers [here](#).
25 Plural

So far we have learned three cases (apart from the default, nominative case, where there’s nothing to learn). All forms we have seen were in singular: we couldn’t say I’m eating apples or birds are singing.

Let’s now see how nouns look in plural. We’ll start with the simplest possibility: nominative and accusative plural for nouns ending in -a and for neuter nouns (that is, more or less all nouns that end in -o or -e).

The rules are very simple:

- jabuka apple → jabuke apples
- pismo letter → pisma letters
- more sea → mora seas

Couple of feminine and neuter nouns exist only in their plural forms; they will be indicated with their gender and "pl."

- gaće f pl. underpants
- hlače f pl. pants, trousers
- naočale f pl. eyeglasses
- novine f pl. newspaper(s)
- škare f pl. scissors
- traperice f pl. jeans

Some English nouns, including translations of the Croatian nouns listed above have the same property – there are only scissors and pliers.

So we now know how to make the nominative form in plural, but what about the accusative case? It turns out that for such nouns, the accusative plural is equal to the nominative plural! So we can say:

Jedem jabuke. I’m eating apples.
Pišem pisma. I’m writing letters.

There are couple of neuter nouns that don’t have regular plurals; if you want to express plural you will have to use something called mass noun that will be explained a bit later. Often used nouns with such problem are:

- dijete (djetet-) child
- pile (pilet-) chick
- janje (janjet-) lamb
- štene (štenet-) puppy

Such nouns are easy to distinguish: they all get an additional t in their case-base.

Four frequently used neuter nouns shift their stress in plural forms:

- ime (imen-) name → imena
- jezero lake → jezera
- rame (ramen-) shoulder → ramena
vrijeme (vremena) time/weather → vremena

A few neuter nouns have alternative, more expressive and poetic, longer plural forms in -esa; the most common is:

nebo sky → nebesa

Unfortunately, we still don’t know how to say birds are singing: we need to make plural of the first Croatian verb form we have learned, pres-3. How to make it? The rules are a bit more complicated than for other verb forms, it depends of the last letter of the pres-3:

```
pres-3  pres-3pl  example
----------  --------  ----------------
-a        -aju     pjevati sing → pjevaju
-i        -e        voziti drive → voze
-e        -u        jesti (jede) eat → jedu
```

It’s interesting that pres-3pl for any verb ends in either -u or -e. For example:

Ptice pjevaju. Birds are singing.

Many verbs that end in -a in pres-3 have – in the Standard scheme – the stress in the pres-3pl on the same syllable as in the inf, regardless of stress in other present forms. This is a rather small detail, and even if you’re trying to learn the Standard stress, you might just ignore it.

If we want to express what more than one subject is doing (or their state) we can link them with the following word:

i and

For example:

Ana i Goran pjevaju. Ana and Goran are singing.
Ivan i Damir jedu. Ivan and Damir are eating.

There’s a common way to express mutual action, corresponding to English each other – just use se²:

Ana i Ivan se vole. Ana and Ivan love each other.

As you can see, here se² is actually the fourth word, since the words Ana i Ivan are treated as one ‘unit’.

This use explains farewells like vidimo se and čujemo se – they mean we see each other (later, again) and so on. If you know a Scandinavian language, e.g. Swedish, you’ll notice it has exactly the same construction:

(Swedish, Danish, Norwegian) Vi ses! = Vidimo se!

This literally translates as we see-s, where the appended -s means each other. A
difference is that Croatian uses a separate word se², and of course, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian have (like English) mandatory pronouns with verbs.

We can also say (we use oni for an all-male or mixed group):

**Oni**⁴ se vole. *They love each other.*

There’s another way to express the mutuality, by a small phrase **jedan drugog** (all male/mixed) or **jedna drugu** (all-female). Both literally mean *one another:*

**Ana**⁴ i **Ivan**⁴ vole **jedan drugog.** *Ana and Ivan love one another.*

We would use the plural form **one** only for all-female groups.

This is maybe the right place to describe ‘impersonal plurals’ – like in the English sentence *they’re building a new road.* This is exactly the same in Croatian, but you have to leave the pronoun out:

**Grade novu cestu**⁴. *They’re building a new road.* (cannot add oni)

If you would add oni, it would then be a reference to some particular, known group of people, e.g. when you see a group of workers and explain what they’re doing. In the past, use masc. pl.:

**Gradili su novu cestu**⁴. *They were building a new road.*

What about expressing states and properties, like *birds are beautiful?* We must first be able to put adjectives to plural as well, both to nominative and accusative! Since adjectives always follow the noun pattern, accusative will be equal to nom. (we can list both together as NA-pl). Even better, for feminine and neuter adjectives, endings will actually be the same as for nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>adj. NA-pl</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>velike ribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>big fishes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>velika jezera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>big lakes</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, we need the pres-3pl form of the verb to be:

**biti** (je² +) *be* → **su**²

So now we can say:

**Ptice**⁴ **su lijepe**⁴. *Birds are beautiful.*

**Pisma**⁴ **su duga**⁴. *The letters are long.*

And we are able to say:

**To**⁴ **su ptice**⁴. *These are birds.* (lit. ‘birds are that.’)

Pay attention that in demonstrative sentences, to stays in singular, unlike in English.
There are few verbs – otherwise irregular – that have a bit irregular pres-3pl as well. They end in -ći in infinitive, have pres-3 in -če, but the pres-3pl in -ku. Common ones are:

- peći (peče) bake → peku
- teći (teče) flow → teku
- tući (tuče) beat, smack → tuku
- vući (vuče) pull → vuku

If a verb has pres-3 in -če, but its infinitive ends in -ti, there’s no such complication: the pres-3pl is completely regular:

- vikati (viče) yell → viču

What about feminine nouns in a consonant? It’s quite simple – they just get an -i in their N-pl, and the accusative is the same as nominative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Su duge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noć</td>
<td>Nights are long.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, there’s a small problem. Croatian has usually specific words for male and female people/animals – pairs like prijatelj friend (m) and prijateljica friend (f).

How do you call a group of friends, if some of them are male, some female? Croatian has then a notion of default gender. For most terms, the default gender is masculine. You simply use the masculine noun in plural, but the meaning is rather generic or mixed.

However, for some animals, the default gender is feminine. Such animals are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>feminine</th>
<th>masculine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>krava</td>
<td>bik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vol</td>
<td>ox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lica</td>
<td>lisac (lisc-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mačka</td>
<td>mačak (mačk-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patka</td>
<td>patak (patk-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(There are more.) So, if you see a bunch of cats, either of mixed sex, or you don’t know their sex, you simply refer to them as if all were feminine.

Let’s summarize changes of feminine (and all nouns that end in -a) and neuter nouns in plural:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type (N)</th>
<th>NA-pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns in -a (= fem.)</td>
<td>-a → -e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter nouns (= in -o, -e)</td>
<td>-o or -e → -a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)</td>
<td>add -i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plural of masculine nouns and the corresponding adjective forms are a bit more complicated, so they will be explained a bit later.

° In Serbia, and often in Bosnia, the following nouns are used instead of the nouns listed above (forms used there are given after arrows); they have plural forms only as well:

- hlače → pantalone
- škare → makaze
- naočale → naočare / naočari
- traperice → farmerke

In Dalmatia, you’ll sometimes hear and read -u in all verbs, for example from trčati (trči) run, pres-3 is trču; this not standard.

In the “Ekavian” pronunciation, which completely dominates in Serbia, there’s a small group of verbs which have another pattern. The most common is razumeti understand: its pres-3 is regular, but pres-3pl has a specific pattern:

\[\text{pres-3 razume} \rightarrow \text{pres-3pl razumeju}\]

You can think about them in this way: verbs which change -e to -u in pres-3pl also change vowel from inf to pres-3; they are all kind of ‘irregular’. However, the “Ekavian” verb razumeti is completely regular, as e.g. čitati read which gets -ju in pres-3pl, it just has a different vowel before it.

In the “Ikavian” pronunciation (which is used colloquially in parts of Croatian coast, including Split), such verbs behave usually like other verbs in -iti (i.e. the verb is razumiti).

• Something Possibly Interesting

The rules above apply to all nouns. English sometimes borrows plural forms along singular forms, so some people use e.g. singular bacterium vs. plural bacteria. Not so in Croatian: the singular is bakterija and the plural is only the expected form bakterije.

• Examples

Mirno teku rijeke Rivers flow peacefully is a song from 1959. It starts with simple, but poetic verses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mirno teku rijeke</th>
<th>Rivers flow peacefully</th>
<th>teći</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mirno žita šume</td>
<td>wheat hisses peacefully</td>
<td>njihati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svjetlo njišu misli</td>
<td>the light sways thoughts</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misli njišu šume</td>
<td>thoughts sway forests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The verb teći (teče, tekao, tekla) flow is one of few verbs having pres-3 in -ku, already mentioned above. The verb šumiti means boom, but the English likes hiss
with sounds of grain and tall grass. Using žito corn, grain in plural is unusual: it’s here forced to make the corresponding verb plural, so it can rhyme with the plural of šuma forest.

The noun misao (misl-) f thought is one of feminine nouns not ending in -a, and maybe the only one ending in -o. Note the verb misliti think is clearly related to this noun. The verb njihati (njiše) means rock, sway.

In the last verse, both nouns (misli and šume) could be in either N or A – these forms coincide in plural. So it falls back to the word order (the same as in English) to understand what sways what.

The following verses have some weird features which are rare in speech. The form ptica is genitive plural – it looks the same as N in writing for this noun – a case which will be introduced later: normally, it would be let ptica flight of birds, but the word order noun-noun-in-G is inverted here, which is almost never done in speech and normal writing:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ptica}^G & \quad \text{let}^N \quad \text{šara svod}^A \\
\text{pršt} & \quad \text{pjev}^N \quad \text{u jasni vedri dan}^N \\
\text{jasni dan}^N, & \quad \text{vedri smijeh}^N \\
\text{vedar} & \quad \text{čovjek}^N \quad \text{nikad nije sam}^N
\end{align*}
\]

Flight of birds scrawls the vault
singing frizzles on a bright clear day
a cheerful man is never alone

prštati

The verbs šarati scribble, scrawl and prštati (pršti) sputter; fizzle, sizzle are not really common. The construction u jasni vedri dan uses u - + A because it’s about time (recall u srijedu etc.). The adjective jasan (jasn-) is precisely clear (and then obvious), while vedar (vedr-) means without clouds (and then cheerful), but this word play is impossible to translate to English.

The following verses start with maštom – it’s the word mašta imagination in a case which is yet not introduced (the instrumental case):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Maštom} & \quad \text{takneš} \\
\text{svak} & \quad \text{u travku}^N, \quad \text{cvijet}^N \\
\text{tu si velik}^N & \quad \text{ti}^N, \quad \text{i tvoj}^N \quad \text{je svijet}^N \\
\text{Onda} & \quad \text{mir}^N, \quad \text{sam} \quad \text{mir}^N \\
\text{rjeka} & \quad \text{šuma}^N, \quad \text{plavi} \quad \text{svod}^N \quad \text{ti}^N \\
\text{tu} & \quad \text{strana}
\end{align*}
\]

(Drago Britvić)

With imagination, you touch
each blade of grass, each flower
you’re big here, and the world is yours
Then peace, only peace
the river, the forest, the blue vault and you

Observe the inversions velik... ti and tvoj... svijet, to make it rhyme with cvijet flower.

The verb taknuti (takne) touch is essentially a perfective verb, but it’s nevertheless used here in the present tense (poetry...).

You can find various performances on YouTube™; check this performance on A strana.

This song launched the career of Vice Vukov, one of the most important Croatian
singers – whose life story is *worth reading*.

** Exercise  

Fill in the right form of nouns and verbs:

**Hlače____(a)__________(b). The pants are black.**

**Gledamo_________(c). We’re watching birds.**

**Čitali____(d)__________(e). We were reading the letters.**

_______(f)____(g) **ovdje. They are here.** (a mixed group)

____(h)____(i) **mačke. These are cats.**

**Ne____________________(j)____(k). They don’t understand us.**

____________(l) **kruh. They are baking bread.**

Check answers [here](#).
26 Yes or No?

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 the Standard Croatian, the 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 li² to the second position (before all other second-position words):

Iđeš u školu. You’re going to school.
Iđeš li u školu? Are you going to the school?
— Ne. No. / — NNe idem. I’m not going.

If the verb in a sentence is present form of the verb biti be (that is, je², sam², etc.) the verb cannot be simply put to the beginning, since it must be in the second position!

Therefore, there are extended (or stressed) forms of the present of the verb biti (je² +), used when the verb must be the first word in a sentence. The forms are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pers.</th>
<th>sing.</th>
<th>plur.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>jesam</td>
<td>jesmo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>jesi</td>
<td>jeste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>je</td>
<td>jesu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They are quite simple: just add je- to the beginning of usual forms, and you have the forms you need! Again, je² is an exception – it looks exactly the same in its normal and extended form. We can then ask:

Gladni² ste. You’re hungry. (to a group/someone you respect)
Jeste li gladni²? Are you hungry?
— Da. Yes. / — Jesmo. We are.
— Ne. No. / — Nismo. We aren’t.
Je li žedna²? Is she thirsty?
— Da. Yes. / — Je. She is. *
— Ne. No. / — Nije. She isn’t.
— Možda. Maybe.
— Ne znam. I don’t know.

As you can see, you can answer with either da or ne or with the verb in its extended form. There are no special extended/stressed negative forms – the usual negative forms of biti (je² +) are already stressed.

Note also how she is implied by the feminine form of the adjective (žedna).

Now for the past tense. The past tense is made from two words, but for purpose of
making questions, the *auxiliary* verb – the present tense of *biti* (je² +) *be* – is the important word. Grammatically, the past form behaves like a kind of adjective and has no role in making questions. Therefore, we need to move the *auxiliary* (je², sam², and so on):

**Gledala si film^A^**. You watched the movie. (to a female)

**Jesi li gledala film^A^?** Did you watch the movie?


— Ne. No. / — Nisam. I didn’t.

If je² is left out due to se², it must reappear in questions:

**Bojao se. He was afraid.**

**Je li se bojao? Was he afraid?**

Everything described so far was in the Standard Croatian. Colloquially, you will also hear and often read other ways of making such questions. The first one, and quite common, is to just put *da li* to the front, nothing else is changed, no verbs are moved, the present forms of *biti* (je² +) don’t get extended, etc:

**Da li ideš u školu?** (colloq.) Are you going to the school?

**Da li ste gladni?** (colloq.) Are you hungry?

**Da li si gledala film?** (colloq.) Did you watch the movie?

**Da li se bojao?** (colloq.) Was he afraid?

I used the abbreviation (colloq.) to remind you that these are colloquial sentences in Croatian ®. It’s very often seen and heard, e.g. on the wall in a (fancy) bakery:

![Image of a sign saying 'Da li ste kad kušali svježiji sendvič?'](image)

This translates as *Have you ever tasted a fresher sandwich?* – the word *kad*, in yes/no questions, can mean *ever* as well (this will be explained in more detail in 41 Somewhere, Nobody, Everything...).

You will sometimes hear and read questions with these two words contracted to *dal*, or spelled together as *dali*.

Another option is to use the standard way, but without *li*:

**Jesi gledala film?** (colloq.) *Did you watch the movie?*

Yet another quite colloquial option is to put *je li* to the front, frequently contracted to just *jel* (also spelled as *je l, je l’*):

**Jel ideš u školu?** (colloq.) Are you going to the school?

**Jel ste gladni?** (colloq.) Are you hungry?

**Jel si gledala film?** (colloq.) *Did you watch the movie?*
Jel se bojao? (colloq.) Was he afraid?

Also, colloquially, it’s possible to turn normal sentences into a question just by changing their intonation – sentences end on a higher tone, and are spoken faster – no rearrangement of any kind is needed:

Iđeš u školu? (colloq.)
Ići
Gledala si film? (colloq.)
Bojao se? (colloq.)

However, with just the present forms of biti (je² +), there are questions like this often heard:

Jeste gladni? (colloq.)

All the ways of making questions described above are used in real life, unlike some formal terms that actually nobody uses (e.g. formal hladnjak vs. colloq. frižider fridge). For example, here are some statistics (by Google™ search) from the Croatian discussion site, forum.hr:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jesli gledala</td>
<td>3280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>da li si gledala</td>
<td>1420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jesi gledala</td>
<td>11800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There’s another, special type of questions, asking for advice or an opinion. In English, such questions begin with Should I… or something like it. In Standard Croatian, you can start such questions with da li da + present, but that works for the present tense only:

Da li da gledam taj film? Should I watch that movie?

In the past tense, you have to use the verb trebati need/should + verb in infinitive; questions follow the same pattern as any other yes/no question:

Jesam li trebala gledati taj film? Should I have watched that movie?

(How to use infinitives will be explained a bit later.)

Colloquially, da li is very often left out in such opinion questions, and you’ll most of the time hear and see just:

Da gledam taj film? (colloq.) Should I watch that movie?

Sometimes you’ll hear jel instead of da li even in opinion questions:

Jel da gledam taj film? (colloq.) Should I watch that movie?

Such opinion questions are often answered with conditionals and imperatives – verb forms I haven’t introduced yet. (For conditionals, check as 39 Would, Could: Conditionals; for imperatives, see 53 Giving Orders.)
In Serbia and parts of Bosnia, affirmative answers using the verb biti (je² +) be in the 3rd person can be also jeste (besides je). However, this additional stressed form is *not used when forming questions* — it’s used only in answers and sometimes in regular sentences, meaning roughly *is really*.

The way of making questions using da li... is considered standard in Bosnia and Serbia, and it’s often considered (or was often considered) standard in Croatia as well.

**Something Possibly Interesting**

Most languages in Europe usually use short responses meaning *yes* and *no*; English and Celtic languages are unique in preferring short answers with generic verbs (e.g. *I do, I am*.)

Some people in Croatia hate other people using questions (and other constructions derived from questions) starting with da li..., for reasons they are often unable to explain (they usually claim it’s “not Croatian”). However, such constructions are very common in speech.

**Examples**

This song from 1970’s, Piši mi by Drugi način — still quite popular — nicely illustrates various ways to ask yes/no questions: each verse uses another form! (It also uses a couple of constructions and forms I haven’t explained yet; the proposition *pored beside* requires the genitive case.)

```
I dal još svirate  And do you still play
   noću pored rijeke  at night by the river
Sad je došlo lijepo vrijeme  Now nice weather has come  doći past-n
Pjevate li  Do you sing
   one naše pjesme  those songs of ours
Da li ponekad  Do you sometimes
   sretneš moju dragu  come across my darling  sresti
Jel još uvijek onako lijepa  Is she still so beautiful
Pita li za mene  Does she ask about me
   i dal me čeka  and is she waiting for me
   (Fikret Kurtović)
```

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

Note how there’s no *ona she* in the verse *Jel još uvijek onako lijepa*, but the adjective *lijepa* is in the fem. N sing., and that’s enough: we know who he’s talking about. We again see the form *još uvijek*. 
The verbs sresti (sretne, sreo) meet, come across and doći (dođe, došao, došla) come, arrive are two more perfective verbs; I will explain them a bit later, in 37 Complete Reading: Perfective Verbs.

The various forms of questions are here purely for rhythmic reasons.

• Exercise

Fill in the right words:

_____ (a) ____ (b) ____________ (c) film? Did you watch the movie? (to a single female person)

_____ (d) ____ (e) ____________ (f) film? Did you watch the movie? (to a mixed group)

Check answers here.
27 Body

Croatian sees body parts and what’s felt in them in a quite different way than English. Let’s check words for body parts first:

- **glava** head
- **jezik** tongue
- **koljeno** knee
- **kost** bone
- **lakat** (lakt-) elbow
- **leđa** n pl. back
- **noga** leg/foot
- **nos** nose
- **prst** finger, toe
- **rame** (ramen-) shoulder
- **ruka** hand/arm
- **srbi** / **svrjeti** itch

Words **leđa** and **usta** we have already encountered: they exist only in plural. Both words are neuter. The noun **rame** belongs to a small group of neuter nouns with case-base extended with an **n**.

The word **jezik** tongue means also language.

It’s interesting that Croatian doesn’t distinguish arm from hand or leg from foot! There’s only one word for both arm and hand.

Now, there are two very useful and often used verbs:

- **boli** / **svrbiti** / **svrjeti** itch

The verb **boljeti** has past forms like **živjeti** and other verbs on **-jeti**, so I have omitted them, and wrote only periods. The verb **svrbiti** has another infinitive form, **svrjeti** – it’s more formal – but the present forms are the same; for more, see 58 Colloquial and Formal.

Now, the English verb *itch* can be used in two ways:

*My leg itches.*

*The shirt itches me.*

Both Croatian verbs are *always* used in the second way. Something (a body part, shirt...) always *does something* (itches, ‘hurts’) to someone. In Croatian, the first sentence translates as:

**Srbi me**¹ **noga**¹. ‘The leg is itching me.’ = *My leg itches.*

One who gets affected is in accusative, and the body part or anything else that causes feelings is the subject of the sentence, and therefore in nominative. What is the source of feelings is often put to the end.

This, a bit unexpected use of cases, is sometimes called *inverse assignment*. What you expect to be a subject actually isn’t, at least grammatically.
If you use personal pronouns, they of course must be at the second place, but if you use general nouns or names, they are usually put to the first place. They must be in accusative, since they are really objects: legs, shirts, etc. are itching *them*:

**Anu**[^1] **svrbi noga**[^2]. *‘The leg is itching Ana.’* = Ana’s leg itches.

Such placement is common in Croatian: if you express someone’s feelings or experience, it’s normal to put him or her to the front, regardless of case. Recall this example:

**Ani**[^3] **je bilo dosadno**. (DL) Ana was bored.

Pain is expressed in exactly the same way:

**Boli me**[^4] **zub**[^5]. *‘The tooth is hurting me.’* = My tooth hurts.

Note how in both sentences, the subject (a body part, here **noga, zub**) comes after the verb. This is the default word order in such sentences; you can tweak it to emphasize the body part by putting it first.

You must bear in mind that **leda** and **usta** are always in plural, despite everyone having just one. Since they are subjects, verbs must be put into plural as well:

**Leđa**[^6] **me**[^7] **bole**[^8]. *‘The backs are hurting me.’* = My back hurts.

**Usta**[^9] **me**[^10] **svrbe**[^11]. *‘The mouths are itching me.’* = My mouth itches.

We haven’t learned plural of masculine nouns yet, but for both **prst** and **zub**, it’s simply made by adding an -i:

**Gorana**[^12] **bole zubi**[^13]. Goran’s teeth hurt.

All sentences above were in the present tense. Examples for the past tense (keep in mind that the body part is the subject in such sentences):

**Anu**[^14] **je svrbiha noga**[^15]. Ana’s leg itched.

**Leđa**[^16] **su me**[^17] **boljela**[^18]. My back has hurt.

**Gorana**[^19] **su boljeli zubi**[^20]. Goran’s teeth have hurt.

There are two more body parts, and both are quite special: their plural form is not only irregular, it’s in different gender:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>plural noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oko eye</td>
<td>oči f pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uho ear</td>
<td>uši f pl.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

**Anu**[^21] **boli oko**[^22]. Ana’s eye hurts.

**Anu**[^23] **bole oči**[^24]. Ana’s eyes hurt.

The gender switch is visible in the past tense:
Anu⁵ je boljelo oko⁴. Ana’s eye has hurt.
Anu⁵ su boljele oči⁴. Ana’s eyes have hurt.

If you can’t (or don’t want to) tell what hurts, you should make an impersonal sentence, i.e. without a subject – and consequently, neuter singular in the past tense – but don’t forget the object:

Boli⁶ me⁵. It hurts.
Boljelo me⁵ je. It has hurt.

The next interesting thing is what grows from the body – hair. While English has only one word, Croatian strictly distinguishes these two terms:

- kosa human hair growing from the scalp
- dlaka facial hair, body hair, animal hair

The word kosa is used in singular only – it stands for any amount of hair. Such nouns are called mass nouns. Similarly, English hair can refer to a single hair or any amount of it. The word is reserved for human hair growing from the top of the head. Everything else is dlaka, which can be used in either in singular or in the plural dlake to describe any amount of such hair. It’s interesting that French has the same distinction: cheveu vs. poil – but they both refer to single hair, you have to use plural in most circumstances. Italian does it too: capello vs. pelo.

When talking about body parts, it’s common to express possession somehow. Recall it’s normal, when you use body parts as objects, to express possession by DL:

Ana⁴ pere Goran⁶ kosu⁵. Ana is washing Goran’s hair.

The DL case is also used, usually in speech, to express possession of a described body part as well, that is, when a body part is the subject of the verb biti (je² +) be. We start from these sentences:

Kosa⁵ je čista⁴. The hair is clean.
Noge⁵ su prljave⁴. The feet are dirty.
Lice⁴ je prljavo⁴. The face is dirty.

Here the nouns kosa hair, noga leg/foot (in plural noge) and lice face are the subjects. Then we add the person in DL, and change the word order a bit, as usual (but the body parts are still subjects):

1. Goran⁶ je kosa⁵ čista⁴. Goran’s hair is clean.
   Goran⁶ su noge⁵ prljave⁴. Goran’s feet are dirty.
   Lice⁴ ti⁶ je prljavo⁴. Your face is dirty.

We can shuffle words around, e.g. ... čista kosa and so on.

There’s another way: you can usually express possession with the verb imati have. Now the body parts and any adjectives describing them are in A:

2. Goran⁵ ima čistu kosu⁵. Goran has clean hair.
Goran has dirty feet.
Imaš prljavo lice. You have dirty face.

There’s something very interesting. The way #1 to describe a body part – using DL for possession of it – is limited to temporary properties. Using it to express more permanent properties (e.g. color) is very rare.

The same holds for clothes. If a T-shirt is dirty – and especially if someone is wearing it – you can say:

Majica ti je prljava. Your T-shirt is dirty. (The T-shirt you’re wearing)
Prljava ti je majica. (the same meaning, emphasis on prljav dirty)

But nobody would use that expression to express that the shirt is red, as this is a permanent property.

Of course, there’s yet another way to express possession: with possessive adjectives, like Goranov or moj my. It can be used for both kinds of properties. However, it’s much less often used in speech, the two ways above are preferred.

Frequency of these expressions is not the same in all regions: the first way is less common in western and northern Croatia, the verb imati have is preferred in wider Zagreb and Rijeka regions, especially in small towns and villages. Using DL in such sentences gets more common further you go to the southeast. This table sums up the three possibilities (using the 1st person):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways to say my hair is dirty</th>
<th>is it common?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kosa mi je prljava.</td>
<td>DL yes (for temporary prop.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prljava mi je kosa.</td>
<td>verb have yes (esp. western areas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam prljavu kosu.</td>
<td>possessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moja kosa je prljava.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There’s another way to look at this feature. Temporary properties – wet, dirty, clean etc. affect the person. It’s something he or she maybe doesn’t know. Everyone knows he or she has a long or brown hair, or a red shirt. This is yet another example where DL = the affected person. Therefore, the form with the DL is not used to express that something is new.

I admit – this is a rather fine point. If you are going to use possessive adjectives or the verb imati in all circumstances, you will still be understood, of course, and not sound weird. Just be prepared to hear such expressions from native speakers.

® Instead of trbuh, the noun stomak is common in Serbia and Bosnia; it also means stomach.

In parts of Croatia not too far from the Slovene border, you will encounter –
specially in smaller towns and villages – lasi f pl. used colloquially instead of kosa.

• Something Possibly Interesting

A reader has pointed out that Croatian has specific words for hand and foot: šaka and stopalo. However, these words are limited to very narrow contexts, e.g. when you describe where a muscle or a tendon is, or you speak about an injury or surgery. The word šaka is also used (mainly in sport, but also when talking about physical fights) where English uses fist.

When we talk about washing, holding, raising, busy, dirty, clean hands, only ruka can be used.

Many languages consistently distinguish arm vs hand, but many other languages, like Croatian, don’t. This map in The World Atlas of Language Structures nicely illustrates the diversity of languages regarding this feature: Hand and Arm.

• Examples

Krunoslav Slabiniac, usually known under the nickname Kićo, performs – with a traditional band Slavonske lole – a traditional song Crne oči Black eyes. The song is from Šokadija, a part of Slavonia, a historical region of Croatia, where Šokci live. They speak a specific, a bit archaic dialect, which is only partially featured in this song. It’s mostly “Ikavian”, i.e. there’s i in many places where standard Croatian has ije or je:

Crne očiN dobro vide Black eyes see well f
Di u mrakuDL dvojeN side Where two people are sitting in the dark

JednoN drugomDL progovara One starts speaking to another
Di je naša ljubav staraN Where is our old love f
(traditional; author unknown)

The song starts with an easy to understand line. The next line has di for where, which is not just “Ikavian”, but used colloquially in many parts of Croatia. Another “Ikavian” form in that line is side instead of sjede they sit.

Each pair of lines is sung twice. The last line has the adjective stara after the noun, which is common in traditional songs (but note the adjective naša, before the same noun).

You can listen to it on YouTube™. Note that the stress is not standard in this song (the present tense is progovara) – it’s more similar to the ‘western’ stress.
• Exercise

Fill in the words (use DL for possession of body parts when needed):

______________ (a) ______ (b) oči. My eyes are itching.

Boli ___(c) ________(d). My knee hurts.

Puna ___(e) ___(f) __________ (g). My mouth is full.

________________ (h) ___(i) ___(j) koljeno. Your knee has hurt.

________________ (k) ___(l) ____(m) oči. My eyes were itching.

Kosa ___(n) ___(o) __________________ (p). My hair is dirty.

Check answers here.
28 Asking Who and What

Let’s learn how to make simple questions like *who is driving?* or *what do you read?* I’ve explained some simple questions already, but this will explain it deeper.

English has two *question words* (*who* and *what*). Croatian has essentially the same two words, however they change in cases. Here are forms for the Croatian equivalent of *who*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>people (who)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A, G</th>
<th>DL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tko</td>
<td>kog(a)</td>
<td>kom(e)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final *a* in *koga* and *e* in *kome* can be dropped, but the longer versions are used quite often. Colloquially, especially in certain regions, *tko* is simplified to just *ko*.

The question-words are placed to the first position and must be put into the exact case, for instance:

**Ivan**

Ivan was driving (**Ivan N**)

**Tko**

Who was driving?

For the accusative case (contrasted with the question about the subject in N):

**Goran**

Goran is waiting for Ana. (**Anu A**)

**Koga**

Who is Goran waiting for? (**A**)

**Tko**

Who is waiting for Ana? (**N**)

English questions could also be written with *whom* (*whom is Goran...*) – that’s recommended by many use guides, but increasingly rare in real life. You could think about *whom* as an almost extinct object case form of *who*, corresponding to Croatian *A* and *DL*.

Examples for the **DL** case:

**Ana**

Ana was writing to Ivan. (**Ivanu DL**)

**Kome**

Who was Ana writing to?

**Knjiga**

The book belongs to Ana. (**Ani DL**)

**Kome**

Who does the book belong to?

There’s no special placement of verbs or any other words in Croatian questions, except that the question word must be at the first position.

If you are asking about something that’s obviously not a person, you would use another question word (*I’ve already introduced its nominative form*):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>things (what)</th>
<th>N, A</th>
<th>DL</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>što</td>
<td>čemu</td>
<td>čega</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As said before, in many regions, šta is used colloquially instead of što.

Pay attention how with tko, A = G, while što has A = N (as with neuter nouns and adjectives in neuter gender!)

**Ana**[^1] je pisala pismo[^2]. *Ana was writing a letter. (pismo = A)*


**Ivan**[^5] se boji mraka[^6]. *Ivan is afraid of dark. (mraka = G)*

**Čega**[^7] se boji Ivan[^8]? *What is Ivan afraid of? (čega = G)*

When answering such questions, you can answer with just one word, but in the right case:

**Kome**[^9] je Ana[^10] pisala? *Who was Ana writing to?*
— Ivan[^11]. *To Ivan. (DL)*

**Što**[^12] je Ana[^13] pisala? *What was Ana writing?*
— Pismo[^14]. *A letter. (A)*

— Ana[^17]. *Ana. (A)*

**Čega**[^18] se boji Ivan[^19]? *What is Ivan afraid of?*
— Mraka[^20]. *Dark. (G)*

It’s possible to ask questions about any "slot" in a sentence, normally occupied by a noun, including one after prepositions. Then the preposition will be before the question word (like in a kind of ultra-formal English):

**Bili smo kod Ane**[^21]. *We were at Ana’s house/home. (kod + G)*

**Kod koga**[^22] smo bili?
— Kod Ane[^23]. *At Ana’s house/home.*

Now, you have to answer with the right preposition and the noun in the right case!

Since tko and što can be used as subjects in questions, what forms of verbs and other words do we have to use with them? It turns out to be quite simple and like in English (and unlike in Spanish, where quiénes is used to ask about plural):

**tko** = masculine sing., 3rd person
**što** = neuter sing., 3rd person

Therefore, even if you are asking about someone who is obviously female, or if the answer is obviously more than one person, you should always set up the question in the masculine gender, singular:

**Tko**[^24] je bio ovdje? *Who was here?*
**Tko**[^25] je gladan[^26]? *Who is hungry?*

For things:

**Što**[^27] je to bilo? *What was that?*
That’s very similar to English, where you ask in singular even if it’s obvious the answer will be more than one person.

Another example: to ask about which body part hurts, you have to use što as the subject, since body parts are subjects in such sentences, while the person feeling the pain is grammatically the object (in A). Consequently, in questions, past forms must be neuter singular, and in answers the body part is in N:

Što te bolji? lit. ‘What hurts you?’ = Where does it hurt you?
— Zub. A tooth.

Što je boljelo Anu? lit. ‘What did hurt Ana?’ = Where did it hurt Ana?
— Ruka. Hand/arm.

The word što is a pronoun, it cannot be attached to a noun. You cannot use it to ask e.g. What movie are you watching?. For such purposes, Croatian uses another word, adjective koji, explained in 57 Whose, What Thing and What Like.

The question-word što is used to ask for additional information about what someone is, e.g. what profession:

Što je Ivan? What is Ivan?
— Liječnik. Doctor.

What about animals? For general animals, you should use što, but for animals you’re familiar with (e.g. pets) tko is often used.

Recall that što is used for generic questions where we know the subject, but not the verb:

(Ana spava. Ana is sleeping.)
Što Ana radi? What is Ana doing? (lit. ‘working’)
— Spava. She’s sleeping.

For general questions what is/was going on – nothing is known – the following two verbs are used (the first one is a bit colloquial):  

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{dešavati («)} & \text{ se }^2 \\
\text{događati («)} & \text{ se }^2 \\
\end{align*}
\]

\text{go on, happen}

For example:

Što se događa ovdje? What is going on here?

Since Croatian has only one present tense, it’s very common to add the all-purpose demonstrative to that after question words, usually before the verb, to stress that you’re asking something present, ongoing right now, what or who can be seen:

Što to Ana radi? What is Ana doing? (right now)
Što to radiš? What are you doing?
Šta to radiš? (the same meaning, but colloquial)
**Što** se **to** događa? *What is going on?* (right now)

**Tko** je **to**? *Who’s that?*

**Kome** DL **to** pišeš? *Who are you writing to?* (I see you’re typing a message)

Observe that between the question words and **to** second-position words may appear. This removes the ambiguity of the present tense, as this question is also about someone’s job, depending on the context:

**Što** ^4 radiš? *What are you doing? / What do you do?*

Such **to** is optional, of course, but makes the question really specific. Even adding sad(a) now wouldn’t remove the ambiguity, since sad(a) can stretch to days, weeks, months – depending on the context.

If you are puzzled what **to** is in such questions, it behaves rather as an adverb or particle, and never changes its form.

Finally, it’s possible to ask questions what **should** be, or what **should** you do, that is, *ask for advice or an opinion*. There’s a special construction where **da** is put right after the question-word:

**Što** ^4 da pišem? *What should I write?*

**Koga** ^4 da čekamo? *Who should we wait for?*

**Što** ^4 da radim? *What should I do?*

(Google™ for **što da radim** or **šta da radim** and you’ll see it’s a very frequent expression.)

The main verb should be in the present tense, as in other questions of this type (**gdje da...**, **kada da...** etc.):

**Kamo** da idemo? *Where should we go?*

The verbs must be in the present tense to use such form. If you are asking about what **should have been**, use the verb **trebati** in the past tense with another verb in **inf**:

**Što** ^4 sam trebao raditi? *What should I have been doing?*

---

The variants **ko** and **šta** are considered standard in Bosnia and Serbia. In Serbia, and especially Bosnia, **što** is often used with meaning *why*.

The verb **dešavati** («) **se** ^2 is considered standard in Serbia and most of Bosnia.

• **Something Possibly Interesting**

The **to** in **š-to**, not appearing in other cases, comes historically from forms like these:

**Što to** radiš? *What are you doing?*
An older version of the question word was something like ča (it’s still used in some regions of Croatia). The word to was so much used after the older question word that it eventually fused with it, and lost its meaning. Later the word to was introduced again.

Various versions of the question-word what are used as traditional criteria for dividing various dialects in Croatia.

Russian, a not-so-distant relative of Croatian, still spells the question word что – which is just čto, but in Russian Cyrillic script. (However, it’s pronounced što, the same as in Croatian!)

The same happened in tko – the older form was kto, i.e. k + to. Again, Russian has still the older form, while certain regions in Croatia have only ki.

• Exercise

Fill in the right forms of question words (and verbs, where necessary):

Ivan čeka Anu. Ivan is waiting for Ana.

________(a) Ivan čeka? Who is Ivan waiting for?

Ivan čeka vlak. Damir is waiting for a train.

________(b) Damir čeka? What is Damir waiting for?

________(c) čeka vlak? Who is waiting for a train?

Marija je pisala pismo. Marija was writing a letter.

________(d) je ________(e) pismo? Who was writing a letter?

________(f) je Marija ______________(g)? What was Marija doing?

Check answers here.
29 Plural of Masculine Nouns and Adjectives

If the world were a simple place, Croatian masculine nouns would have their nominative plural made just by adding an -i, and accusative plural just by an -e. Well, it’s almost so, but there are few twists.

Most masculine nouns do simply get an -i in nominative plural:

- **krevet** *bed → kreveti* *beds*
- **prozor** *window → prozori* *windows*
- **tanjur** *(to eat from) → tanjuri* *plates*

What about the accusative case? It has just an -e instead of -i:

- **Goran**: *N* → **pere zube**: *E*. Goran is ‘washing’ his teeth.

(Yes, in Croatian, teeth are ‘washed’ and not ‘brushed’.)

And now, a few complications.

A few masculine nouns shift their stress in plural. One such noun is quite common:

- **mjesec** *moon/month → mjeseci*

A couple of nouns that get simply an -i in nom. plural undergo a consonant change if they end in either k, g or h. It does not happen in the accusative plural, only when an -i is added (that is, in the N-pl):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>N-pl</th>
<th>A-pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>putnik</td>
<td>putniči</td>
<td>putniké</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>razlog</td>
<td>razlozi</td>
<td>razloge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uspjeh</td>
<td>uspjesi</td>
<td>uspjehe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prozor</td>
<td>prozori</td>
<td>prozore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, most single-syllable nouns (that is, nouns that have only one vowel) get a longer ending; most of them -ovi:

- **brod** *ship → brodovi*
- **grad** *city → gradovi*
- **lijek** *cure → lijekovi*
- **sin** *son → sinovi*
- **vrto** *(garden) → vrtovi*
- **zid** *wall → zidovi*

(I hope you remember that e.g. **lijek** is just a spelling convention, the word is actually pronounced as **ljek**, and therefore has only one syllable, so it gets longer endings for plural.)

The consonant alternations described above (e.g. k → c) *do not* happen if the noun gets longer endings in plural:

- **vlak** *train → vlakovi*
If such short nouns end in a Croatian-specific letter, they get -evi instead:

- broj number → brojevi
- miš mouse → miševi
- ključ key → ključevi
- nož knife → noževi

(It’s the same principle as for -om vs. -em for change of adjectives in masc. and neuter genders.)

If one-syllable nouns end in a -c (it’s a Croatian-specific letter!) it turns into a č before -evi:

- princ prince → prinčevi
- zec rabbit, bunny → zečevi

A few one-syllable nouns do not end in a Croatian-specific letter, but get -evi nevertheless:

- car emperor → carevi
- sir cheese → sirevi

A couple of nouns often have -evi in everyday, colloquial communication, but according to the rules of Standard Croatian, -ovi is preferred (I personally use -evi®):

- kut angle, corner®
- pojas belt
- nos nose
- put way

(The noun pojas belt, despite having two syllables, gets longer endings; more nouns like that are listed below.)

Furthermore, there are a few exceptions: certain common one-syllable nouns get simply an -i; they are listed here:

- krvin worm
- gost guest
- konj horse
- dak pupil
- gumb button®
- mrav ant
- dan day
- keks biscuit
- pas (ps-) dog

I haven’t listed prst finger/toe and zub tooth since we have already learned them. The noun dak gets the same alternation as putnik, so its N-pl is daci.

There’s a quite odd noun that has different plural forms depending on its meaning:

- sat hour → sati hours
- sat clock, watch → satovi clocks, watches

The noun bol pain is usually feminine®, but in plural, the masculine bolovi is quite frequent, while regular boli is usually used for non-physical pains, and in poetry:

- bol f pain → pl. bolovi m (physical)
- boli f (emotional, poetic)

There are nouns that have two syllables in nominative, but a one-syllable case-base. Most such nouns get short endings, like any other two-syllable nouns:

- glumac (glumc-) actor → glumci
lonac (lonc-) pot → lonci
nokat (nokt-) fingernail/toenail → notki

However, a few such nouns get longer endings, as one-syllable nouns do; the only option is to remember them (the list below is not exhaustive):

bubanj (bubnij-) drum → bubnjevi
češalj (češlj-) comb → češljevi
dio (dijel-) part * → dijelovi
lakat (lakt-) elbow → laktovi
otac (oc-) father → očevi
vjetar (vjetr-) wind → vjetrovi

There are several two-syllable nouns that usually get longer endings. Notably, they include bird species:
galeb gull  golub pigeon  labud swan
(The Core Dictionary lists all unusual plural forms of nouns included in it.)

The accusative case for longer plural again has just -e instead of the final -i:

Gledam brodove. I’m watching ships.

One masculine noun has a completely irregular plural, and one more has no real plural but something else that will be explained a bit later:

čovjek man/human → ljudi people, men and women
brat brother → ?

The noun ljudi has a slightly different meaning than čovjek, it’s more generic, and can be often translated as people. It also corresponds to the English phrase men, women and children used to describe a mixed group. In a more narrow sense, it corresponds to men and women (i.e. all adults). If you attempt to translate men and women as ljudi i žene, it would sound extremely sexist – you would basically say that women are non-human.

Unfortunately, there’s more: some nouns in N-pl have a bit unexpected – and unsettled – spelling. They have case-base in -tk-; for example:

redak (rekt-) line of text
početak (početk-) beginning

From everything you have learned so far, you would expect the forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DL</th>
<th>N-pl</th>
<th>A-pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>redak</td>
<td>retku</td>
<td>retci</td>
<td>retke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>početak</td>
<td>početku</td>
<td>početci</td>
<td>početke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, since the sequence tc in N-pl is normally pronounced just as c, it was
traditionally spelled without the t. On the contrary, more recent Croatian orthography manuals mandate writing tc – and here’s a crazy thing – dc if the N has a d! So, be prepared to see all possible variants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>DL</th>
<th>N-pl</th>
<th>A-pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>redak</td>
<td>retku</td>
<td>reci</td>
<td>retke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>retci</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>redci</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>početak</td>
<td>početku</td>
<td>počeci</td>
<td>početke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most recent Croatian orthography manual allows also c-only forms for some frequent nouns, such as:

- **gubitak** (gubžtak-) loss
- **predak** (pretk-) ancestor
- **ostatak** (ostātk-) remainder
- **trenutak** (trenutk-) moment
- **početak** (počētk-) beginning
- **zadatak** (zadātk-) task

But the noun **redak** (rekt-) is not one of them! I expect there will be more changes in the future regarding this group of nouns. (Google™ for forms **preci**, **pretci** and **predci** on the .hr domain, to check frequencies. Don’t forget that the most regular form – **pretci** – is non-standard, according to the latest manual.)

What about adjectives? They are much simpler – they just get the following endings (equal to short endings for nouns) without any complications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjectives</th>
<th>N-pl</th>
<th>A-pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>masculine</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This applies to past forms of verbs as well. For example:

- **Gledam velike brodove**. I’m watching big ships.
- **Goran** ima prljave laktove. Goran has dirty elbows.
- **Psi** su bili gladni. Dogs were hungry.

® Instead of **tanjur** plate, a slightly different word **tanjir** is used in Serbia and most of Bosnia. In the coastal areas of Croatia, you’ll often hear **pjan** or **pjad** for plate.

Instead of **VRT** garden, the word **bašta** is much more common in Serbia for **garden**, and it’s used alongside **VRT** in Bosnia.

Instead of **VLAK** train, the word **VOZ** is used in Serbia and most of Bosnia. Instead of **KUT**, the word **UGAO** (ugl-) is used for angle, corner in Serbia. That word is used in Bosnia too, but you can find also **KUT** in Bosnia.

Instead of **GUMB**, the word **DUGME** (dugmet-) is used for button in Bosnia and
Serbia. In the coastal areas of Croatia, the word botun is common for button.
The form nosevi is accepted as standard in Serbia, besides nosovi.
The masculine singular form bol m pain is much more frequent in Serbia.
In Serbia, the word dio (dijel-) m part has an unexpected “Ekavian” form deo (del-) m; the plural is the expected delovi.
Serbian standard orthography allows only spellings like reci, preci, etc.

• Examples

For example, you can see here the plural of ruksak backpack – ruksaci:

školske torbe ruksaci

(The term školske torbe is N-pl of školska torba school bag; školski is an adjective derived from škola school; forming such adjectives will be explained in 33 School Yard and Bunk Bed: Relations. Yes, the English phrase is an original part of the poster.)

• Something Possibly Interesting

If you’re puzzled why almost all one-syllable nouns get -ov- in plural, the likely answer is this: 1400 years ago, there was a small, but frequently used group of masculine nouns, called u-nouns. Nouns sin son and dom home were among them (they had a bit different shape back then). They had special case endings, some of them containing -ov-.

From these nouns, the inserted -ov- in plural has spread to almost all one-syllable masculine nouns.

Croatian standard language manuals universally condemn forms like noseve (A-pl of nos), despite that form being 7 times more common (on the Internet) than nosove, since they break the rule when the e-endings are used. In speech, forms nosevi and noseve prevail almost completely. This is a textbook example of language prescriptivism, i.e. forcing a rule that’s not respected in the language as it’s really
used.

Spelling of nouns such as **predak, sudac** as so on is a matter of endless debate and small differences in various spelling manuals published by various institutions in Croatia.

Do you still think Croatian spelling is phonetic, obvious and simple?

- **Exercise**

Complete the following sentences:

- (a) __________ (b) žedni. *People are thirsty.*
- Goran gleda ______________ (c). *Goran is watching swans.*
- Ana reže ______________ (d). *Ana is cutting (i.e. trimming) her nails.*
- Čekamo ______________ (e). *We’re waiting for the guests.*
- Tražimo ______________ (f). *We’re looking for the keys.*
- ______ (g) trče. *Dogs are running.*
- ______________ (h) su u vlaku. *The travelers are in the train.*
- ______________ (i) su u ladici. *Knives are in the drawer.*
- To su bili ______________ (j) ______________ (k). *These were my beginnings.*
- ______________ (l) su rijetki. *Successes are rare.*

Check answers [here](#).
30 Three Beers: Less than 5 Things

We’re now able to say two, able to say apples, able to say beers… but do we really know how to say two apples or two beers in Croatian? Sadly, not really. So let’s learn it!

Surprisingly, Croatian uses two different ways of counting things: one for numbers 2-4, and another for larger numbers! I’ll show how to count less than 5 things first.

Words for some numbers adapt to the gender of the noun you count:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>fem.</th>
<th>neut./masc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>both</td>
<td>obje</td>
<td>oba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>obadvije</td>
<td>obadva (colloq.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>dvije</td>
<td>dva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>tri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>četiri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have included the Croatian words for both, since they behave identically as the words for two. The alternative forms obadvije and obadva are considered a bit colloquial (opinions vary).

But what form of nouns comes after the number? If you have expected N-pl, you’ll be surprised. It’s genitive singular (although it’s more than one thing). We can count apples and ships now!

dvije jabuke two apples
dva broda two ships
dva prijatelja two friends

But what about using them in a sentence? Do they change as single nouns, e.g. in accusative, etc.? No, such forms number-noun normally not change at all:

Imam dvije jabuke24. I have two apples.
Vidim dva broda24. I see two ships.

(Standard Croatian insists that numbers also change according to case. That’s very rare in speech. If you’re interested, check 99 Aorist Tense and Other Marginal Features.)

What about using adjectives (red, my) with counted nouns? Somehow, a special thing happens – adjectives get special endings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>adjectives (2-4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut./masc.</td>
<td>-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It’s simple to remember, since the endings are identical to noun endings for the majority of nouns, and to the end vowels of the number two:

**Imam dvije crvene jabuke**. *I have two red apples.*
**Vidim dva crvena broda**. *I see two red ships.*

Of course, the endings are different if you take masculine nouns in -a or feminine nouns in a consonant:

**Ovo su dvije duge nječi**. *These are two long words.*

You are maybe puzzled: *why adjectives get the special endings? Why not just G forms? Why genitive singular at all?*

Actually, I oversimplified things a bit. After these numbers, nouns and adjectives really have a special, so-called ‘**dual**’ form (also called ‘**paucal**’ form). It historically had specific endings, but today its endings – for nouns – look like G endings. However, if we were paying attention to vowel length, we’d see that the G ending for nouns ending in -a, e.g. **kod žene** is a long vowel e, while the ending in e.g. **dvije žene** is a short e. The forms just look the same in writing. However, since many people in Croatia don’t distinguish short from long vowels, these endings often coincide in speech as well. But ‘deep down’, the forms after numbers 2, 3, 4 and both are not plain G forms. Adjectives still have specific endings.

When such counted nouns are subjects, verbs come in plural:

**Dva prijatelja** my a čekaju. *Two friends are waiting for me.*

Since past forms of verbs are really a sort of adjectives, they get special endings as well:

**Dva prijatelja** su me čekala. *Two (male) friends were waiting for me.*
**Dvije prijateljice** su me čekale. *Two (female) friends were waiting for me.*

As in English, possessives often come before the number; since they are really adjectives, they must get special endings as well:

**Tvoje dvije knjige** su kod Ane. *Your two books are at Ana’s place.*
**Moja tri prijatelja** su ovdje. *My three friends are here.*

This implies that plural is used in Croatian less than in English. For example:

- **dva čovjeka** two men
- **dva brata** two brothers
- **tri djeteta** three children
- **četiri broja** four numbers

As you can see, you talk about children and brothers without using their plural forms (which are yet unexplained) if there’s not more than four of them:

**Imam dva brata** i jednu sestru. *I have two brothers and a sister.*

However, **numbers are mandatory**. If there’s no number 2 to 4, you have to use plural forms.
Sometimes you don’t know the exact number, it could be 2, it could be 3; one way to express it is by joining numbers:

**Imam dva-tri piva**\(^{24}\). *I have two or three beers.*
**Imam dvije-tri jabuke**\(^{24}\). *I have two or three apples.*

You will see this written with a comma instead of hyphen, e.g. *dva, tri*. It’s also common to join numbers 3 and 4 (*tri-četiri*).

There’s a twist: I’ve written above that *numbers adapt to the gender of the noun*. And I’ve written that *dva prijatelja* means *two friends*. That’s not the full story. Numbers described above cannot adapt in some circumstances.

In the case of mixed groups of people, where masculine nouns are used as a default (e.g. when you use *prijatelji friends* for a group of friends of mixed sex), you cannot use the numbers I have just described! This restriction holds even for *četiri*, a form common for both genders.

That’s because Croatian has a *specific set* of numbers used for mixed groups or people: they are described in detail in 47 *Of Flowers, Thorns and Counting Children*. Therefore:

- (both male) *dva prijatelja*\(^{24}\) *two friends*
- (both female) *dvije prijateljice*\(^{24}\) *two friends*
- (mixed) ? → will be explained

However, if you are talking about *animals*, you can and should use the numbers above even for mixed groups. For example, *konji horses* can mean an all-male group, or a mixed group, so you’re free to say:

**dva konja** *two horses* (all-male or mixed)

Now, there’s a word that’s quite common in Croatian: *još*. We have seen it long ago. It’s also used with numbers: you can place it before any quantity, to indicate it’s an additional quantity:

**Želim dvije jabuke**\(^{24}\). *I want two apples.*
**Želim još dvije jabuke**\(^{24}\). *I want two apples more.*

Don’t forget, if you place it before a verb, it has another meaning – *still*:

**Još želim dvije jabuke**\(^{24}\). *I still want two apples.*

There are two more useful words that are often used before quantities:

- **bar / barem** *at least*
- **čak** *even, as much as*

There’s no difference between *bar* and *barem*. For example:

**Trebam bar dvije čaše**\(^{24}\). *I need at least two glasses.*
**Imam čak tri tanjura**\(^{24}\). *I have even three plates.*
So, you can finally order food and drink (basically all waiters in Croatia speak English as well, so you could do it without any knowledge of Croatian as well). The most common conversation would be something along these lines:

**Imate li? Do you have...?**

— **Imamo.** We have. / — **Nemamo.** We don’t.

**Što imate? What do you have?**

Molim Vas A I’d like...

For example, the last line could be:

- **Molim Vas A dvije kave**. Two coffees, please.
- **Molim Vas A tri mala piva**. Three small beers, please.
- **Molim Vas A jedan hamburger**. One hamburger, please.
- **Molim Vas A dva čaja**. Two cups of tea, please. (lit. two teas)
- **Molim Vas A tri velike pizze**. Three large pizzas, please.

Normally, we don’t say cup of coffee, bottle of beer etc. when we are ordering food, because there’s no other option. But when ordering food that’s served on the plate, and it’s not pizza, the word porcija serving, portion is often used. Of course, what you are ordering comes after porcija, in G, while the word porcija changes to A or to the 24 form:

- **Molim Vas A (jednu) porciju A piletine**. One serving of chicken, please.
- **Molim Vas A dvije porcije A piletine**. Two servings of chicken, please.

The number one is optional, but it’s often used in such sentences. The same holds for wine, you can sometimes order it by glasses:

- **Molim Vas A (jednu) čašu A vina**. A glass of wine, please.

Of course, you can always order more:

- **Molim Vas A još dva piva**. Two more beers, please.

Finally, it’s interesting that the verb moliti has two objects in such sentences, and both are in A: the person asked, and what is asked.

There’s another way of asking for (and offering) food and drink, and it will be introduced in the following chapter.

**Exercise**

Fill in the right forms of verbs and pronouns:

- **Imam _____ (a) _______________ (b) ________(c). I have three big glasses.**
- **Dva ______________ (d) su __________ (e). Two men were singing.**

Check answers [here](#).
31 First, Second: Ordinals

We have just learned how to count things – at least up to 4 things. But there’s another way of counting, with words first, second etc. They are usually called ordinals or ordinal numbers, and behave as adjectives in Croatian. Their forms are:

1 prvi first 5 peti fifth
2 drugi second 6 šesti sixth
3 treći third 7 sedmi seventh
4 četvrti fourth 8 osmi eighth

Of course, the adjective drugi also means other.

For higher numbers, you should just add -i to them, if they consist of only one word:

17 sedamnaest → sedamnaesti
40 četrdeset → četrdeseti

If a number consists of more than one word, just change the last word into the ordinal form; if a number is in a compact form (without the i) just change the last part:

31 trideset i jedan → trideset i prvi
31 tridesetjedan → tridesetprvi

Pay attention that all ordinals are adjectives, i.e. they change case, gender and number when needed:

17th sedamnaesti (masc. N)
   sedamnaestom (masc. DL)
   sedamnaestu (fem. A) etc.

One thing the ordinal numbers are used for in Croatian is for dates. In Croatian, e.g. the year 1932 is understood as the ‘1932nd year’ or just the ‘thirty-second’ year.

In Croatian, when you want to say that something happened (or happens, or will happen) on a given day, month or year (expressed as a date), you should put the date in the genitive case.

Bilo je toN trideset i drugeG (godineG). lit. ‘It was in the 32nd (year).’ = It was in thirty-two.

Also, days in a month are referred to as the first, the second (the same is in English, but in the genitive case), and Croatian treats months in the same way: the first month (in a year), the second... ®. Normally people would just say:

RođenN sam petog osmogG. ‘I am born on the fifth of the eighth.’ = I am born on the fifth of August.

Of course, both petog and osmog are genitives of ordinal adjectives peti and osmi (in masc.), since it’s just short for petog dana and osmog mjeseca – and both dan
and mjesec are masculine.

In the Croatian writing of numbers, ordinal numbers are abbreviated to just number + a period, so it’s usually written:

Rođen^{N} sam 5. 8.

This is the word used to describe a specific date:

datum date

If you want to talk about a date related to an event, you add the event in the genitive case:

datum rođenja date of birth

To say that something happened/happens sometime in a given month, use u^{`} + DL:

Rođen^{N} sam u osmom mjesecu^{DL}. I’m born in August.

The word mjesec is sometimes abbreviated as mj.; colloquially, even mjesec month can be left out:

Idemo na more^{A} u sedmom^{DL}. We’re going to seaside in July.

There are also names of months in Croatian, but they are mostly used in formal writing, books, etc.; they are normally not capitalized (similar to days of week):

1 siječanj (siječnj-) January
2 veljača February
3 ožujak (ožujk-) March
4 travanj (travnj-) April
5 svibanj (svibnj-) May
6 lipanj (lipnj-) June
7 srpanj (srpnj-) July
8 kolovoz August
9 rujan (rujn-) September
10 listopad October
11 studeni (adj.) November
12 prosinac (prosinc-) December

Of course, they must be also put to genitive when used in the above meaning (when something happened/happens):

Rođen^{N} sam petog kolovoza^{A}. (formal) I am born on the fifth of August.
Rođen^{N} sam u kolovozu^{DL}. (formal) I am born in August.

When the date is the subject, the first word should be in nominative, but the rest of the date must stay in the genitive case, since you are actually talking about the Xth day of some month of some year and all those of’s correspond to the Croatian genitive case:
The fifth of August was hot.

If you want to talk about decades (i.e. the seventies) you can simply use ordinal adjectives in feminine plural (since you’re really talking about godine years, and it’s feminine plural).

The seventies were long ago.

Another very frequent use of ordinal numbers is talking about levels in a building. Croatian uses the same scheme as British English – the floor above the ground level is the first floor:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tavan</th>
<th>attic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>potkrovlje</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drugi kat</td>
<td>the second floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prvi kat</td>
<td>the first floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prizemlje</td>
<td>the ground floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>podrum</td>
<td>basement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word kat means only storey, level in a building, not surface you walk on (the other meaning of English floor). For surfaces, the word pod is used.

If you use only na katu (or direction na kat), the first floor is assumed:

The bathroom is on the first floor.

For prizemlje and podrum, you should use the preposition u; for all levels above, the preposition na is used:

The box is in the basement.
The office is on the second floor.
The toys are in the attic.

For attic, there are two terms: potkrovlje is more formal.

The adjective prvi is often used in spatial arrangements, when English usually uses front instead:

front row (lit. ‘first row’)
There’s one instance when ordinals are used less than in English: when you just enumerate things in no particular order, e.g. when you talk about your sisters:

**Imam tri sestre**. *I have three sisters.*

**Jedna radi u banci**. *One works in a bank.*

**Druga studira**. *Another is in university.*

**Treća je još u školi**. *The third one is still in school.*

The first word is just an numeral adjective (used as a pronoun). The second one means both *another* and *second*. After it, there’s no other option but to use ordinal adjectives. The point is: there’s no *first sister*. But there’s the third one. You’ll find out that native speakers prefer also speaking about *one son* and *the other one*, rather than about *the first son* and *the second one*, and so on. You should use the ordinal *prvi* only when you want really to say that someone or somebody is at the first position. After it, it doesn’t matter, since there’s no difference in Croatian.

The opposites of *prvi* are:

- **posljednji** — last
- **zadnji** — last (The adjective **posljednji** is a bit more formal.)

An example for **zadnji**:

**Ana živi na zadnjem katu**. *Ana lives on the top floor.* (lit. ‘last floor’)

While in English, you can just use *first* as an adverb (e.g. *first, you mix flour with eggs*...), in Croatian you must use its ‘adverbial’ form, that is, neuter singular *prvo*. Instead of **posljednje**, the form **na kraju** is used in meaning *finally*.

However, in English, **finally** can also mean *after so much time, after a long wait* and so on, like in *we’re finally done*. In that meaning, Croatian uses another word:

- **konačno** — finally (after a long time)
- **na kraju** — finally (as the last step)

This corresponds to Spanish *por fin* (**konačno**) vs. *finalmente* (**na kraju**).

---

* In Serbia, ordinal numbers are usually not used for months (except when reading dates written as numbers); specific names – different than Croatian – are used even in the colloquial speech:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>januar</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>februar</td>
<td>February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mart</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aprl</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maj</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jun / juni</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you can see, these names are similar to the English names. Those names also prevail in Bosnia and Montenegro, and are sometimes used in Croatia too. Ordinal numbers for months are infrequent in Bosnia and sometimes used in Montenegro.

The following words are less often used in Serbia and Bosnia (words more common there are listed on the right side of arrows):

kat → sprat
kupaonica → kapatilo
ured → kancelarija

• Examples

These banners on the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb advertise an exhibition about the sixties:

You can also see how the dates of the exhibition are written on the banners.

The song Moja prva ljubav My First Love, also known as Djevojke u ljetnim haljinama volim Girls in Summer Dresses I like was a hit by Haustor, a band from Zagreb. The song has very short lyrics:

mirišu na smolu[^5]
to[^11] je, to[^12] je...
moja prva ljubav[^13] (Srđan Sacher)

Girls in summer dresses I like
I kiss them in their back
they smell of resin
my town got a port this evening
There’s oil on the water
that’s, that’s...
my first love

[^1]: 3pl
[^2]: DL
[^3]: N
[^4]: A
[^5]: N
[^6]: N
[^7]: N
[^8]: N
[^9]: N
[^10]: DL
[^11]: N
[^12]: N
[^13]: N

The first verse contains a case yet unexplained: DL in plural. The verb *mirjšati*
(miriše) can mean either pleasant or unpleasant smell, and what something smells of is expressed with na” + A. If you’re puzzled by imagery in this song, it’s from a perspective of someone living inland and imagining his town became a seaside town for a while, with the smell of resin from pine trees and oil from boats in the port.

Note how the verb ljubiti kiss uses a destination.

The song has unusual word order in some verses: normally, you would put the verb first in the first verse. The fourth verse has moj grad my town (or my city) split by strict placement of the verb je².

The verb dobiti (dobiže) get is another perfective verb.

You can listen to the song on YouTube™, but there aren’t many videos for copyright reasons. Check a great performance by young singers on the Croatian public TV show A strana A Side, which are joined by the original singer (Darko Rundek).

• Exercise

Fill in the sentences below:

________(a) stan ____(b) ____{(c) ____________________}(d) ________(e). Our apartment is on the third floor.

To je bilo ____{(f) __________________}(g) mjesecu. It was in April.

Kutija je ____{(h) __________________}(i). The box is in the basement.

Sjedili smo ____{(j) ______________}(k) ________(l). We were sitting in the front row.

Check answers here.
32 Love and Like

There are two most common verbs used to express that you love or like something:

- *voljeti* (voli, volio, voljela)  \[ \text{love/like} \]
- *sviđati se* ²

The first verb is about lasting emotions (you *love* a person, a city) and the second one about impressions, e.g. when you eat something and you like it, but also when you feel someone attractive.

The first verb is straightforward to use, the object is in the accusative case, as usual:

Goran¹ voli Ana. *Goran loves Ana.
Ana¹ voli sladoled². *Ana likes ice-cream.*

However, the second verb is a bit more complicated: the thing one likes is the subject of the sentence, and who likes it comes in DL. For instance, if you’ve just eaten a soup and you liked it, you could say:

Sviđa mi² se juha¹. *I like the soup.* ¹

If e.g. Ana feels attraction or affection to someone (e.g. Ivan) – and it’s not necessarily erotic, you can just like someone’s personality – one could say:

Ani¹² se sviđa Ivan¹. *Ana likes Ivan.*

This is probably quite familiar to you if you know some German, French, Italian or Spanish, since all these languages have verbs that express *like* that behave exactly the same (and use a form that corresponds to the Croatian DL):

(Spanish)  *Me gusta el libro.*
(Italian)  *Mi piace il libro.*
(French)  *Le livre me plaît.*
(German)  *Das Buch gefällt mir.*
           Knjiga mi¹² se sviđa. ¹

All five sentences above mean *I like the book*, but the *book* is the subject in all five sentences, and the person who likes (*I*, emphasized in the sentences) is *not* the subject. Therefore, all five verbs – Spanish *gustar*, Italian *piacere*, French *plaire*, German *gefallen* and Croatian *sviđati se*² – are above in the 3rd person. The only real difference is the word order, which follows quite different rules in Spanish, Italian, German and Croatian (the French word order is here quite similar to the Croatian order, though).

As with such sentences, in Croatian, what you’re talking about comes first: if you are talking about Ana, she comes before the verb, but Ivan (or a book) is really the topic, it can sometimes come to the first position in such sentence. (Of course, second position words are always placed in the second position.)
Since what you like is the subject, and subjects are usually left out, this sentence can have multiple meanings, depending on the context:

**Sviđa mi se.** I like it/him/her.

The same holds for Spanish (*me gusta*) and Italian (*mi piace*), since both languages usually omit subjects, if known from the context.

If you like something in plural, the verb, of course, must come in plural:

**Sviđaju mi se cipele.** I like the shoes.
**Sviđale su mi se cipele.** I liked the shoes.

Of course, you can also say:

**Sviđaš mi se.** I like you.
**Sviđaš se Ani.** Ana likes you.
**Sviđala si mi se.** I liked you. (*you* = female)

The last sentence is in the past tense, and implies that it’s *no more*: something has changed (either ‘you’ has died, or ‘I’ doesn’t like ‘you’ anymore).

You have a lot of freedom of what you can like with *sviđati se*² – it includes places and times, which simply are used as subjects:

**Ani se ovdje nije sviđalo.** Ana didn’t like it here.
**Sviđalo mi se na moru.** I like being at the seaside.

English here usually has to use either *it* or some form of the verb *to be*, but Croatian does not (recall, there are no dummy pronouns in Croatian).

Since these subjects are not nouns or pronouns, verbs are impersonal, 3rd pers. singular, and past forms must be in neuter singular:

**Ani se ovdje nije sviđalo.** Ana didn’t like it here.
**Sviđalo mi se na moru.** I liked being at the seaside.

Liking places and times is also often expressed with the adverb *lijepo nice* + DL + je²:

**Lijepo mi je na moru.** I like being at the seaside.
**Bilo mi je lijepo na moru.** I liked being at the seaside.
**Bilo mi je lijepo jučer.** I liked it yesterday.

The verbs are again impersonal.

You can like *doing something*: you should then put the right verb into the infinitive and place it after one of the two verbs listed above, usually *voljeti* (*voli,...*):

**Ana voli trčati.** Ana loves to run. *

The verb in infinitive can have an object, and so on:

**Ana voli voziti bicikl.** Ana likes to ‘drive’ bicycle. (= *ride*) *

It’s interesting that we don’t ‘ride’ bicycles, but ‘drive’ them: *jahati* (*jaše*) *ride* is
reserved for horses and other animals.

To express that somebody generally likes running (which can imply just watching others running, not running themselves), other words, so-called verbal nouns or gerunds should be used:

Ana\textsuperscript{N} voli trčanje\textsuperscript{A}. Ana loves running.

You can find more about verbal nouns in 66 Smoking is Dangerous: Verbal Nouns.

You can use adverbs of intensity with all such expressions, mostly jako and stvarno to strengthen expressions, using the usual placement rules for such adverbs (the intensifying adverb usually comes before the verb, but 2nd position words can intervene):

\textit{Jako mi se sviđa juha}\textsuperscript{N}. I like the soup very much.  
\textit{Bilo mi je jako lijepo na moru}\textsuperscript{DL}. I liked being at the seaside very much.  
\textit{Ana stvarno voli trčati}. Ana really likes to run.

It’s interesting that the more formal word vrlo cannot be used to strengthen verbs.

There’s another often used verb:

\textit{zanima}\textsuperscript{A} («) be interesting to

This verb is used in a similar way; however, the person who feels interest is expressed in A:

\textit{Gorana zanima nogomet}\textsuperscript{N}. Goran is interested in football. ®

This Croatian sentence could also be translated as football is interesting to Goran (it’s interesting that English here kind of follows Croatian).

This verb is used in a very common expression, used when you want to express that you don’t really want to hear about something (the expression is not really polite, however):

\textit{Ne zanima me}. I’m not interested.  

Another verb is very similar to voljeti (voli,...) but stands for an even stronger feeling:

\textit{oobozavati} («) adore, be fan of, really like

It can be used for people you really love, but also for actors, sports, food, activities (including verbs in infinitive), etc.:

\textit{Igor obožava kavu}. Igor ‘adores’ coffee.  
\textit{Ana obožava plivati}. Ana ‘adores’ swimming.

The verb with the meaning opposite to love and like is:

\textit{mržiti} hate  

It’s used in the same ways as voljeti (voli,...):
Ana^N mrzi te cipele^A. Ana hates these shoes.  
Goran^N mrzi čistiti kuću^A. Goran hates to clean the house.

Another verb that’s frequently used with another verb in inf is:

znati (+ inf) know how ®

This verb with a normal object in A means just know, but with inf it covers also knowledge how to do something:

Ana^N zna plivati. Ana knows how to swim.  
Ne znamo plivati. We don’t know how to swim. = We can’t swim.

Actually, Croatian uses only znati in many instances where English would use can, i.e. can read, can sing would be always expressed with znati in Croatian. Colloquially, znati is also used for things that are done occasionally, or are known to happen occasionally, like English may:

Snijeg^N zna padati i u desetom mjesecu^DL. (colloq.) Snow may (is known to, does sometime) fall in October as well.

(The use of i¨ to express as well will be explained in 67 Only, Except, Too: Inclusion and Exclusion.)

There’s a fine difference: while moći implies just a possibility, znati implies that something is known to happen (you see the connection with the verb know). It’s possible not in principle, but because it does happen. This use is a bit colloquial, but common.

There are more verbs that use other verbs in infinitive, you’ll encounter them later.

________

® In Serbia, infinitives are much less often used: in speech, the form da + present prevails. For instance, such sentences would be much more common in Serbia:

Ana^N voli da třči. Ana loves to run.  
Ana^N voli da vozi bicikl^A. Ana likes to ‘drive’ bicycle.

Knowledge of doing something is usually expressed in parts of Bosnia and Montenegro with the verb umjeti (umije, umio, umjela) know how. In Serbia, the same verb has the “Ekavian” form umeti. So, the sentences about knowing how to swim would be like this in Serbia:

Ana^N ume da pliva. Ana knows how to swim.  
Ne umemo da plivamo. We don’t know how to swim. = We can’t swim.

The verb is fully regular, and like “Ekavian” razumeti understand, its pres-3 is umeju:

Ne umeju da plivaju. They don’t know how to swim. = They can’t swim.

This verb is also used in Serbia to express that something happens occasionally,
besides znati.
In Serbia and most of Bosnia, instead of juha and nogomet, supa and fudbal are used.
In Serbia, the verb mrziti hate has the unexpected “Ekavian” form mrzeti (mrzi).

**Something Possibly Interesting**

If we could travel back in time to the 15th century, we would find that the English verb like behaved then exactly like Croatian svidati se². For example, Thomas Malory wrote in 1485 if it like you I will speak with them. You can find both uses in Shakespeare’s works, but after him, the old way went into oblivion.

**Exercise**

Complete the following sentences:

Ana ______(a) čaj. Ana likes tea.
(b) ______(c) ______(d) hlače. I like the pants.
Marko ______(e) ______(f) mlijeko. Marko doesn’t like milk.
Ne ______(g) ______(h) ______(i) to. I don’t like it.
(j) ______(k) ______(l). I like to watch movies.

Check answers here.
33 School Yard and Bunk Bed: Relations

Croatian contains a big number of adjectives derived from nouns (and sometimes from other words too) that are often represented in English as nouns-used-as-adjectives. Here’s what I mean:

*school yard*

Here *school* is actually used as an adjective, it *describes* what kind of yard it is, what it belongs to. Such adjectives are sometimes called *relational* or *quasi-possessive* adjectives. It’s interesting that such adjectives in English cannot have a comparative (you cannot say *more school*) or even cannot be used as a property (you cannot say *the yard is school*).

In Croatian, you *cannot* simply use nouns as adjectives – you have to *turn them into adjectives*. It holds for some nouns in English too: you cannot use e.g. *person* as an adjective (e.g. ‘*person space*’) you have to turn it into an adjective – *personal*.

The main way to turn nouns into adjectives in Croatian is to append *-ski* as if it were a case ending (it’s *not* a case ending!):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>brod</em></td>
<td><em>brodski</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>grad</em></td>
<td><em>gradski</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>škola</em></td>
<td><em>školski</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The resulting word is an adjective, so it must adapt to the noun case and gender. Since *dvorište* *yard* is neuter (as expected) we have to use it accordingly:

**Ovo**<sub>N</sub> je **školsko**<sub>N</sub> *dvorište*. *This is a school yard.*

**Bili smo u**<sub>DL</sub> **školskom**<sub>PL</sub> *dvorištu*. *We were at the school yard.*

In some words that add *-ski*, the *s* gets fused with neighboring consonants and vowels, and we sometimes get *-ški*, *-čki* or even *-ćki*, or other irregularities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *pošta* | *poštanski* *
| *putnik* | *putnički* *

Adjectives for cities, regions and countries are often irregular (and they are not uppercase):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Bosna</em></td>
<td><em>bosanski</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dalmacija</em></td>
<td><em>dalmatinski</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Istra</em></td>
<td><em>istarski</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Slavonija</em></td>
<td><em>slavonski</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zagreb</em></td>
<td><em>zagrebački</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zagorje</em></td>
<td><em>zagorski</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For countries, islands and cities that end in *-s* or *-z*, the final consonant is usually assimilated into *-ški*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Pariž</em></td>
<td><em>pariški</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tunis</em></td>
<td><em>tuniški</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Teksas</em></td>
<td><em>tekšaški</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vis</em></td>
<td><em>viški</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relational adjectives are also created for cities having more than one word (e.g. *Banja Luka*, a city in Bosnia-Herzegovina) and foreign ones, respelled according to
pronunciation:

Banja Luka → banjalučki  New York → njujorški

(You will also see mixed spellings, e.g. newyorški.) You can find adjectives derived from countries in L2 Countries and Nationalities, and adjectives derived from cities and towns in L3 Cities and Towns.

Country adjectives (many of which are used as country names) such as danski Danish, irski Irish etc. are also historically derived with the suffix -ski.

Recall, words like Hrvatska Croatia or Njemačka Germany are already adjectives, just used as nouns – there’s no need to make adjectives from them.

All countries and cities derive relational adjectives by -ski (unless they are already adjectives) – but, generally, not all words do. Many words add -ni instead, and there’s no real rule which noun uses what ending, as you can see for adjectives derived from seasons – you have to remember it:

jesen f autumn → jesenski  proljeće spring → proljetni *

zima winter → zimski  ljeto summer → ljetni

Common adjectives that are derived with -ni are:

cvijet flower → cvjetni  rat war → ratni
kiša rain → kišni  soba room → sobni
kuća house → kućni  stol table, desk → stolni *
ljubav f love → ljubavni  voće fruit(s) → vočni
osoba person → osobni *  vrt garden → vrtni
rad work → radni  zid wall → zidni

Observe that adjective cvjetni has just je instead of ije. Consonants change before this ending, e.g. k or c → č and so on, as in these examples:

brak marriage → bračni  noga leg → nožni
krug circle → kružni  oko eye → očni
mliječko milk → mlječni  trbuš belly → trbušni
ruk a hand → ručni  ulica street → ulični

(English has specific adjectives personal, marital and circular, but there’s no specific adjective for many other nouns in English, e.g. hand is simply used as an adjective in hand brake. English usually has specific adjectives if a noun is of French or Latin origin, since these two languages have specific adjectives). Adjectives derived from cardinal directions also follow this pattern:

sjeverni northern  istočni eastern
zapadni western  južni southern

A few adjectives in -ni have specific meanings; the most common one is:

glava head → glavni main
It’s interesting that relational adjectives cannot be derived from days of week, except for Sunday:

nedjelja Sunday → nedjeljni

(You will occasionally see and hear adjective subotnji adj. Saturday, but it’s quite rare.)

It’s very useful to learn relational adjectives derived from time nouns (like English day → daily, month → monthly); some of them are quite irregular:

dan day → dnevni večer f evening ® → večernji
noć f night → noćni mjesec month → mjesečni
jutro morning → jutarnji godina year → godišnji

For the nouns tjedan (tjedn-) week, ponoć f midnight and podne (podnev-) noon, adjectives are derived regularly by adding the -ni. For example:

OvoN je moj mjesecni prihodN. This is my monthly income.
Kupi neke dnevne novineA. Buy a daily newspaper.

The adjective godišnji annual is used in a common phrase:

godišnji odmor annual leave, paid vacation

The phrase is often – in speech and casual writing – shortened to just godišnji: the noun odmor is assumed. So, you’ll often hear (and read):

IvanN je na godišnjemDL. Ivan is on (paid) vacation.
Sutra idem na godišnjiA. I’m going on (paid) vacation tomorrow.

Of course, even when used on its own, the word godišnji behaves like any adjective and keeps the gender of the omitted noun (here: masculine inanimate). Therefore, it got the DL ending -em in the first sentence (for "activity as location") and the A ending in the second (for "activity as destination").

It’s also possible to derive relational adjectives from many adverbs, e.g. sad(a) now, jučer yesterday, gore up and so on: they will be explained in 76 Inner and Outer and Step by Step: More on Space and Time.

Few nouns have relational adjectives on -ji, again with (specific) consonant alternations; they include most animals:

djeca coll. children → dječji ® ptica bird → ptičji
mačka cat → mačji riba fish → ribljji
miš mouse → mišji zec rabbit → zečji

There are frequently used adjectives to indicate what kind of meat something is made of:

govedi adj. beef pileći adj. chicken
janjeći adj. lamb teleći adj. beef (veal)
Since relational adjectives cannot be simply derived from nouns, they will be listed with nouns in the Core Dictionary.

The -ski is the default suffix for relational adjectives: new words that are adopted into Croatian use it (translation for the words below is, I hope, not necessary):

- **atom** → **atomski**
- **laser** → **laserski**

However, nouns ending in -s or -t will likely get the suffix -ni:

- **balet** → **baletni**
- **virus** → **virusni**

There are probably more rules on -ski vs -ni, but I don’t know them at the moment.

Certain terms in Croatian are not expressed in this way, especially when we describe the purpose of something, e.g. where something is applied or where it’s used. Then, the preposition za + a noun in A are put after the noun. Common examples are:

- **čaša za vino** wine glass
- **lak za nokte** nail polish
- **četka za kosu** hair brush
- **pasta za zube** toothpaste
- **krema za ruke** hand cream
- **šalica za čaj** tea cup

Such constructions are used even in many cases when there seems to be an appropriate relational adjective. For example, **hand towel** is only **ručnik za ruke**, despite the relational adjective existing and being used in **ručna kočnica** hand brake, **ručni alat** hand tool, and some others. Also, there is an adjective **čajni**, but it’s basically used only in the expression **čajni kolūtić**, which is a type of tea biscuit (some 80% of appearances of **čajni** on the Internet are followed by kolūtić: try it yourself).

On the other hand, some of these terms have alternative versions, with relative adjectives (e.g. **zubna pasta** toothpaste), but versions with za are more common in speech.

Certain types of nouns, e.g. gerunds like **čitanje reading** don’t have relational adjectives at all. To express **reading glasses** in Croatian, you have to use the same construction:

- **naočale za čitanje** reading glasses
- **štap za pecanje** fishing rod

(More about gerunds in 66 Smoking is Dangerous: Verbal Nouns.)

Another way of expressing relation which does not use a relational adjective is with **na** + A, mostly placed after a noun, used as a predicative, or used as a kind of (secondary) object. First, it can describe basically sources of power and energy:

- **peć na drva** wood stove
- **svjetiljka na baterije** battery-powered lamp
- **igračka na navijanje** wind-up toy

Note how Croatian is more precise here. English wood stove is in principle
ambiguous. Is it maybe a proverbial stove made of wood? Croatian distinguishes peć od drva (made of wood) from peć na drva (running on wood).

It can be also used with the verb raditi work, do describing how something works:

Fen^N radi na struju^A. The hair dryer runs on electricity.

This preposition (with A!) is frequently used in parts of phrases that describe something; it’s never about the material, but some other distinctive property. For example:

krevet na kat^A bunk bed (lit. ‘bed on floor/story’)
kupus na salatu^A cabbage salad (lit. ‘cabbage on salad’)
plaćanje na rate^A paying by installments (lit. ‘on installments’)

There are four very common, fixed combinations of na¨ + a noun in A, with non-trivial meanings (except for one, which translates to English literally):

na primjer for example
na sreću fortunately, luckily
na vrijeme on time
na žalost unfortunately

All four are sometimes spelled as one word, e.g. naprimjer (both ways are standard)^®. The phrase na primjer is so common that is has a standard abbreviation (the period is mandatory):

npr. = e.g.

This table summarizes various ways to express English ‘noun attributes’ in Croatian:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>expression</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>generic</td>
<td>rel. adj. +</td>
<td>školsko dvorište school yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x of y</td>
<td>+ G</td>
<td>ključevi auta^G  car keys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ključevi od auta^G (colloq. !)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>material</td>
<td>+ od¨ G</td>
<td>sok od jabuke^G  apple juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purpose</td>
<td>+ za¨ A</td>
<td>četka za kosu^A  hair brush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mode, power</td>
<td>+ na¨ A</td>
<td>peć na drva^A    wood stove</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these constructions form phrases that can fill the first position in a sentence or clause, and then second-position words normally come after them:

Naočale^N za čitanje^A su^2 na stolu^DL. The reading glasses are on the table.

You will very rarely see these expressions split by second-position words, if ever. (Also check A5 Word Order.)
In Serbia, relative adjectives derived from Pariz, Teksas and Tunis have forms pariski, teksaski and tuniski, while forms of these adjectives in -ški are rare and considered non-standard in Serbia. This applies to most such nouns, but not to viški, which is accepted also in Serbia. Conversely, forms like pariski are very rare in Croatia.

Instead of prolijeti, a more regular adjective prolijećni is used in Serbia and Montenegro, and sometimes in Bosnia; instead of osoba \(\rightarrow\) osobni, lice \(\rightarrow\) lični covers that meaning in Serbia and Bosnia.

The noun stol table has the form sto (stol-) in Serbia and most of Bosnia, and the derived adjective is a bit unexpected stoni.

The noun večer f evening has the form veče (večer- f) in Serbia and most of Bosnia, but the derived adjective is the same, večernji.

Adjectives ending in -ji (e.g. dječji) have alternative forms ending in -iji (e.g. dječiji) that actually prevail in Serbia and Bosnia and are accepted in standard there. They are sometimes seen in Croatia as well.

Instead of šalica, the words šolja and šoljica are used in Serbia and parts of Bosnia. Instead of naočale, words naočare and naočari are more common in Serbia and most of Bosnia.

It appears that -ski is a bit more favored in Bosnia and Serbia: for example, from the noun autobus there’s autobuski there, while there’s autobusni in Croatia.

Spellings such as naprimjer are not standard in Serbia, and are partially accepted in Bosnia and Montenegro.

**Something Possibly Interesting**

In Danish, the adjective Danish is dansk: you again see the -sk- to form adjectives. It turns out that Croatian -ski, Danish (and Swedish and Norwegian) -sk, German -isch and English -ish have a common origin. The -i- before -sk- was lost in Croatian, but not before it had affected the preceding consonants: for instance, it had changed k to č in putnik \(\rightarrow\) putnički.

Each employee in Croatia has at least 4 weeks of godišnji, paid vacation, and often more. For those who can choose when they want to use these days, there’s a whole art of creating mini-vacations, by merging weekends with public holidays.

The adjective čajni is also used in čajna kobasica, literally tea sausage. This is often shortened to just čajna, since the feminine form of the adjective is seldom used in any other expression. However, it originally had nothing to do with tea; it seems it’s a corruption of China.
• Examples

This sign shows directions to a dog beach, which is literally beach for dogs in Croatian:

The construction with na“ + A is, a bit paradoxically, used to express ways of entering or leaving – which door to use – e.g. on this notice (I found it on a bakery) that the entrance is through the other door:

This is a bit unexpected if you consider it a location. But it’s not – it’s how to enter, and the ‘modal’ na“ + A is used.

• Exercise

Fill in the missing words (relational adjectives):

Goran je na __________________ (a) igralištu. Goran is at the school playground.

Sjedimo na _______________ (b) obali. We’re sitting at the sea shore.

Ana pije _______________ (c) sok. Ana is drinking fruit juice.

Ovo je _______________ (d) film. This is a war movie.

(Hint: pay attention to the case of the noun after the relational adjective.)

Check answers here.
34 Stressed Pronouns

Besides the forms of pronouns we have already learned, there are additional, stressed forms of pronouns. They can be placed to any position in the sentence. They are mostly optional, used when you want to emphasize them; however, they must be used with prepositions and conjunctions. Their forms are similar to the regular, ‘unstressed’ pronouns, but usually a bit longer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st &amp; 2nd pers. pronouns in singular</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A, G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>ja</td>
<td>mene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>ti</td>
<td>tebe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refl.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>sebe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bear in mind that Croatian completely distinguishes 2nd person singular and plural, while English has just you for both.

This example will illustrate their use when stressing objects:

Ana\(^N\) čeka mene\(^A\). Ana is waiting for me.

You cannot join an unstressed pronoun and another word with e.g. conjunction i” and – stressed pronouns must be used:

Vidim tebe\(^A\) i Anu\(^A\). I see you and Ana.

Despite the second position of tebe in the sentence above, the unstressed te\(^2\) cannot be used, since it cannot be joined with i” and with anything else.

When using stressed pronouns (which is not the default option in speech and writing!) the order of words is more like English:

Želim vidjeti tebe\(^A\). I want to see you.  ⚠️

There’s the curious third row: A sebe, DL sebi, marked as reflexive. The word sebe is the emphasized form of se\(^2\). However, you cannot emphasize every se\(^2\): you can emphasize it only when used in a specific meaning. Consider these sentences:

1. Brijem se. I’m shaving.  🔄
2. Oni\(^N\) se vole. They love each other.  🔄
3. Juha\(^N\) se kuha. The soup is cooking.  🔄
4. Vraćam se. I’m coming back.  🔄
5. Zovem se Igor\(^N\). My name is Igor.  🔄
6. Igram se. I’m playing.  🔄

You can emphasize only the se\(^2\) in the sentence #1, not in others:
(1) **Brijem sebe**. *I’m shaving myself.*

There’s a simple test to decide what you can emphasize: it can be done if you can use *myself* and *not you* (or *herself* and *not him*, etc.) in English sentence. For example, if you accidentally called yourself over the phone (e.g. your mobile phone), you can emphasize it:

**Zvao sam sebe**. *I called myself! (or dialed)*

To put it simply, you can emphasize se² as sebe only if someone is *really doing something to themselves* – e.g. *shaving*, *washing* and so on. Such use of se² is sometimes called *true reflexive*.

In other words, sebe never shifts the meaning, where se² does shift the meaning of some verbs. For example:

**Zabavljam se**. *I’m having fun.*

**Zabavljam sebe**. *I’m entertaining myself.*

The form sebe must be used when prepositions, adverbs and conjunctions are involved. For example, with the adverb (*iz*)van outside there’s an often used phrase:

(iz)van sebe **pred. furious, mad, freaking out**

This implies extreme excitation, you can be (iz)van sebe because you’re really happy, but most often it just means you’re really angry:

**Goran** je bio van sebe. *Goran was freaking out.*

Such small phrases that can be used only with the verb *biti* (je² +) *be* are sometimes called *predicatives*, abbreviated as pred.

Like other stressed forms, sebe must be used when you want to want to add something to the object, e.g. use i¨ and. It also must be used whenever you refer to subject and need the genitive case:

**Bojao se sebe**. *He was afraid of himself.*

In the last sentence, the se² is the particle, and sebe is the object in genitive.

What about the DL sebi? It’s used when you send something to yourself, and with prepositions. There’s a matching unstressed form *si²*:

**Pišem si** poruku. *I’m writing a message to myself.*

Unlike svoj, this form is never replaced colloquially by *mi²* or like.

I’ve emphasized more than once that possession of body parts (and clothes worn, etc.) is normally implied, and when they don’t belong to the subject, a possessor in DL is usually added. In western regions of Croatia, especially in parts of Istria and the Zagreb region, you’ll sometimes hear that even when a body part or a piece of clothing belongs to the subject, a DL possession is nevertheless expressed by *si²* – which is exactly the same construction as in German:
**Perem si**<sup>DL</sup> **ruke**<sup>A</sup>, (colloq.!, western parts)  
*Ich wasche mir die Hände.* (German)  
*I’m washing my hands.*

(Of course, it’s not required that you speak like that, but be prepared to hear and see it occasionally in these regions. This feature is likely German influence.)

Here are the forms for plural – they’re almost identical to the unstressed forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A, G</th>
<th>DL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>mi</td>
<td>nas</td>
<td>nama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>vi</td>
<td>vas</td>
<td>vama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, here are the 3rd person forms. They are mostly like unstressed forms with added *n-* or *nje-*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>DL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>ona</td>
<td>nju</td>
<td>nje</td>
<td>njoj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>njega = A</td>
<td>njemu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m pl.</td>
<td>one</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n pl.</td>
<td>ona</td>
<td>njih = A</td>
<td>njima</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n pl.</td>
<td>oni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the stressed forms of personal pronouns, we are able to use prepositions. One of them is *za*¨ *for*, requiring nouns or pronouns in the accusative case:

**Sendvić**<sup>N</sup> *je za Anu*<sup>A</sup>. *The sandwich is for Ana.*  
**Kolač**<sup>N</sup> *je za njih*<sup>N</sup>. *The cake is for them.*

In the standard stress scheme, the stress shifts to unstressed prepositions (ones marked with ¨), so it’s usually pronounced *za mene*. ®

(In certain regions, you will maybe hear *za me* or *za te*, that is, using *za*¨ with the unstressed 1st and 2nd person pronouns glued to them. It’s a bit archaic.)

It’s also quite common to use the preposition *kod*¨ + G with pronouns. The result is a compact way to say where something is:

**Knjiga**<sup>N</sup> *je kod mene*<sup>G</sup>. *The book is ‘at my place’.*

This, as we have already seen, can mean that the book is in your *house* (even if you’re not in the house at the moment!), your *room*, your *backpack*, or even *pocket* – depending on the context. This is a convenient way to indicate temporary
possession of movable things.

Also, this is a very common way to express location ‘at our place’ (this corresponds to German ‘bei uns’). Of course, this ‘us’ can imply your family, your friends, your country – depending on the context:

Kod nas\textsuperscript{G} pada k\textsuperscript{iša}\textsuperscript{N}. It rains ‘at our place’. (or here, etc.)

Goran\textsuperscript{N} je bio kod nas\textsuperscript{G}. Goran was at our house/home.

Another frequent use of stressed pronouns is in short responses to what others have said. This is how it works:

Ovaj film\textsuperscript{N} je dosadan\textsuperscript{N}... This movie is boring...
— Meni\textsuperscript{DL} nije. lit. ‘Not to me.’
— I meni\textsuperscript{DL} lit. ‘Also to me.’

The first sentence tries to be an ‘objective statement’, while the responses are opinions (by adding a person in DL): what I feel/think. Even if you rearrange words, you cannot use short forms of pronouns in such responses.

Then, the stressed pronouns (esp. sebe) are used in A and DL, with the preposition na\textsuperscript{ˇ}, where someone is understood as either a destination or location, meaning what he or she is wearing:

Goran\textsuperscript{N} ima samo majicu\textsuperscript{A} na sebi\textsuperscript{DL}. ‘Goran has only a shirt on himself’. = Goran is wearing only a shirt.

This use is a bit colloquial. More about the word samo only in 67 Only, Except, Too: Inclusion and Exclusion.

You’ll encounter later more situations where the stressed pronouns have to be used.

________

® In Serbia, infinitives are less used, da + present is more common, so the example would rather be želim da vidim tebe.

In Serbia and most of Bosnia, instead of juha soup, supa is used. The verb kuhati cook has the form kuvati in Serbia and parts of Bosnia, and colloquially in some parts of Croatia.

In Serbia, the DL pronoun si\textsuperscript{2} is less common (except in the Southeastern Serbia) and it’s not considered standard.

In Serbia, the stress very rarely shifts from pronouns to prepositions, za mene is much more common.

• Something Possibly Interesting

If you think there are too many forms of the stressed personal pronouns, here are stressed personal pronouns of Standard Slovene, a next door neighbor of Croatian,
for your entertainment. They have specific, dual forms for two persons – you don’t use plural then – and D and L are separate cases (of course, they also have unstressed forms, the language is quite similar to Croatian)...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>jaz</td>
<td>mene</td>
<td>=A</td>
<td>meni</td>
<td>=D</td>
<td>mano / menoj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ti</td>
<td>tebe</td>
<td>=A</td>
<td>tebi</td>
<td>=D</td>
<td>tabo / teboj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>ona</td>
<td>njo</td>
<td>nje</td>
<td>njej / nji</td>
<td>=D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>ono</td>
<td>njega</td>
<td>=A</td>
<td>njem</td>
<td>njem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refl.</td>
<td>sebe</td>
<td>=A</td>
<td>sebi</td>
<td>=D</td>
<td>sabo / seboj</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1-du | f | medve | m | naju  | =A | nama  | =A | =D |
|      | m | midva |

| 2-du | f | vedve | m | vaju  | =A | vama  | =A | =D |
|      | m | vidva |

| 3-du | f | onidve | m | njiju | =A | njima | =A | =D |
|      | m | onadva |

| 1-pl | f | me   | m | nas  | =A | nam   | =A | nami |
|      | m | mi   |

| 2-pl | f | ve   | m | vas  | =A | vam   | =A | vami |
|      | m | vi   |

| 3-pl | f | ona  | n | njih / nje | njih | njim  | =G | njimi |
|      | n | one  | m | oni   |

This table includes the instrumental case (I) which we haven’t covered yet. The interesting things is that some Croatian plural forms (e.g. njima) match Slovene dual forms. In the history of Croatian, it happened that dual and plural have merged, and some originally dual forms started being used even when there were more than 2 people, while the original plural forms were simply lost.

However, there are dialects in Croatia where some original plural forms are still used. If your family is from certain parts of Croatia, some pronouns in the Slovene table might better match the speech of your grandmother...
• Examples

This ambitious love song, Mjesto za mene A place for me, performed by Damir Urban & 4 contains a lot of stressed pronouns:

- Ti\(^N\) zbog mene\(^G\), You because of me
- ja\(^N\) zbog sebe\(^G\), me because of myself
- Pitam se, I ask myself
- ima li te\(^G\) uopće, are you there at all
- Ima li tu mjestu\(^G\) za mene\(^A\), a place for me
- Sasvim mala rupa\(^N\) je dovoljna\(^N\), A really small hole is enough
- Da se ušuljam, To sneak
- u tebe\(^A\), into you

(Damir Urban)

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

The preposition zbog because of requires a noun or pronoun in G; for more details, see 50 Because, In Order To, Why: Reasons.

The adverb sasvim actually means completely, but I decided to translate it non-literally. Also, note that Damir Urban uses the Standard stress, or something very close to it.

The questions ima li te and ima li tu mjestu use the verb imati have in existential phrases; for more details, see 45 Quantities and Existence.

The verb ušuljati («) se\(^2\) means sneak in. It’s another perfective verb. It’s preceded by a da, which here translates as to; it’s a purpose clause (why is it enough?). For more on purpose clauses, see again chapter 50.

• Exercise

Fill in the following sentences, using kod\(^¨\):

Ključ ______(a) ______(b) ______(c). You (sing.) don’t have the key.
Išli ______(d) ______(e) ______(f). We went to her home.

Fill in the following sentences:

Pas _____(g) boji __________(h). The dog is afraid of him.
________________________(i) _____(j) za ______(k). The cakes are for you (guys).

Check answers here.
35 Tools and Means, With and Without

It’s time to introduce one more case. It’s called instrumental (just I for short), and among other things, it has to do with instruments and tools. We’ll learn it in singular first. The endings are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type (N)</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns in -a (= fem.)</td>
<td>-a → -om</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter nouns (= in -o, -e)</td>
<td>add -m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. nouns not in -a</td>
<td>add -om (some -em)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)</td>
<td>add -i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some masculine nouns get ending -em instead of -om if they end in a Croatian-specific letter – the same principle as for DL of adjectives. Two masc. nouns that get plural on -evi despite not ending in a Croatian-specific consonant, get -em in instrumental as well:

- car emperor → carem
- put way → putem

This is often seen with other nouns in -r as well, but it’s optional for them. Most nouns ending in -c get -evi as well:

- otac (oc-) father → ocem
- stric uncle → stricem

There are many uses of the instrumental case – some quite surprising, involving time and so on – but the use it got named after is for tools and means. For instance:

- Pišem olovkom¹. I’m writing with a pen.  
- Putujem vlakom¹. I’m traveling by train. ¹

These are often used nouns for means of transportation:

- auto (aut-) m car
- autobus[w¹] bus
- avion airplane
- bicikl bicycle
- brod ship
- taksi (taksij-) m taxi
- tramvaj tram
- vlak train

For example:

- Na posao⁸ idem biciklom¹. I go to work by bicycle. ¹

The instrumental case of noga foot is not used to express that you walk, it’s used only as a ‘tool’, e.g. if you kick something with your foot. There are specific adverbs in Croatian to express ‘by foot’, as a way of transport:

- pješke / pješice by foot

There’s another way to express tools, mostly when you want to emphasize that you used a tool, especially an unusual tool for the task:
Certain verbs use objects in the instrumental case. One of them is:

**baviti se**² *be engaged in/with, pursue*

This verb looks hard to translate, but it simply means you are doing something (often regularly), either as your paid job, as a kind of duty, work at home, or as recreation. For example:

**Marko**⁴ *se bavi sportom*. *Marko is doing sports.*

The personal pronouns have the following forms in the instrumental case (there are no shorter and longer forms in instrumental, only one form exists):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pers. (N⁴)</th>
<th>1st (ja)</th>
<th>2nd (ti)</th>
<th>refl. (self)</th>
<th>3rd f (ona)</th>
<th>3rd n (ono)</th>
<th>3rd m (on)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mnom</td>
<td>tobom</td>
<td>sobom</td>
<td>njom</td>
<td>njim</td>
<td>njim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instrumental case of nouns and pronouns is often used with several prepositions. Often used ones are:

**pred**² + I *in front of*  
**s**² / **sa**² + I *with*

This is the same **s**² / **sa**² as used with G, it just has a different meaning with I. It’s often used with the following verbs:

**igrati se**² *play*  
**razgovarati** («) *talk, discuss*

For example:

**Ivan**⁴ *razgovara s Marijom*. *Ivan is talking to Marija.*  
**Goran**⁴ *se igrao sa mnom*. *Goran was playing with me.*

With the I of the pers. pronoun *ja – mnom* – the longer *sa**² is always used, and both words are pronounced together, with the stress on the preposition: "**samnom**". Otherwise, normal rules for **s**² vs. **sa**² apply; the rules are often violated in real life in favor of **sa**², as on this (officially installed) parking sign in Zagreb:

```
parkiranje dozvoljeno sa kupljenom parkirnom kartom
```
Don’t forget that some words get -em in the instrumental case:

**Ana** je razgovarala s prijateljem. *Ana was talking to her (male) friend.*

The opposite meaning is expressed by another preposition with the genitive case:

**bez** + G *without*

For example:

**Goran** se igrao bez mene. *Goran was playing without me.*

According to the rules of Standard Croatian, you shouldn’t use s / sa for tools, only for company, but, colloquially, it’s not always so; you’ll often hear and read pišem s olovkom.

Both prepositions can be used with other cases, and then they have other meanings: **pred** can be used with the accusative case, and then it stands for a *destination*.

The following two adverbs mean more or less the same, but **skupa** is a bit informal:

**skupa** / **zajedno** *together*

For example (these words can go to any place in the sentence):

**Gledali smo** zajedno film. *We watched the movie together.*

They are often used together with **s** / sa** -** to emphasize something is done together (with someone else), as English *together with*:

**Gledao sam** film zajedno s prijateljem. *I watched the movie together with my friend.*

Then, there’s an *adjective* that’s opposite to company:

**sam** *alone*

Since it’s an adjective, it must adapt to the gender of the subject:

**Goran** se igrao sam. *Goran was playing alone.*

**Martina** se igra sama. *Martina is playing alone.*

**Igramo se sami**. *We play alone.* (all male/mixed group)

Like in English, this adjective is not attached to the noun, it’s just a word in the sentence (but it must change the case, gender and number in Croatian!). Such additional adjectives are often called *secondary predicates.*

The preposition **pred** refers to a location – simply *in front* of something (that goes in the instrumental case):

**Ana** je pred kućom. *Ana is in front of the house.*

In the instrumental case, adjectives get the following (fairly simple) endings (you might notice they are identical to endings of the 3rd person pronouns, and that
there are again only 2 endings to remember: one for feminine, another for everything else):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>adj. I</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| fem.   | -om   | **velikom** ribom  
         |       | **big fish**    |
| neut.  | -im   | **velikim** jezerom  
         |       | **big lake**    |
| masc.  |       | **velikim** konjem  
         |       | **big horse**   |

When you compare adjectives in DL, G and I, you see there are only two different endings in singular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>adj. DL</th>
<th>adj. G</th>
<th>adj. I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>-oj</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-om</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>-om</td>
<td>-og</td>
<td>-im</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>(-em)</td>
<td>(-eg)</td>
<td>-im</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, Croatian adjectives have much fewer different endings than they could in principle have!

Question-words **tko who** and **što what** have the following forms in instrumental (as expected, as they change like adjectives):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>who</td>
<td>tko</td>
<td>kim(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what</td>
<td>što</td>
<td>čim(e)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To ask about means, you can use either **kako how** or **čim(e)**:

**Kako idete na more**? How do you go to the seaside?  
— **Autom**. By car.

With verbs of motion, such as **trčati (trči) run, šetati (ščeće/šeta) stroll, walk**, etc. the instrumental case can be used to indicate where the whole action happened. It’s usually translated with through:

**Trčali smo šumom**. We were running through the forest.

The preposition **za** is used with the instrumental case, to indicate that you’re sitting behind something or at something. It’s usually used with the following expressions, and the verbs **biti (je² +) be** and **sjediti sit**:

**za stolom** at the table
za volanom  
za upravljačem  

(Both volan and upravljač mean steering wheel; the former noun is colloquial, the latter is standard.)

With verbs of motion, za− + I indicates following something or someone:

Trčali smo za njom¹. We were running after her.

Three final remarks: first, certain feminine nouns that don’t end in -a have alternative I forms, e.g.

riječ word → riječju  
sol salt → solju

Both forms are standard, some people prefer the forms in -ju, but the forms in -i are actually much more common in speech.

Second, masculine names in -io (which always have -ij- whenever anything is added to them) have two possible I forms, and both are used:

Mario (Marij-) → Mariom  
Marijem

Third, according to Standard Croatian, most one and two syllable masc. nouns which would get -em, but have the vowel -e- before it, get -om instead. Classic examples are:

jež hedgehog → ježom  
muzej museum → muzejom

However, in speech and casual writing, versions with -em are common too: you’ll see and hear ježem as well, and muzejem is likely more common in speech. This never applies to longer nouns (e.g. prijatelj friend), which get always -em, and doesn’t apply to some two-syllable nouns as well – the feature is actually irregular.

² Instead of vlak, the word voz is used for train in Serbia and most of Bosnia. The pres-3 form šeće is specific to Croatia; in Bosnia and Serbia, the form šeta is used.

• Something Possibly Interesting

If you search the Internet, you’ll find a number of pages discussing whether muzejom or muzejem is ‘right’. The mere existence of such pages should inform you there’s some variation in speech and writing, and you can expect both variants. You won’t find any discussions about autom vs. autem – only one form is used.

• Examples

The song Jugo Southern Wind, is a very successful song performed by Giuliano Đanić.
– whose name is pronounced like in Italian, and who performs just as Giuliano – and Marijan Ban.

The following verse contains a phrase in instrumental to indicate where the sailing happens: dalekim morem (the N would be, of course, daleko more). However, that phrase is split by the adverb sad now, and with the verb, likely for rhythmic reasons. It’s still grammatical, just uncommon:

Dalekim sad plovim morem I’m now sailing a distant sea
Zaboravljam naše zore I’m forgetting our dawns
Ostaje mi samo more Only the sea remains to me
I vjetar što tuče u lice i dušu And the wind beating my face and soul

(Jasminka Ursić & Šime Gržan)

The phrase I vjetar što tuče u lice i dušu contains a relative clause (they will be explained in 62 The Friend I Saw: Relative Clauses). Also, it says literally beating into face and soul.

The verb ostajati (ostaje) stay, remain will be explained in depth later, with verbs related to it.

You can listen to it on YouTube™. You can get more information about jugo on the Wikipedia.

• Exercise

Fill in the sentences below; you will find the following nouns useful:

nož knife šunka ham

Režem kruh ______________(a) ______________(b). I’m cutting bread with a sharp knife.

Putovali smo ______________(c) __________(d). We were traveling with his car.

Jedem sendvič ____(e) ______________(f). I’m eating a sandwich with ham.

Putujemo ______________(g). We’re traveling by bus.

Ana __________(h) za ______________(i). Ana is sitting at the table.

Goran trči ______(j) ______________(k). Goran is running after a bird.

Ivan je pred __________(l). Ivan is in front of the house.

Želio bih pizzu ____(m) ______________(n). I’d like a pizza with cheese.

Check answers here.
**36 Dative/Locative and Instrumental Plural**

We know now how to form the nominative plural of nouns, and how to form the accusative in plural, but we still don’t know how to make the dative/locative plural (DL-pl) or the plural of the case we introduced in the previous chapter, the instrumental case.

Both cases are quite simple to form, and they are always equal in plural. Nouns get the following endings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type (N)</th>
<th>DLI-pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns in -a (≈ fem.)</td>
<td>-a → -ama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter nouns (≈ in -o, -e)</td>
<td>-o, -e → -ima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. nouns not in -a</td>
<td>N-pl + ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)</td>
<td>N-pl + ma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, all nouns end in either -ama or -ima in DLI-pl. There are no additional sound changes in this case: if you know how to make N-pl, you know how to make these two cases as well!

For example:

Putujemo rođaci**DL**. We’re traveling to our relatives.  
Ptice**N** sjede na granama**DL**. Birds are sitting on branches.  
Stojim pred vratima*. I’m standing in front the door.  
(Recall that the noun vrata door exists in plural only.) In the following example you’ll see how DL = I in plural:

Pišem poruku**A** prijateljima**DL**. I’m writing a message to my friends.  
U kinu**DL** sam s prijateljima*. I’m in the movie theater with my friends.  

Of course, we must be able to put adjectives into DLI-pl as well. It’s simpler than you probably would expect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>adj. DLI-pl</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| fem.   | velikim     | velikim ribama  
|        |             | big fishes     |
|        | -im         | velikim jezera  
| neut.  |             | velikim jezerima  
|        | -im         | big lakes       |
| masc.  | velikim     | velikim stolovima  
|        |             | big tables       |

What about pronouns? We have already seen DL case of personal pronouns, both in singular and in plural, and instrumental case in singular. The instrumental case in
plural is identical to the DL-pl forms, but only stressed forms are used – there are no unstressed forms of instrumental. Pronouns **tko who** and **što what** have singular forms only anyway.

Something quite special happens with **adjectives used as nouns or pronouns**. For example, the ‘noun’ **mladi** m pl. (adj.) is actually an adjective, short for **mladi ljudi** young people or the young. Look what happens when it’s used in DLI-pl:

\[ \text{Na mladim ljudima}^{DL} \text{ svijet}^{N} \text{ ostaje. The world is left to the young people.} \]

\[ \text{Na mladima}^{DL} \text{ svijet}^{N} \text{ ostaje. (the same meaning)} \]

The verb **ostajati** (ostaje) means **remain**. As you can see, if an adjective is used as a noun, it gets an additional -a in DLI-pl, essentially giving it the same ending as any masc. or neuter noun. This happens only in the DLI-pl.

The second, shorter sentence is a common proverb in Croatian, corresponding to English **the young shall inherit the earth**.

An exception to this rule are ordinal numbers in plural that refer to **decades**. The otherwise obligatory -a in DLI-pl is optional for them and often left out:

\[ \text{Beatlesi}^{N} \text{ su bili popularni}^{N} \text{ u šezdesetim}^{DL}. The Beatles were popular in the sixties.} \]

\[ \text{U 80-im}^{DL} \text{ sam bio u vrtiću}^{DL}. I was in the kindergarten in 80’s.} \]

(Note how the English name **Beatles** gets a Croatian case ending for N-pl.)

The following preposition is used with instrumental when you have more than one thing, or a collective noun:

- **među among**

For example:

\[ \text{Ptica}^{N} \text{ se skriva među lišćem. The bird is hiding ‘among’ the leaves.} \]

\[ \text{Tražim pismo}^{A} \text{ među papirima. I looking for the letter among the papers.} \]

The noun **lišće** is a collective noun, so we used instrumental singular (collective nouns have no plural), but the noun **papir paper** is a regular noun so we used DLI-pl.

The preposition **među** can be used with A as well, then it stands for a destination.

This is maybe the right place to list prepositions using instrumental or accusative:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prepositions using I or A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>pred</strong> in front of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nadi</strong> above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>među</strong> among</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pod</strong> under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(za)</strong> behind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With these prepositions, you have to use I for **locations**, and A for **destinations**:

\[ \text{Idem pred publiku}^{A}. (A = dest.) ‘I’m going in front of the audience.’ \]

\[ ići \]
Plesati pred publikom. (I = loc.) I’m dancing in front of the audience.

However, za + A usually means for, so za + I is almost never used as a destination – iza + G is much more preferred, while za + I is used only in some set expressions, or meaning following:

Trčati za tebe\(^A\). (A = dest.) I’m running for you. (not behind you)
Trčati za tobom\(^l\). (l) I’m running after you. (i.e. following)

These 5 prepositions are similar to u and na – which use DL for locations, and A for destinations – and even more in plural, since the DL case (used for u and na) and the l case for the 5 prepositions above coincide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>preposition</th>
<th>loc.</th>
<th>dest.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>u(^_) in, into</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na(^_) on, at, to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nad(^_) above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pred(^_) in front of</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>među among</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pod(^_) under</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(za(^_) behind)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 5 prepositions listed above have longer versions, which are used with G, and don’t distinguish location vs. destination. The longer prepositions, starting with iz- or is- are more common in speech and mean the same when talking about spatial relations (i.e. locations and destinations):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>longer prepositions (always use G)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ispred in front of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>između between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ispod under</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

Auto je iza kuće\(^6\). The car is behind the house.

However, there is an important difference between ispred + G and pred + I/A: the latter combination includes temporal and metaphorical relations as well, so it’s only possible to use pred\(^\_\) in the following expressions (here expressing metaphorical ‘locations’, so using I):

pred publikom before the audience
pred sudom before the court

The same applies to other prepositions, e.g. you can only use pod\(^\_\) to express that someone is ‘under pressure’ (pod pritiskom), while you can use both pod\(^\_\) and ispod to express that something is under the bed – and ispod is more common in such
to express that something is under the bed – and pod is more common in such non-metaphorical uses.

Something different happens when using pred in the temporal sense, like English before, the accusative case must be used always:

pred jutro before the morning
pred kišu before the rain
pred zimu before the winter

(Strangely, some Standard Croatian manuals discourage use of pred + A in the temporal sense, but it has been used for centuries in speech and literature.)

There’s yet another difference: među is mostly used when there are more than two things or persons (i.e. among) while između usually means between, i.e. when there are two things or persons.

Now you know how to create almost all forms of nouns. There are only two cases left unexplained: genitive plural and the vocative case. They will be explained in 44 Genitive Plural and 72 Addressing and Vocative Case.

(There are certain dialects in Croatia where DL is not equal to I in plural, actually, where D, L and I are have different endings. They will be briefly summarized in the section A8 Dialects.)

® Instead of kino, bioskop is used for cinema in Serbia and most of Bosnia.

• Examples

This blackboard in front of a restaurant in Opatija, Croatia lists their fall specialties:

Jesen u Vorgoli

Fritaja sa vrganjima
(scrambled eggs & boletus)
Krem juha od vrganja
(Cream boletus soup)

The first specialty has is sa + I-pl (the standard spelling demands s here, but as I’ve
already explained, it’s often not respected).

The second one has od + G-pl since vrganji penny bun mushrooms are the main ingredient: the soup is literally made out of them. (The G-pl forms are yet to be explained, but here it’s just -a.) The word krem is here used as an indeclinable adjective added to juha soup (sometimes the whole thing is spelled as a compound, e.g. krem-juha).

• Exercise

Complete the sentences below:

Goran je ______________(a) škole. Goran is in front of the school.
Bili smo na ______________(b) ______________(c). We were on nice beaches.
Imam vrećicu ___(d) ______________(e). I have the bag with the sandwiches.

Check answers here.
37 Complete Reading: Perfective Verbs

I’ve already mentioned that some Croatian verbs stand for accomplishments, while most verbs stand for processes (there are more types, but these two are the most common). This distinction – an essential feature of Croatian verbs – is called verbal aspect (or grammatical aspect).

The following two sentences illustrate the essence of verbal aspect:

Jučer sam čitala knjigu. *I was reading the book yesterday.* (some of it)
Jučer sam pročitala knjigu. *I read the book yesterday.* (completed it)

Now, the second sentence means that you completed the reading yesterday. You could, in principle, have started earlier, but the essential part, the accomplishment, was done yesterday. And this is constantly expressed in Croatian: whether there was a completion of the action or not. Using the first sentence implies there was some reading, but not if you completed it or not.

In previous versions of this ‘course’, I translated pročitati as read through. But that’s not accurate: read through implies careful, close reading, when you pay close attention, or look for errors. The verb pročitati has no such implications – it just implies the reading is completed.

Therefore, one English verb (read) corresponds to two Croatian verbs: čitati and pročitati. So, how to make perfective verbs?

Some perfective verbs are obtained from impf. verbs just by adding a prefix. Unfortunately, not all verbs get the same prefix. Some get po-, for instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperfective verb</th>
<th>Perfective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jesti (jede)</td>
<td>pojesti (pojede)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piti (pije)</td>
<td>popiti (popije)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slati (šalje)</td>
<td>poslati (pošalje)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since it’s important to remember both verbs, the only option is to remember verbs in pairs. I will indicate them with the impf. verb on the left, perf. on the right, separated by a tilde (~):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impf.</th>
<th>Perf.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>čitati</td>
<td>pročitati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piti (pije)</td>
<td>popiti (popije)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To simplify things even further, if a perfective verb differs just by a prefix, I’ll show just the prefix, e.g.:

čitati ~ pro- read    piti (pije) ~ po- drink
If the prefix has the stress mark, as above, it means that the stress will be on the prefix in the Standard pronunciation. However, for almost all verbs, it will never be on a prefix in the ‘western’ pronunciation: it will stay on the same syllable as in the unprefixed verb.

Some verbs make their perfective verbs by prefixing na-:

- **crtati** ~ **na-** draw, sketch
- **hraniti** ~ **na-** («) feed
- **puniti** ~ **na-** fill
- **pisati** (piše) ~ **na-** («) write
- **slikati** ~ **na-** paint (image)
- **učiti** ~ **na-** («) learn

The stress in **nhraniti**, **napisati** and **naučiti** doesn’t move to the prefix in the infinitive, but (only in the Standard pronunciation!) it does move in the present tense: therefore, their present tense forms are **nahrani**, **napiše** and **nauči**. I will, as usual, indicate such shift in the present tense with just a («).

Others use **o-** or **pro-**:

- **brijati (brije)** ~ **o-** shave
- **buditi** ~ **pro-** («) waken
- **prati (pere)** ~ **o-** (») wash
- **gutati** ~ **pro-** swallow

The stress – both Standard and ‘western’ – in **oprati** moves one syllable to the right in the present tense: **opere**; I will abbreviate such stress shift with a (»), as above.

Other pairs have more complicated ‘relationships’. Here are the main types of pairs (besides prefixing pairs). A common type involves a change of verb ending:

- **bacati** ~ **baciti** throw
- **primati** ~ **primiti** receive

Within this scheme, most pairs always change the final consonant before the ending:

- **plačati** ~ **platiti** pay
- **prihvacati** ~ **prihvatiti** accept
- **vračati** ~ **vrati** return

(It’s worth remembering that, in such pairs, the impf. verb most often has a Croatian-specific consonant, while the perf. verb has an ordinary consonant.)

Many verbs in this scheme also change the vowel before the final consonant, always a vs. o:

- **odgadati** («) ~ **odgoditi** («) postpone
- **otvarati** («) ~ **otvoriti** («) open

Another scheme, used by many pairs, is that impf. verbs have -ava-, and the perf. verbs just -i- or -a- (some pairs have change of consonant as well):

- **pokušavati** («) ~ **pokušati** try
- **ukrašavati** ~ **ukrašiti** («) decorate

Finally, there’s a very common scheme – likely, including the highest number of verb
pairs – where impf. verbs have -iva-, which changes in pres-3 to -uje, while perf. verbs just -i- or -a- (again, some pairs have change of the consonant before all these endings):

odlučivati (odlučuje) ~ odlučiti («) decide
usporedivati (uspoređuje) ~ usporediti («) compare

Since such impf. verbs tend to be long, I’ll often list them just by showing change in the variable part, and the constant and variable part will be split by a thin vertical line (\):

---

**Shorthand for -ivati/-uje verbs**

instead of usporedivati (uspoređuje)
I’ll write just usporedivati (-uje «)

---

The symbol « will be there to remind you of the stress shift in the present tense, which here applies to both Standard and ‘western’ stress patterns.

There’s no need to learn these schemes now: they are here just to show you what lies ahead. There’s no simple rule how to make a perfective verb – the pairs must be learned, but most of them fall into the small number of schemes above.

When should you use perf. verbs?

Perfective verbs are almost never used in the true present tense, for an ongoing action. However, it is possible to use perf. verbs in the present tense – if we use the present tense to describe things that happened in the past and will happen in the future, especially when adverbs često often and ponekad sometimes are used:

Ponekad napišem pismo\(^8\), i ne posaljem ga\(^8\). Sometimes I napisati | poslati | 3m/n write a letter and don’t send it.

Why have I used perf. verbs, e.g. poslati (posalje)? Because sending is not something where any progress matters (e.g. even reading a few pages from a book can matter). Sending is normally done in one go, not split into parts. So it’s only important that the action was not completed. The first sentence talks about accomplishments. Letters are completed, but not sent.

For most verb pairs, in the past tense, perf. verbs are usually used, unless the action was interrupted, you describe what you were doing at some moment, or it’s not clear what the outcome was. Also, you can tell how long something was happening only if you use an imperfective verb, e.g. these adverbs of time can be used only with imperfective verbs:

- **dugo** for a long time
- **kratko** for a short time

For example:

Pala je noc\(^9\). The night fell.
Kiša^N je dugo padala. ‘The rain was falling’ for a long time.
Kiša^N je pala. ‘The rain fell’.

Perfective verbs are so often used in the past tense that some people would answer that the past form of the verb padati is pao! Another example:

Platio sam piće^A. *I paid for the drink.* (done)
Plaćam piće^A. *I’m paying for the drink.* (right now or about to do it)

If you want to express that something has happened moments ago, you can use the adverb sad(a) now with a perf. verb in the past tense:

Sad sam se probudio. *I’ve just woken up.*

Since perf. verbs stand for accomplishments, you must often tell exactly what you did, even if you don’t have to with the impf. verb:

Čjtao sam. *I was reading* (something).
Pročjtao sam knjigu^A. *I have read the book.* (must say what)

You should use perf. verbs if there’s an indication what was produced, absorbed or consumed, even if the amount is not exact. In the sentence #1, it’s not clear at all how much is consumed each time, the action is very generic:

(1) Ponekad pijem vino^A. *I drink wine sometimes.*
(2) Ponekad popijem malo vina^G. *I drink little wine sometimes.*

In the sentence #2, it’s stated how much is consumed, so we use a perf. verb (here both verbs are in the present tense, since we’re talking about occasional events; but this applies to all tenses).

Whenever there’s a focus on action – not on what was actually accomplished – you should use impf. verbs in Croatian:

*We were building houses.* → impf. in Croatian
*We built three houses.* → perf. in Croatian

The first sentence has emphasis on action: what the result was isn’t said, what was successfully built – if anything! Such a sentence will use an impf. verb in Croatian. But the second sentence tells exactly what was accomplished, and such a sentence uses a perf. verb in Croatian. Since people talk about both – what they were doing and what they accomplished – Croatian (as all Slavic languages, from Russian to Czech) treats it as different things, and has a different verb for each of them.

What about *we built houses*? If you imply that the houses mentioned were really completed, it’s perf. in Croatian.

Sometimes, two verbs that make a pair are different in English as well:

Puno sam učila. *I studied a lot.*
Puno sam naučila. *I learned a lot.*
There’s another very rough rule: impf. verbs often correspond to English continuous tenses (*I was reading*) while perf. verbs often correspond to simple tenses or perfect tenses (*I read, I’ve read*). For example:

*I was getting hungry.* → impf. in Croatian
*I got hungry.* → perf. in Croatian

A major exception to this rule is that states, usually represented with non-continuous tenses in English (*I am, I live, I love, I sleep*), in Croatian always use impf. verbs.

Also, although there are perfective counterparts of *gledati* *watch* and *slušati* *listen* – for example, you just prefix *po-* to *gledati* – they are much rarer than you would expect. Normally only impf. verbs are used to say or ask if someone watched or listened to something.

When you use verbs with negation, the negated perf. verbs state that the action was not *complete*, but it might be ongoing:

**Nisam čitao knjigu**. *I haven’t read the book (at all).*
**Nisam pročitao knjigu**. *I haven’t read the book (completed it).*

While the first sentence means you haven’t read the book at all, the second only says you haven’t read the book *in its entirety*, haven’t *completed it*. It’s *not* stated if you have read any part of it or not. So, both answers are possible:

**Jesi li pročitao knjigu?** *Have you read the book (completed it)?*
— Nisam, još je^\* čitam. *No, I’m still reading it.*
— Nisam ni počeo. *I haven’t even started.*

The verb *početi* (*počne*) is a perf. verb meaning *start*; it will be explained in the following chapters. The word *ni* emphasizes the negation; it will be explained in 67 Only, Except, Too: Inclusion and Exclusion.

If you use the present tense for a future action, e.g. *I’m leaving tomorrow*, this is (like in English) understood as an extension of the present moment, and consequently, impf. verbs must be used. Again, English continuous tenses correspond to Croatian impf. verbs.

There are a couple of impf. verbs that show some characteristics of perf. verbs; important ones are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impf. Verbs</th>
<th>Perf-like Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>čuti (čeje)</td>
<td>hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>razumjeti (razumije, ...)</td>
<td>understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vidjeti (vidi, ...)</td>
<td>see</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These verbs are ‘really’ perf. verbs, but are *used as imperfective in most situations*. However, you cannot tell how long with these verbs (except in a specific construction which will be shown later). You *can* use them in the present tense (and they’re frequently used) but even English translation changes a bit in the present...
I’ll explain various tips when to use perfective, and when to use imperfective verbs as I introduce verbs and various constructions. We start immediately, in the following chapter.

* In Serbia, the impf. verb prihvaćati is used in a slightly different form: prihvatati; there’s no difference for the perf. verb.

### Something Possibly Interesting

If you were reading very carefully, and thinking about stress shifts, you maybe noticed that the present tense form učići is weird: when you put ne” before it, the standard stress stays put, but when you add prefix na-, the stress does move to the prefix. Unfortunately, this doesn’t apply to all verbs with an ‘underline’: the verb čitati moves stress neither to ne” nor to a prefix.

Did I say the standard stress is quite complicated, even in my watered-down form?

### Examples

This pop song from the 1990’s, S dlana Boga pala si, performed by En face – a Croatian band from Rijeka, despite its name – featuring Damir Urban, was a major hit.

In the following verses, there are both perfective verbs (highlighted) and imperfective verbs:

*S dlana G Boga G pala si*  
*I andđelu DL si krala mir A*

*From the palm of God you fell*  
*And were stealing peace from an angel*  

*Kao kiša N rasula kapi sve A*  
*U pehar A skupljam tvoje riječi A i pogled A i tvoj prah A*  

*Like rain, you scattered all the drops*  
*Into a chalice I’m collecting your words and look and your dust*  

(Vlado Simcich Vava)

The two perf. verbs are:

pasti (padne, pao) perf. fall  
rasuti (raspe) perf. scatter, spill around

The second verb has a quite unexpected present tense form. They represent events in the past which are done, completed, no need to go into details. But there’s also an impf. verb in the past tense in the verses:
**krasti (krade, krao) impf. steal**

Here the focus is on the process, and not on the completion. If the song had **ukrala**, which is the past form of perf. **steal**, it would mean the angel lost the peace. I tried to translate this difference with the English Past Continuous Tense. Pay attention how the **angel** is in DL: literally, ‘stealing the peace to an angel’.

Besides, this song contains a number of poetic constructions which are very rare in normal speech. For example, instead of expected **sve kapi all drops**, the order adjective-noun is inverted; then, check the position of **si²** in the first verse, and so on...

You can listen to it on YouTube™.
38 Needs, Wishes and Intentions

Let’s now see how to say I want to sleep or Ana intends to go to Zagreb. Such expressions are quite simple in Croatian. You should use one of verbs of desire and intent:

- **morati** must
- **pokušavati** («) try
- **namjeravati** («) intend
- **trebat** need/should
- **planirati** («) plan
- **željeti** (želi, želio, željela) wish

All these verbs are imperfective, and have no perfective verbs related to accomplishments. (You’ll see later that, in fact, there are a few weird perfective verbs related to some of the verbs above, but they don’t stand for accomplishments.) For example, if you wish/must/intend to eat an apple, you should simply say:

- Želim _jesti_ jabuku. *I want to eat an apple.*
- Moram _jesti_ jabuku. *I must eat an apple.*
- Namjeravam _jesti_ jabuku. *I intend to eat an apple.*

What you want/intend to eat is still in the accusative case: only the wished/intended action is expressed in the infinitive form. Since the infinitive form is the form listed in dictionaries, that’s not complicated at all.

Colloquially, there’s another verb that’s often used to express intentions:

- **misliti** (+ inf) (colloq.!) intend

This verb literally means think, but with infinitives, it can be used like this:

- Mislimo _ići na plažu._ (colloq.!) *We intend to go to the beach.*

There’s nothing special about the past tense, just use the verb in the past instead of present, the other verb stays in inf:

- Željela sam _jesti_ jabuku. *I wanted to eat an apple.* (I = female)
- Morao sam _jesti_ jabuku. *I had to eat an apple.* (I = male)

Now, if you intend to accomplish something, you should use a perfective verb in inf:

- Želim _pojesti_ jabuku. *I want to eat an apple.* (the whole apple)
- Želim _pročitati_ knjigu. *I want to read the book.* (the whole book)
- Želim _pročitati_ prvo poglavlje. *I want to read the first chapter.* (the whole chapter)

Of course, if you don’t intend to read the whole book, or any defined part of it (like, a chapter) but just engage in that activity, use the imperfective verb:

- Želim _čitati_ knjigu. *I want to read the book.* (a bit of it)

Therefore, use of perfective or imperfective verbs makes such statements much more precise in Croatian. With some actions, perfective verbs are basically always used, such as:
kupovati (kupuje) ~ kupiti buy

For example:

Moram kupiti novu majicu. I have to buy a new T-shirt.

It’s unlikely that you want to engage in buying, but not really buy a new T-shirt.

In the Standard Croatian, the infinitive always ends in -i. Colloquially, the final -i of infinitives is very often left out, even in writing:

Želim jest jabuku. (colloq.)
Moram pit vodu. (colloq.)

Please pay attention how the English verb must behaves a bit differently than the other two – it does not use to. English has a special group of ‘modal’ verbs that have specific behavior – for example, it’s not he musts, but he must. Croatian has no special modal verbs, the verbs above are like any others, except they permit another verb in the infinitive as their ‘object’.

**Warning.** If the verb in inf has a pronoun as its object, it goes to the second position (unless you use stressed forms, which will be explained a bit later):

Želim te vidjeti. I want to see you. (!)

Here the pronoun te (ti in A) is the object of the verb vidjeti see, and not of the verb željeti want! (Verbs in inf cannot have subjects, so te² cannot be its subject.) If you would mistakenly translate the last sentence word-for-word, you would get:

(wrong translation!) I want you to see.

This is an example where the word order in Croatian is completely different than in English, and it simply doesn’t carry the meaning English order does. (How to express I want you to see will be explained in 56 Desires and Demands. If you’re impatient, it’s želim da vidiš.) Check also the past tense:

Željela te je vidjeti. She wanted to see you. (!)

You’ll sometimes see another construction, which uses verb + da + verb in the present tense, both verbs in the same person. In such a construction, the word da restarts word-counting and holds the first position:

Želim da jedem jabuku. I want to eat an apple.
Želim da te vidim. I want to see you.

Such constructions are more common in eastern parts of Croatia, but you will encounter them in songs and literature as well.

Of course, verbs like trebati can used simply with an object, but it corresponds to English need, and when it’s used with another verb in infinitive, it’s like English
There are two verbs that are not listed above, since they are irregular and need an additional explanation. They are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>pres-1</th>
<th>pres-1pl</th>
<th>pres-3pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>htjeti</td>
<td>want</td>
<td>hoće</td>
<td>hoću</td>
<td>hoćemo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moći</td>
<td>can</td>
<td>može</td>
<td>mogu</td>
<td>možemo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only surprising forms in present of these two verbs are pres-1 and pres-3pl (check how their pres-1pl is completely expected, given the pres-3). It ends in -u for both verbs, but the form is also otherwise irregular and must be remembered. However, the pres-1 form of the verb moći can keeps its stress after the negation, while all other forms – including the pres-3pl – shift the stress to negation in the Standard scheme. (I’ve warned you that the Standard scheme is really complex, even after I have watered it down!)

In some regions, in colloquial speech, present forms of htjeti are without the initial h-, that is, oću, oćeš, etc. You will see it from time to time in casual writing and popular songs.

Their past forms are expected for htjeti – like for other verbs in -jeti, e.g. vidjeti see – but irregular for moći:

htjeti → htio, htjela
moći → mogao, mogla

(You’ll also occasionally see past-m htjeo.)

Both verbs are used like the others listed above:

Hoću jesti jabuku. I want to eat an apple.
Mogu jesti jabuku. I can eat an apple.
Možemo spavati. We can sleep.
Mogla sam jesti jabuku. I could eat an apple. (l=female)

However, the verb htjeti is considered a bit rude and impolite; željeti is a better choice.

The verb moći is equivalent to both English can and may in everyday use. If you would give someone a permission to do something, you would use moći.

**Warning.** In English, can has almost empty meaning with some verbs, like see, hear, feel, taste (generally, ‘sense’ verbs):

I can see you. = I see you.

Croatian never uses moći in this way, for something really happening. If you play hide and seek and see someone, you would say only:
Colloquially, its pres-3 form *može* means something like ‘OK’, and this is another way to ask for food and drink — but also to offer it to someone, e.g. your guests. You can hear it in shops, cafes, at home, everywhere – conversations like this one are very common:

Može čaj? (colloq.) Want some tea? (lit. ‘Is tea OK?’)
— Može. (colloq.) Yes. (lit. ‘OK.’)

*Pay attention* that the word after *može* is in nominative. This expression is used both for asking for something (e.g. by a customer) and offering something (e.g. by a waiter or host):

Može kava? (colloq.) *moći* pres-3

* Want some coffee?
* Can I/we get some coffee?

In both cases, an affirmative answer could be just *može*. However, keep in mind that this is colloquial, people are not using it in very formal occasions.

If you want to express that you *don’t* want to eat an apple, just use a normal negation, except for the verb *htjeti* want that has special negated present forms where *ho-* is replaced with *ne-* (it’s similar to the verb *imati* have):

Neću jesti jabuku. *I don’t want to eat an apple.*

(You’ll occasionally see negative present forms of *htjeti* want spelled as separate words, e.g. *ne ću*.)

There’s another useful verb that’s often used negated:

*smjeti* (smije, smio, smjela) be allowed to

This verb corresponds to English *may*, and like it, it’s not really used in speech. However, it *is* used in Croatian in negative sentences. This is how it and the other verbs work when negated:

Ne želim jesti jabuku. *I don’t want to eat an apple.*

Ne moram jesti jabuku. *I don’t have to eat an apple.*

Ne mogu jesti jabuku. *I cannot eat an apple.*

Ne smijem jesti jabuku. *I’m not allowed to eat an apple.*

*Pay attention* that *ne* + *morati* does not mean “must not” but “don’t have to”. If you know some German, you’ll immediately see that it’s similar to German *müssen*. This table summarizes various possibilities:
**moći**

- must
- have to
- morati
- should
- trebati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I must eat.</td>
<td>Moram jesti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to eat.</td>
<td>Trebam jesti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should eat.</td>
<td>Ne smijem jesti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have to eat.</td>
<td>Ne moram jesti.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are more similarities with German. If you use the verbs above + ići go + destination, in the spoken language, you can leave the infinitive ići out:

Moram ići na sastanak. I have to go to a meeting.
Moram na sastanak. (the same meaning, a bit colloquial)

There’s another verb that similar to **pokušavati** («) try:

probati (+ inf / A) perf. try

The difference is that this verb basically means try something, e.g. try a shirt on, taste food, while its use with infinitives is a bit colloquial:

Ana je probala hlače. Ana tried the pants on.
Goran je probao kolč. Goran tasted the cake.

You should pay attention that the verb probati perf. try is a perfective verb, so it’s normally not used in the present tense.

On the other hand, pokušavati («) cannot be used with objects in A at all – with a partial exception of pronouns like to.

This table summarizes which verbs can be used with what objects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>+ inf</th>
<th>+ A / inf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>moći (...) can</td>
<td>htjeti (...) want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morati must</td>
<td>planirati («) plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>namjeravati («) intend</td>
<td>probati perf. try</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pokušavati («) try</td>
<td>trebati need/should</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smjeti (...) may</td>
<td>željeti (...) wish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, it is possible to replace infinitives (and other things attached to them) with the general pronoun to, to refer to something previously said or known, so the pronoun to can be used, and is frequently used with verbs in the left column as well:

Ne mogu to. I can’t do that.
However, it’s common to use the verb *raditi* besides *to*, in its generic sense (*do*):

**Ne mogu to raditi.** (the same meaning)  
The verb *trebati* is often used *impersonally*, when used with another verb in *inf*. It corresponds to using English generic words like *one* and *men/people*:

**Treba° jesti zdravo.** *One should eat healthy.*

Of course, as with all impersonal expressions, the verb will be in neuter singular in the past: *trebalo je*...

What about intending/having to do something that in Croatian must use a verb with a *se²*? You still must use the *se²*, and place it at the second place in the sentence:

**GoranN se želi igrati.** *Goran wants to play.*  
**Moram se brijati.** *I have to shave.*

There’s nothing special about questions – these verbs behave like any other verb, for instance:

**Hoćeš li gledati film?** *Do you want to watch the movie?*  
**Što želiš jesti?** *What do you want to eat?*

— **Pizzu.** *A pizza.*

You can ask about desired actions using *štto* – and answer with verbs in *inf* (+ objects, if needed):

**Što želiš?** *What do you want?*

— **Jesti pizzu.** *‘Eat pizza.’*

If you want to stress that the question is about an action, not a desired object, use the verb *raditi* *work/do*:

**Što želiš raditi?** *What do you want to do?*

— **Igrati se.** *‘Play.’*

There’s one more possibility to express wishes and intentions, using *nouns*. The common nouns used for this purpose are:

| namjera | intention | potreba | need | obaveza | obligation | pravo | right | plan | želja | wish |

They are used as verbs above, what you wish/intend/need is expressed with a verb in infinitive following the noun:

**AnaN ima potrebu spavati.** *Ana has a need to sleep.*

If the verb in infinitive has a *se²*, it usually follows the verb, but can be also placed elsewhere, *usual placement rules don’t hold*:

**GoranN ima namjeru igrati se.** *‘Goran has an intention to play.’*
This way of expressing needs and intentions is seen more often in formal communication, and sometimes in speech when you want to say something expressive.

However, it’s not really polite to say simply želim + A to someone you’re not familiar with. Consequently, there’s a way to ‘soften’ such expressions, and you’ll see it in the following chapter.

® In Serbia, infinitives are less often used: in speech, the form da + present prevails almost completely. For instance, the first sentence in Serbia would rather be basically always Želim da jedem jabuku. You will sometimes hear such constructions in Croatia and Bosnia as well.

Furthermore, Standard Serbian insists that the verb trebati cannot be used personally at all with another verb, so instead of e.g. Trebam jesti jabuke, the only standard option is:

**Treba° da jedem jabuke**

The past-m form htjeo is frequent in Bosnia.

Instead of kava, a slightly different word kafa is common in most parts of Bosnia and Serbia. In Bosnia, the form kahva is used as well, especially in parts where Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) live.

In Serbia, the verb smjeti (smije, smio, smjela) be allowed to is used in the “Ekavian” form, which is just smeti; the verb is fully regular, but like “Ekavian” razumeti understand, its pres-3 is smeju. Besides, it has an additional meaning dare.

In Serbia, it’s common to use the verb probati in the present tense as well, unlike in Bosnia or Croatia.
• Examples

This web page I took screenshot of says *I want to work in the Post* — it recruits new employees for Croatian Post. The word *pošta* means both *post* and *mail*:

![Hrvatska pošta](image)

The song *Odjednom ti Suddenly You*, performed by *Massimo* and *Merita’s* (again two non-Croatian names!) contains *I can* expressions, together with a lot of nouns in the *I case*, both in singular and plural, all used as tools.

- **Mogu reći šutnjom** I can say it with silence
- **Mogu prstima** I can with fingers
- **I u pijesku** And with footprints in sand
- **I u mraku** And with lips in the dark

- **Mogu čuti srcem** I can hear it with my heart
- **Mogu očima** I can with eyes
- **Nekim novim mirisom** With a new scent
- **Nekim novim okusom** With a new taste

(I. Prajo & A. Kunštek)

The adjective *neki* is here used as an indicator of indefiniteness. There’s no possessive adjective in Croatian verses for *srce* heart; it’s obvious whom it belongs (but it could have been expressed as well).

The verb *reći* say is another *perfective verb*. It’s also quite irregular, and it will be explained in later chapters.

You can listen to it on YouTube™.
• Exercise

Complete the following sentences (use tražiti as look for):

(a) ______________________ (b) ________ (c) u restoranu. We don’t intend to eat in a restaurant.

d) ______________ (e) cipele. I want to look for shoes.

Marko ____________________ (f) ________ (g). Marko is trying to work.

Goran ______(h) _______ (i) ____________ (j). Goran couldn’t sleep.

(k) ________________ (l) ______________ (m). You must not run.

________________ (n) ____________ (o). I’m trying to sleep.

Check answers here.
39 Would, Could: Conditionals

In Croatian, there is a special verb construction called *conditional*. It represents *desires* or things that *might happen*. For instance, phrases *I would...* (or *you could*) are often represented by conditionals in Croatian.

Conditional is a compound form: it’s constructed from the *past* form, and a *special conditional verb*, having with the following forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
<th>sing.</th>
<th>plur.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>biʰ²</td>
<td>bismo²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>bi²</td>
<td>biste²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>bi²</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In everyday speech of many people, just *bi²* is used in all persons and numbers, but it’s not standard. Just *bi²* is also quite frequent in casual writing – these are results by Google™ on the .hr domain:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;mi bismo&quot;</td>
<td>46800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;mi bi&quot;</td>
<td>71000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let’s compare the following sentences in present:

**Jedem.** *I am eating.*

**Mogu jesti.** *I can eat.*

With ones in conditional (as indicated by the superscript ², the conditional verb wants to be at the second position):

**Jeo bih.** *I would (like to) eat.*

**Mogla bih jesti.** *(female speaking)*

The English *I could eat* is ambiguous: it could mean that you had the ability in the past, or that you’re thinking about it right now (conditional). Croatian does not have such an ambiguity:

**Mogla bih jesti.** *(now, conditional)*

**Mogla sam jesti.** *(past)*

Croatian *mogla bih* actually corresponds to English *I would be able to*.

People use conditionals a lot when trying to be polite or soften expressions, but it could be ironic as well:

**Hoću jesti.** *(not polite)*

**Htio bih jesti.** *(much more polite)*
Another example:

Želim kupiti majicu. *I want to buy a T-shirt.* (not polite)
Želio bih kupiti majicu. (much more polite)
Kupio bih majicu. (also polite)

Actually, most often desires are expressed using conditionals (these are examples for the masc. gender in 1st person – I hope you are able to work out others):

Volio bih...
Htio bih...
Želio bih...

I’d like...

As you see, the verb voljeti (voli,...) love shifts its meaning in conditional a bit – there’s no real difference in meaning of the three verbs above in conditional. (I’ll explain various ways to use the verb voljeti (voli,...) love in conditional in 56 *Desires and Demands,*

When the verb trebati need is put into conditional and used with another verb in infinitive, it’s just a bit softened, and usually means *should:*

Trebala bih spavati. *I should sleep.*
Trebala bi spavati. *You should sleep.* (or *She should..."

It’s possible to soften any verb with conditional:

Morao bih jesti. *I would have to eat.*

Sometimes, the conditional verb is used just like a regular verb, for every desire, not just with verbs (it’s quite informal, children mostly talk like that):

Ja bih čokoladu. (colloq.) ‘I’d a chocolate.’ = *I’d like a chocolate.*

What if we have more than one second-position word? Then the conditional verb is placed before everything else that also requires the second place (that is, words like me², se², etc.):

Ivan bi me trebao zvati. *Ivan should call me.*
Goran bi se igrao. *Ivan would like to play.*

If you want to express *negative conditional,* just place a ne” in front of the conditional verb. These two words must then stay together and are usually found right before the past form:

Ne bih mogla jesti. *I couldn’t eat.*
Ivan ne bi trebao zvati. *Ivan shouldn’t call me.*
Goran se ne bi igrao. *Ivan wouldn’t like to play.*

The negation with the conditional verb behaves like one word that can be placed anywhere, despite being spelled as two words. Since the conditional verb is short (one syllable) the stress shifts to ne” even in the ‘western’ stress scheme (as indicated by the underlines above). As a result, you’ll sometimes see (non-standard)
spellings nebi and like.

To make questions in conditional, just use the normal methods. When the conditional verb is used in questions, it can be placed at the first position.

Conditional is frequently used in short negative responses, when someone is asked if he or she wants to do something:

Hoćeš u kino? Do you want to go to the cinema?  
— Ne bih, hvala. I wouldn’t, thanks.

There’s a construction in Croatian that corresponds to the English preference construction:

cond + radije ... nego ... would rather ... than ...

Both parts – after radije and nego are in conditional, but the conditional verb is not repeated in the second part. The word radije can be shuffled around a bit, but nego cannot:

Radije bih čitao knjigu nego gledao televiziju. I’d rather read a book than watch TV.

Pay attention how the verb after nego is also in past forms: both parts are in conditional, just the second bih is left out.

In both Croatian and English, the verb in the second part is left out if it’s repeated, however, you have to pay attention to use the right case in Croatian:

Radije bih pio čaj nego kavu. I’d rather drink tea than coffee.

You can even leave the verb completely if you would like to get something:

Radije bih čaj nego kavu.

This is also often used in short responses:

Želiš li kavu? Do you want coffee?  
— Radije bih čaj. I’d prefer tea.

Conditionals are also used in special, conditional sentences, corresponding to English "if I were... I would". They are described in 70 If I Were: Conditional Sentences.

(There’s another form, so-called past conditional, but it’s very rare in everyday communication. It will be covered in 99 Aorist Tense and Other Marginal Features.)

...
Mogla bih da jedem. I could eat. (female speaking)

Standard Serbian insists that the verb trebati need/should must be used impersonally with another verb, so the standard option in Serbia is only:

Trebal bi da spavam. lit. ‘It’s needed that I sleep.’ = I should sleep.

However, in the real speech there’s much more freedom.

Instead of kino and kava, the words bioskop and kafa are used in Serbia and most of Bosnia for cinema and coffee.

• Exercise

Complete the following sentences:

__________ (a) ______(b) knjigu. I’d read a book.

Goran ___(c) ___(d) __________(e). Goran would like to play.

Check answers here.
40 Future Tense

We have learned how to make the present tense. We also know how to make the past tense. But what about the future tense? It’s quite easy to make in Croatian.

First you need the infinitive form of the verb you want to use. That’s really easy, since infinitive forms are found in any dictionary.

Next, you need forms of an auxiliary verb that’s simply made from present of the verb *htjeti* (*hoće*, *htio*, *htjela*) want by dropping the first syllable (*ho*). It requires placement at the second position and looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pers.</th>
<th>sing.</th>
<th>plur.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>ću²</td>
<td>ćemo²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>ćeš²</td>
<td>ćete²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>će²</td>
<td>će²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

**Goran** će jesti. Goran will eat.

There’s a rather strange rule: if an infinitive on -ti is followed immediately by an future auxiliary (*ću²*, *ćeš²*, etc.) the final -i in the infinitive is dropped:

**Jest** ću. I’ll eat. *

This of course also applies to the verb *biti* (*je²*) be:

**Bit** će hladno. It will be cold.

This doesn’t apply to verbs having infinitives ending in -ći:

**Ići** ćemo u školu. We’ll go to school.

Colloquially, it’s quite common to leave out -i from the infinitive -ti always, so you’ll hear quite often:

**Goran** će jest. (colloq.) Goran will eat.

(You’ll also often see, mostly in casual writing, non-standard spellings where the final -i is not dropped, e.g. *biti ću*, and so on.)

As all other verbal second-position forms – the only exception being *je²* – all the forms *ću²*, *ćeš²*, *će²*... come before any second-position pronouns:

**Bit** će ti hladno. You’ll be cold.

**Čut** ćemo se. ‘We’ll hear each other.’ (i.e. We’ll be in touch over phone.)

The form *će²* is ambiguous – it doesn’t distinguish singular and plural:

**Vidjet** će me. He/She/They will see me.

Of course, you can always add a subject pronoun if the meaning is not clear from
the context.

To express *negation*, use simply negative present forms of the verb *htjeti*, obtained by adding *ne-* to the *ću², ćeš²*, etc. The negative forms are not restricted to the second position, they are rather placed before the verb in infinitive:

**Neću jesti.** *I won’t eat.*  
**Nećemo ći u školu².** *We won’t go to school.*

To *ask questions* about the future, you can use all usual ways to form questions. The standard way of forming yes/no questions requires full forms of the auxiliary verb, that is, putting back the *ho*:

**Hoćemo li ći u školu²?** *Will we go to school?*

In colloquial speech, it’s possible to shorten the present of *htjeti* (*hoću, hoćeš*, etc.) to just *ću², ćeš²*... to express that you want to get something right away:

**JaN ću pizzu².** *(colloq.)* *I’ll take a pizza.*

The *negative existential construction* – which is *nema* + G in the present tense – uses the verb *biti* (*je² +*) *be* in the future tense instead (as in the past tense):

**Neće biti piva⁶.** *There will be no beer.*

There’s one more way of expressing future: with the verb *ići* (*ide, išao, išla*) *go* (in the present tense) + infinitive:

**Idem prati zube².** *(In Croatian, teeth are ‘washed’, not ‘brushed’.)* I’ll ‘wash’ my teeth right now. (*= brush*)

This is completely *different* from the English ‘going-to’ future, which can be used in e.g. *it’s going to rain* (as a prediction). Such predictions in Croatian can be expressed *only* with the plain *ću², ćeš²*... future:

**Padat će kiša¹N.** *It’s going to rain.*

It’s also possible to use this kind of future tense in Croatian to suggest people what to do right now:

**Idemo piti pivo⁶.** *Let’s have beer now.*

As you can see, the Croatian sentence has a completely different structure than the English one. Translating it word-for-word – *we’re going to drink beer* – misses its meaning completely.
Another frequent use of the future tense is expressing things that will be done at unspecified time, e.g. when the following time adverbs are used:

| jednog dana | one day | kasnije | later |
| jednom | once | poslije |

(The adverb poslije is a bit colloquial, when used on its own; the ending -ije in it is usually pronounced as one syllable.) For example:

Reći ću ti kasnije. I’ll tell you later.

Here the verb reći (...) is a perfective verb meaning say, tell. Perfective verbs are common in the future tense, if you want to accomplish something:

Sutra ću kupiti knjige. I’ll buy the books tomorrow.

But if you want to engage in an activity, and don’t focus on any particular accomplishment, you should use an imperfective verb:

Sutra ću kupovati knjige. I’ll be buying books tomorrow.

Now, something unexpected. There’s a very special verb, although it has completely regular forms. It’s an alternative to the verb biti (je² +) be. It has only present forms, and its pres-3 is:

(bude) be (potential, ‘subjunctive’)

It’s impossible to translate it to English out of context; it’s often translated with get, become, etc. and it’s (in the Standard Croatian) mostly used in some special constructions (don’t worry, we’ll learn them soon). The verb (bude) is kind of perfective; however, it’s not normally used in past or future tense, unlike other perfective verbs, but it can be used in the present tense when we talk about things that happen any time:

Često bude hladno ujutro. It’s often cold in the morning. (or It often gets cold...)

Therefore, Croatian has two forms of the present tense of verb biti: the irregular je² standing for real states and events, and the regular bude used only in special cases where it stands for potential, possible or desired states.

Using this special verb, we can simply replace the forms of auxiliary je² in the past tense with the forms of bude and create another tense – the potential future tense:

| past tense | sam², si², je²... |
| past form |
| potential future | budem, budeš, bude... |
| past form |

In the Standard Croatian, you cannot simply use the potential future tense or the verb (bude): it can be used only in specific constructions.
In fact, there are some constructions in Croatian where you have to use the verb *(bude)*. They will be introduced a bit later.

In colloquial speech, especially in northwestern Croatia, including Zagreb, both are often used in ordinary sentences, interchangeably with the standard future forms. Then the verb *(bude)* is simply understood as the future form of the verb *biti be*. So you will often hear (and sometimes read):

**Budemo išli u školu*. (colloq. NW Croatia) *We’ll go to school.*

This is by no means standard, and such use is restricted to just a part of Croatia (arguably, with about a half of the total population of Croatia).

One final remark: the potential future tense is usually, in textbooks, known as the ‘exact’ future tense or future II. I think these are quite confusing names, so I’ve invented another name which makes more sense to me.

*****

® You will sometimes see in Bosnia, occasionally in casual writing in Croatia, and always in Serbia, that in such a case, these two words are spelled fused together and the t is left out; verbs that end in -sti in infinitive change the consonant s → š:

**Biće hladno.** It will be cold.
**Ješću.** I’ll eat. (← jest + ěu)

However, this is merely a (weird) spelling. Word order rules still apply, of course, so, effectively, Serbian words like *biće* and *ješću* are limited to the first position in the sentence!

It *never* happens anywhere (at least in standard languages!) to verbs having infinitives in -či.

Additionally, it’s very common in Serbia, usually in speech, to use *da* + present tense instead of the infinitive:

**Ana* će da jede*. Ana will eat.

While the same forms of the verbs *biti* and *(bude)* are used in Serbia, Serbian grammars traditionally classify *bude* as the present tense of *biti*, and present tense forms *(je²)* as another verb (referred by the form *jesam*), having no infinitive.

While it’s true that *bude*-forms sometimes replace *je²*-forms, regarding *je²* as a verb different than *biti* is just absurd. Unfortunately, some materials for foreigners on the Internet repeat this bizarre approach.

A likely background for such approach is that when *da* + present tense is used instead of the infinitive *biti*, *bude* is used instead of *je²*:

**Ana* će da bude gladna*. Ana will be hungry.

You’ll later see the exact circumstances when *bude*-forms replace *je²*-forms.
• Exercise

Complete the following sentences in the future tense:

________(a) ________(b) pivo. We’ll drink beer.

____________(c) ___(d) film. I’ll watch a movie.

Kasnije ____ (e) ____________(f) knjigu. I’ll read the book later. (don’t say you’ll complete it)

____________(g) ____ (h) novi ____________(i). I’ll buy a new car.

Check answers here.
41 Somewhere, Nobody, Everything...

There are couple of very useful words – usually called *indefinite pronouns* – that generally derive from question-words by adding a *ne-* . They *don’t mean negation*, but *some-*:

- **nekamo** *somewhere* (destination)
- **negdje** *somewhere* (location)
- **odnekud** *from somewhere* (origin)

These words are used as generic locations, destinations or origins:

**Auto**[^1] is **negdje**. *The car is somewhere.*

The next two indefinite pronouns change in the same way as the question-words **tko** *who* and **što** *what* (introduced in 28 *Asking Who and What*):

- **netko** *someone*    
- **nešto** *something*

Both pronouns behave grammatically as the pronouns they’re derived from, that is, **netko** as masc. sing., **nešto** as neut. sing.:

- **Netko**[^2] is **bio tamo**. *Someone was there.*
- **Nešto**[^3] is **bilo tamo**. *Something was there.*
- **Netko**[^4] is **spava**. *Someone is sleeping.*

However, if you want to express just the opposite, that is, *nobody is sleeping*, in Croatian, you have only one option: you *have to use negation* (that is, the verb must be put to negative), *and* you must negate the pronoun as well. Croatian uses *double negation as a rule*:

- **Nitko**[^5] is **ne spava**. *Nobody is sleeping.*

It’s very simple to make negative forms of indefinite pronouns: if they begin with *ne-* , change it to *ni-* . Unfortunately, there’s an irregularity: when *ni-* is prefixed to **što**, the result is **ništ**:

- **Nemam** is **ništ**[^6]. *I don’t have anything.* (lit. ‘I don’t have nothing.’)

There’s an often used phrase, used when you look you might be hurt, but you aren’t (or just pretend you aren’t):

- **Nije**[^7] is **ništ**[^8]. *I’m fine.* (lit. ‘It’s nothing to me.’)

Of course, instead of **mi**, you can use any noun or pronoun in the DL case. Since **ništ** is really the subject, it behaves like **što**, therefore 3rd pers. neut. sing. is used in the past tense:

- **Nije**[^9] is **bilo ništ**[^10]. *She was fine.*

To negate adverb-like indefinite pronouns, again replace *ne-* with *ni-* , moving it to the beginning of the word:

[^1]: [Easy Croatian (rev. 47b) / 41 Somewhere, Nobody, Everything...](#)
[^2]: [m]
[^3]: [n]
[^4]: [o]
[^5]: [p]
[^6]: [q]
[^7]: [r]
[^8]: [s]
[^9]: [t]
[^10]: [u]
nikamo nowhere (destination)
nigdje nowhere (location)
niotkud from nowhere (origin)

The next two adverbs stand for manner and are derived from the question-word kako how:

nekako somehow  nikako ‘nohow’

Again, all these ni-words require negation of the verb as well:

Nikamo ne idem. I’m not going anywhere. (lit. ‘I don’t go nowhere.’)

To ask questions, it’s normal in Croatian to use the same pronouns as in usual sentences:

Je li me netko tražio? Was anyone looking for me?
Je li negdje jeftinije? Is anywhere cheaper?

However, in writing, sometimes in formal speech, instead of indefinite pronouns in such questions, questions pronouns can be used, with indefinite meaning:

Je li me tko tražio? (the same meaning as above)
Je li gdje jeftinije?

Actually, Standard Croatian prefers such use – sentences like je li me netko... are considered colloquial in Standard Croatian!

Then, there are frequent combinations like somebody else, somewhere else, etc. Croatian uses specific else-words (meaning other, elsewhere etc. when used on their own) that must match the first word. Either both change in case, or neither one:

netko drugi somebody else → A nekog drugog
nešto drugo something else → I nečim drugim
negdje drugdje somewhere else (both words are adverbs)

Another type of indefinite pronouns is obtained by prefixing sva- (svu- for some words), usually in meaning every. Again sva- + što = svašta:

svatko everyone
svašta things of all kinds

The pronoun svašta doesn’t mean everything! For example:

Vidjeli smo svašta. We saw many different things.

The word svašta can also have negative implications, as all kind of (bad, strange) things, depending on the context. It can also be used as a short comment, when something is unexpected, illogical or meaningless.

Adverbs of this type are:

svakako in any case
The adjectives is:

svaki every, each

The adjective svaki is quite often used. For instance:

Svaka soba ima dva kreveta. Each room has two beds.

Držim čašu u svakoj ruci. I’m holding a glass in each hand.

Finally, there’s a rather interesting adjective sav (sv- +) all. It has a bit specific endings in singular – as if it ends in a Croatian-specific consonant; it also has obligatory final vowels in endings for masc./neut. singular (normally optional for most adjectives):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DL</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feminine</td>
<td>sva</td>
<td>svu</td>
<td>svoj</td>
<td>sve</td>
<td>svom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>sve</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. (not p/a)</td>
<td>sav</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td>svemu</td>
<td>svega</td>
<td>svim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m. (p/a)</td>
<td>= G</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with other adjectives or pronouns having specific forms, the forms for fem. gender are just plain forms, listed just for completeness sake. Also, like most other adjectives with special uses, it never has the optional -i in masc. N.

The adjective can be used as any other adjective, mostly in plural, due to its meaning:

Zovem sve moje prijatelje. I’m calling all my friends.

However, the main use of this adjective is as a pronoun, and specific forms have specific uses. Neuter singular forms (NA sve, DL svemu...) mean everything:

Vidio sam sve. (A) I saw everything.

Dosta mi je svega. (G) I had enough of everything.

The second sentence is a frequent Croatian phrase (type it into Google™).

Masculine plural forms (N svi, A sve...) are used in generic sense everybody:

Svi su kod Ane. Everybody is at Ana’s place.

You have to be careful that svi is plural, so when used as the subject, verbs come in plural too, unlike English:

Svi spavaju. Everybody is sleeping.

Bear in mind that adjectives – sav (sv-) is essentially an adjective – get an additional -a in DLI-pl when used on their own, as nouns or pronouns. Therefore:
Hvala svima\textsuperscript{DL}. Thanks to everyone.
Razgovarao sam sa svima\textsuperscript{i}. I talked to everyone.

The first phrase, hvala svima, is the preferred way to thank a group of people.

Of course, when sav (sv-) is used as an adjective, it gets ordinary endings in DLI-pl:
Hvala svim mojim prijateljima\textsuperscript{DL}. Thanks to all my friends.

Sometimes, feminine plural forms (N sve, A sve...) are used if you refer to women only. You will sometimes hear (and read) forms with regular endings (svo, etc.) – however, only when it’s used as an adjective – such forms are not standard, but frequent in some regions, especially outside Croatia.

You will from time to time hear additional version of masc. A-pl: svih (like personal pronouns, oni \(\rightarrow\) njih). It’s widespread in parts of Croatia, but it’s not standard.

Of course, you can use svi drugi everybody else, etc.

There are more adjectives that are used as pronouns in this way: masc. pl. for people, neut. sing. for things.

The words svi, nitko are similar to total adverbs (e.g. nikad). As will other such words, you can loosen them a bit with the help of the adverb skoro almost:
Nemam skoro ništa\textsuperscript{A}. I have almost nothing.
Skoro svi\textsuperscript{N} spavaju. Almost everyone is sleeping.

Examples

Hladno pivo (Cold beer) is a very popular punk-rock band from Zagreb. They combine love songs with social commentary. This song, Nije sve tako sivo Everything isn’t so gray, is a song about a guy just dumped by his girlfriend via a text message (or SMS):

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Zar nakon svega\textsuperscript{G} & Are you really after everything \\
Joj\textsuperscript{DL} nisi ni poziva\textsuperscript{G} vrijedan\textsuperscript{N} & Not worth a single call to her \\
A zbog nje\textsuperscript{G} si prešo na 091\textsuperscript{A} & And because of her you’ve switched to 091 \\
Nije sve\textsuperscript{N} tako sivo\textsuperscript{N} & Everything isn’t so gray \\
Kad imaš s nekim\textsuperscript{i} & When you have someone \\
Otći na pivo\textsuperscript{A} & To go for a beer \\
(Mile Kekin) &
\end{tabular}

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

The song is not in the Standard Croatian, but fairly close to it.

The word zar enhances a question. The predicative:
vrijedan (vrijedn-) (G DL) pred. worth (of G to DL)

Is here used (if you unravel the sentence and add the right pronoun) as:

**Ti joj nisi vrijedan ni poziva** She thinks you’re not worth a single call

The pronoun *joj* is in DL – it’s *her opinion*. The particle *ni* emphasizes the negation (you see, Croatian has a lot of ‘emphasizing devices’). It will be explained in 67 Only, Except, Too: Inclusion and Exclusion.

The preposition *zbog* because of requires the genitive case; for more details, check: 50 Because, In Order To, Why: Reasons.

The 091 mentioned in the third verse is a mobile network dialing prefix. He switched the network for her, and yet she didn’t bother to call, she has just sent a text message. The word *prešo* is shortened past form *prešao*, from the verb *preći* / *prijeći* go across, switch to. The word *ošć* is just infinitive *ošćić* leave without the final -i. Both verbs will be explained in the next chapter.

The last two verses translate literally as ‘when you have with someone to go on beer’. Words *s nekim* with someone are just the usual preposition + instrumental case. As you can see, words in Croatian can be shuffled around a lot.

**• Exercise**

Fill in the sentences below:

__________ (a) __ (b) **zna** __________ (c). Nobody knows anything.

Ana je __________ (d). Ana is somewhere.

Check answers [here](#).
42 Come In, Come Out, Go

Now I will introduce you to various verbs derived from ići (ide, išao, išla) go.

The verb is irregular in the pres-3 and past forms, and verbs derived from it are also irregular. They have a wide range of meanings, some of them both a literal meaning and metaphorical one.

There’s a very important difference compared to English. Take a look at the following English sentences:

I went into the room.
I came into the room.
I entered the room.

English has a set of verbs (enter, leave, etc.) that are used with simple objects: you just enter something.

Not so in Croatian: most motion verbs behave as go and don’t use objects, but rather destinations or locations. For example:

Išao sam u sobu. I went into the room.
Ušao sam u sobu. I entered the room.

All verbs are organized into impf. ~ perf. pairs. Actually, all impf. verbs derived in those pairs are perfectly regular. The two simplest verb pairs are:

- dolaziti ~ doći (dođe, došao, došla) come
- ulaziti ~ ući (uđe, ušao, ušla) enter, come into

As you can see, these two verb pairs have exactly the same forms, just one pair starts with do- and another with u-. All verbs derived from ići have exactly the forms like the verbs above, except for two verbs, so it’s much less to remember than it seems.

This is a general characteristic of Croatian verbs: they are organized into families, where all pairs have very similar forms, stress pattern, and usually just different prefixes. An upside is that you can easily remember all verb pairs at once; a downside is that you can sometimes mix pairs up.

Let’s put them to use:

Doći čemo sutra. We’ll come tomorrow.

The stress patterns of verbs depend on the number of syllables in the prefix, e.g. verbs derived with do- do not have the same pattern as ones derived with iža-.

The following verb deviates from the above pattern:

- odlaziti ~ otići (ode, otšao, otšla) leave, depart

It’s a very frequently used verb pair. The impf. verb means depart, leave:
**Odlazimo na plažu.** *We’re leaving for the beach.*

This perf. verb is a bit ambiguous. It stands for two things: *departure* (like the impf. verb) and *completing the whole motion:*

**Otihla je na plažu.**

(1) *She has left for the beach.* (departed)
(2) *She has gone to the beach.* (completed)

The meaning #2 is just perfective of *ići* (...) *go*: the motion is completed.

On the other hand, do- corresponds to English *come/came:*

**Došli smo na plažu.** *We came to the beach.*

There are more Croatian verb families that show this opposition. Their pair with ot- or od- is similar to one described above – a bit ambiguous perf. verb, often being just perfective of the base verb, and another pair, derived do-, similar to *come.*

For both pairs, the place you’re going to is expressed as a *destination.*

When you want to express that you *leave* some place, you have to use origins (that is, the right prepositions + G), and not objects:

**Otihla smo iz Zagreba.** *We left Zagreb.*

This verb pair means only *go somewhere or leave a place*; there’s another Croatian verb pair that means *go and not take something* (e.g. *leave the wallet:*)

*ostavljati ~ ostaviti* *leave* (e.g. keys)

For example:

**Ostavila sam novčanik negde.** *I left the wallet somewhere.* (l = female)

This verb pair is also used when you intentionally leave things, e.g. for someone:

**Ostavila sam ručak za tebe u frižideru.** *I left the lunch for you in the fridge.*

If you know some Spanish, you can see these two Croatian verb pairs correspond to two Spanish verbs: *salir* (leaving a *place*) and *dejar* (leaving a *thing*). The same difference exists in French: *partir* vs. *laisser,* and in German: *abfahren* vs. *lassen.* However, French *laisser* and German *lassen* have many generic meanings, while *ostavljati ~ ostaviti* *means only leave things or people.*

Another verb also deviates from the above pattern:

*izlaziti ~ izači (izađe, izašao, izašla)* *come out, exit*

It is used in a similar way to *odlaziti,* but mostly for closed spaces, e.g. *rooms,* *houses,* etc. You have to use origins:

**Izlašla sam iz sobe.** *I came out of the room.*

The perf. verb in this pair has also an alternative form, with *izi-* instead of *iza-*; it’s
actually preferred in Standard Croatian, but less often used in real life (e.g. about 5 times less common on the Internet).

The next three verbs have forms very similar to others. These verbs sound quite alike, and their meaning is all about moving with respect to something else rather than the destination or origin of motion. What is special about them is that they can use prepositions with nouns, but also plain objects in A, without much difference in meaning. Each verb uses a different preposition:

- obilaziti ~ obići (oblade, obišao, obišla) go around; visit
- prelaziti ~ preći (prede, presao, presla) cross, go over *
- prolaziti ~ proći (prode, prošao, prošla) go through; pass

The verb pair starting with pro- is used when you literally pass something; it’s used with either A or kroz + A:

- Prilazim kroz šumuA. I’m passing through the forest.
- Prošao sam kroz šumuA. I passed through the forest.
- Prošao sam šumuA. I left the forest behind.

As in English, this pair can be used figuratively, then things just pass, i.e. they are there, and then they are not:

- Vrijeme prolazi. Time is passing.
- Bol će proći. The pain will pass.
- Bol je prošla. The pain has passed. = The pain is gone.

The past form of the perf. verb is used as a real adjective, in the meaning previous, last:

- Prošle godineG sam bila u ZadruDL. I was in Zadar last year.

The verb pair starting with pre- means cross; it can be used with either preko over + G, or with just with an object in A:

- Prešao sam preko mostaG. I crossed over the bridge.
- Prešao sam mostA. I crossed the bridge.
- Prelazim mostA. I’m crossing the bridge.

The perf. verb in this pair was listed above in a shorter, regularized form, which is considered non-standard, unfortunately. The standard perf. verb has a bit irregular infinitive and the present tense forms:

- prelaziti ~ prijeći (prijeđe, prešao, presla) cross, go over

You will encounter both forms in writing, and on the Internet, including newspapers (Google™ for e.g. preći preko or pređem preko). The verb pair with preko + G is also used metaphorically, to ignore, dismiss or not discuss something:

- Ne mogu prijeći preko togaG. I can’t dismiss it.
- Ne mogu preći preko togaG. (the same, but non-standard)
Another use of this verb pair is with na~ + A, where it means cross to, switch to (as means), get to, move on to (in conversation):

**Prešli smo na drugu temu**. We have moved on to another topic.

The verb pair starting with obi- means go around; one option is to use it with oko around + G:

**Obišao sam oko kuće**. I went around the house.

When used with just an object (in A) it mostly means visit, sight-see:

**Obišla sam grad**. I visited (went around) the city.

Another verb pair is very similar to these three, but it’s used with DL (!) only:

- **prilaziti ~ prići (pride, prišao, prišla)** approach, come close

  For example:

  **Prišla sam im**. I approached them.

Then, there are three verbs with completely unexpected meaning:

- **nalaziti ~ naći (nađe, našao, našla)** find
- **pronalaziti ~ pronaći (pronađe, pronašao, pronašla)** find, discover
- **snalaziti se² ~ snaći (snađe, snašao, snašla)** se² manage, handle

The verb pair with na- is the main way to express this meaning in Croatian (the impf. verb nalaziti is not often used). It’s used just with an object in A:

**Našao sam ključeve**. I found the keys.

**Naći ću ključ**. I’ll find the key.

This verb pair is not used in phrases like I find her attractive and I want to find out about it. It’s only used if you physically ‘find’ some object that was unknown or lost.

The second verb pair, with prona-, has a very similar meaning to the previous one, but it implies a longer search, and is used also when someone discovers something.

The third verb pair, with sna-, is also a kind of find: it’s used to when you manage not to get lost, either in a city you visit for the first time, or metaphorically, in something new you do, when you have to get quickly accustomed to new work, people, any new or unexpected situation, especially if you do it on your own, improvising, without assistance:

**Nisam se odmah snašla u Zagrebu**. I didn’t get accustomed to Zagreb immediately.

The verb pair with na-, when used with se², has meaning located, similar to English is found or can be found (in this way, the impf. verb is often used):

**Pivo se nalazi u frižideru**. The beer can be found in the fridge.

**Rješenja se nalaze na kraju knjige**. ‘Solutions’ (i.e. answer keys) are found at the
end of the book.

This combination is used *only for physical location*, you cannot use it in meaning ‘exist’ e.g. sponges can be found in different sizes – for that, you have to use *postojati (postoji)* *exist* or some other way.

The following verb pair is similar to *odlaziti ~ otići* (...) but the focus is on starting a journey.

*polaziti ~ poći (pođe, pošao, pošla)* *depart*

These two verbs are not often used, mostly used when talking about trains or buses.

The following table summarizes all the verbs I’ve introduced here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>used with</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>do-</td>
<td>dest., origin</td>
<td><em>come</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iz-</td>
<td>origin, dest.</td>
<td><em>come out</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u-</td>
<td>destination</td>
<td><em>come in</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>od- (oti-)</td>
<td>origin, dest.</td>
<td><em>leave, depart</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obi-</td>
<td>oko + G / A</td>
<td><em>go around</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre- (prije-)</td>
<td>preko + G / A</td>
<td><em>cross, go over</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na-</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td><em>pass</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pri-</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td><em>approach</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td><em>find</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>se²</td>
<td><em>be located</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td><em>find/discover</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sna-</td>
<td>se²</td>
<td><em>get accustomed</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are more verbs in this family, but they are less common, and will be explained later.

• **Examples**

**Balada iz predgrađa** *A Ballad from Suburbia*, also known as *Petrolejska lampa* *Kerosene Lamp* is a short poem by Dobriša Cesarić (1902–1980) – a male name, despite ending in *-a* – who is considered one of the greatest Croatian poets. It has been performed by many singers. Many lines contain various verbs derived from *ići* (*ide, išao, išla*) *go*. I have left out first four verses:

I uvijek ću ustaša vidić ući And always the same poor people come
U njezinu svjetlost iz mraka Into its light from the dark
I s licem' na kojem su And with a face which
The third verse contains a relative clause; they will be explained in 62 The Friend I Saw: Relative Clauses. The last verse contains the noun korak step, which one of a few nouns which shift stress in G-pl.

The following verses contain a negative existential expression; jedne večeri is a genitive temporal expression. The form moro is a shortened form of morao, past-m of morati must, have to; the second verse has the shortened infinitive proć pass, which is colloquial, but it rhymes with noć night:

A jedne večeri nekoga nema  And one evening someone is not there
A moro bi proć  And he should have passed
I lampa gori, i gori u magli  And the lamp is burning, burning in the fog
I već je noc  And it’s night already

The use of a¨ for and will be explained in the following chapters. For now, you should just remember that both a¨ and i¨ correspond to English and.

The following verses are similar; the verb veći has only present tense forms; it will be explained in 59 Knowing and Telling: Content and Noun Clauses:

I nema ga sutra  And he’s not there tomorrow
Ni prekosutra ne  Neither the day after tomorrow
I vele da bolestan leži  And they say he’s lying sick
I nema ga mjesec  And he’s not there for a month
i nema g dva  neither for two
I zima je već, i snijegi  And it’s already winter, and it’s snowing

This is an example of the verb sniježiti snow being actually used; as said before, it’s rare in speech.

The following verses contain the impf. verb prolaziti pass; note also use of maj for the month of May. There are many negative existential expressions, some of them shortened to just the verb nema, which is hard to translate to English:

A prolaze kao i dosada ljudi  And people are passing like before
I maj već mirše  And May already smells sweet
A njega nema, i nema, i nema  And here’s not there, and again, and again
I nema ga više  And he’s gone

You can listen to various performances on YouTube™.
Exercise

Complete the following sentences:

____________________(a) ______(b) riječku. We have crossed the river.

Ana ______(c) ________(d) ______(e) ureda. Ana left the office.

Ušao ____ (f) ____ (g) ________ (h). I went into the house.

Check answers here.
Croatian has basically two conjunctions that correspond to English *and*: 

i¨  a¨

The conjunction i¨ is used when you want to join two words or two parts of sentences:

IvanN i AnaN rade. *Ivan and Ana are working.* (nouns)

AnaN je žednaN i gladnaN. *Ivan is thirsty and hungry.* (two adjectives)

SobeN su u prizemljuDL i na katuDL. *The rooms are on the ground floor and on the first floor.* (two locations)

It’s possible to join two normal-type sentences (that is, two verbs) that *have the same subject*:

AnaN jede i pije. *Ana is eating and drinking.*


Here we actually join *two clauses*; a clause is kind of sentence-within-a-sentence (I have put square brackets around each of them in the last sentence).

It’s also possible to join two *subjective-experience*-type sentences, if they *have the same experiencer* (in DL):

Hladno miDL je i dosadno. *I’m cold and bored.*

However, if you want to join two sentences that have *different subjects* (and usually verbs too), you have to use the conjunction a¨:

AnaN čita knjiguA, a GoranN spava. *Ana is reading a book, and Goran is sleeping.*

When an a¨ is used, a comma *always* separates two clauses.

Now there’s a very interesting rule. If you have different subjects – and consequently use a¨ – the *subjects must be emphasized*. That is, you have to use them:

AnaN čita knjiguA, a jaN spavam. *Ana is reading a book, and I’m sleeping.*

You cannot use the previous sentence with just a spavam!

The same works for *experiencers*: they must be emphasized, that is, *stressed forms of pronouns must be used*:

AnaN se zabavlja, a meniDL je dosadno. *Ana is having fun, and I’m bored.*

Again, you cannot use the previous sentence with just a dosadno mi je! Also, such emphasized subjects are usually the in the leftmost position.

The conjunction a¨ is also used if there’s some opposition between two clauses, e.g.

Zabavljam se, a trebao bih učiti. *I’m having fun, and I should study.*
In such a case, when the subjects are the same in both clauses – as above – they are not emphasized.

As other words marked with “, words i¨ and a¨ don’t count – second position words cannot be placed after them:

**Ana** je čitala knjigu, a ja sam spavao. Ana was reading a book, and I was sleeping.

**Gledam** film i dosadno mi je. I’m watching a movie, and I’m bored.

An exception to the “rule of different subjects” is when the second clause is a consequence of the first, then the emphasis of the subject of first clause is not needed, and i¨ is used:

**Pokucao sam i ona** je otvorila vrata. I knocked and she opened the door.

Another example of this exception are weather phenomena: if everything is as expected, use i¨, while a¨ is reserved for unusual and unexpected things, i.e. not consequences:

**Zima** je i pada snijeg. It’s winter and it’s snowing.

**Ljeto** je, a hladno je. It’s summer, and/but it’s cold.

The next conjunction – ili – is very similar to English or:

**To** je patka ili guska. That’s a duck or a goose.

Unlike i¨ or a¨, ili is a word that counts, and all second-position words come right after it.

When you have two subjects or objects (not necessarily in A) which you would link with and in a negative sentence, you can use ni¨ instead of i¨ to either emphasize negation, or when there’s no real connection between these two things:

**Nemamo ulja** ni octa. We have no oil and no vinegar.

This is always optional.

The conjunction ali usually corresponds to English but:

**Hoću se tuširati, ali nema tople vode.** I want to have a shower, but there’s no hot water.

Again, when an ali is used, a comma always separates two clauses. The major difference in comparison to a¨ is that ali is a word that counts, and all second-position words come right after it.

Unfortunately, but is not always ali: there’s an interesting conjunction nego, which kind of completely corrects what was said, but what was said must be negative. For example:

**Nismo išli u kino, nego u restoran.** We didn’t go to the cinema, but to a restaurant.
This construction is more common in writing, a bit less in speech. The important thing is that Croatian ali cannot be used in this construction. The same difference exists in German and Spanish, which has been always a bit of a problem for native English speakers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>but</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>ali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>aber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>pero</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While ali connects two clauses, with nego you don’t have to repeat anything from the part before it, just state the ‘correction’ (of course, you can repeat the verb if you want to).

However, there are cases when you can and must use ali (and Spanish pero) – when you don’t completely correct what is said, but talk about an exception:

**Ne volim serije**, ali mi se sviđa WestworldN. *I don’t like (TV) series, but I like the Westworld.*

(Note how Croatian uses different verbs here; you could use voljeti (...) in both parts too.)

Another example is a complete correction vs something just unexpected or uncommon:

JanetN nije iz HrvatskeG, nego iz KanadeG. *Janet isn’t from Croatia, but from Canada.*

JanetN nije iz HrvatskeG, ali zna hrvatskiA. *Janet isn’t from Croatia, but she ‘knows’ Croatian.* (i.e. speaks)

If you’re unsure about ali vs nego, there’s a simple test: if you can rephrase the sentence with instead (e.g. we went to a restaurant instead) or with rather, you should use nego instead of ali.

There’s a simple way to emphasize that all subjects/actions/objects/places/whatever are involved, like in English both... and.... In Croatian, simply an i¨ is placed before each emphasized item:

**I IvanN i AnaN rade.** *Both Ivan and Ana are working.*

**SobeN su i u prizemljuDL i na katuDL.** *The rooms are both on the ground floor and on the first floor.*

However, if you want to make an emphasis in a sentence where the verb is negated, you should use negative conjunctions ni¨ instead, but the verb is still negated:

**Ni IvanN ni AnaN ne rade.** *Neither Ivan nor Ana are working.*

**SobeN nisu ni u prizemljuDL ni na katuDL.** *The rooms are neither on the ground floor nor on the first floor.*
As you can see, this corresponds to English *neither... nor...*, but the major difference is that the verb is negated in Croatian sentences.

To emphasize that only one option is possible, you can use *ili... ili...*, corresponding to English *either... or*:

To\(^N\) je ili patka\(^N\) ili guska\(^N\). That’s *either a duck or a goose*.

The following conjunctions are used for time sequences, where one thing happens after another, usually when the subject is the same, or there’s no subject:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pa} & \quad \text{(bookish)} \\
\text{te} & \quad \text{(time sequence)}
\end{align*}
\]

Both can be replaced with *i*´ when linking two parts of a sentence. For example:

Bila sam gladna\(^N\) pa sam kupila sendvič\(^Ä\). *I was hungry, and/so I bought a sandwich.*

Both conjunctions count, i.e. second position words come right after them.

The word *pa* is also used in conversation, to emphasize that something is almost obvious, that something need not to be said at all:

Žedan\(^N\) sam. *I’m thirsty.*

— Pa popij malo vode\(^G\)! *Well, drink some water!*

It can be also used on its own, as a small (impatient) rhetorical question:


In this use, *pa* corresponds to English *well*, but it’s not used as a “filler word” when you try to fill a gap in your speech (... *well, ....*). As fillers, words *znači* and *dakle* are common.

The word *te* is a fancy conjunction that’s virtually never used in speech.

**Examples**

This song, *Najdraže moje* *Oh my dearest*, was a big hit by *Novi fosljil*, the most popular Croatian pop group in late 1970’s and early 1980’s. The song is still quite popular.

The song starts with a condition clause, which is not explained yet, but actually quite simple to understand. The words *najdraže moje* are in the only case we haven’t covered yet: the *vocative* case; it’s used to directly address someone. In that case, adjectives usually come *after* nouns. Furthermore, the adjective *najdraži* *dearest* is in the so-called *superlative* form; it will be covered in 63 *Bigger and Better: Comparatives*.

Ako te\(^A\) izgubim  \hspace{1cm} If I lose you
najdraže moje \hspace{1cm} oh my dearest
Utopit će se zvijezde\(^N\)  \hspace{1cm} The stars will drown
u valima\textsuperscript{DL} tuge\textsuperscript{G} \textit{in waves of sorrow}

Normally, the plural of val \textit{wave} would be valovi, but short plural forms are sometimes used in poetry.

The verses above, and the following verses use several perfective verbs; one of them is used in the present tense, but in an \textit{if} construction, i.e. referring to possible things in the future (such constructions will be explained later, in 70 \textit{If I Were: Conditional Sentences}). The pairs are:

\begin{itemize}
  \item gubiti \textasciitilde{} iz- («) \textit{lose}
  \item utapati («) \textasciitilde{} utopiti («) \textit{drown}
  \item nastajati (nastaje) \textasciitilde{} nastati (nastane) \textit{emerge, come about}
\end{itemize}

The last pair is a member of an important ‘verb family’ which will be explained in 52 \textit{Stand, Become, Exist, Cease}. The verb ugasnuti (ugasne) perf. \textit{go out, die out} is very rare, it’s even missing from some dictionaries.

The following verses use the same pattern. The part \textit{ni ptice ni ljudi} uses ni... ni... introduced in this chapter. Furthermore, the phase is in N, which means neither birds nor people will be able to see. (In my English translation, it’s not clear if nobody can see birds or what.)

\begin{verse}
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{Ako te}^\text{A} izgubim & If I lose you  \\
\textbf{jednoga dana}^\text{G} & one day  \\
\textbf{Ugasnuti} \textit{če sunce}^\text{N} & \textit{The sun will die out}  \\
\textit{i nastat} \textit{če tama}^\text{N} & \textit{and darkness will come about}  \\
\textbf{Da ne vidi} \textit{nitko}^\text{N} & \textit{So that nobody can see}  \\
\textit{ni ptice}^\text{N}, \textit{ni ljudi}^\text{N} & \textit{neither birds, nor people}  \\
\textbf{Kad odem} \textit{zauvijek} & \textit{When I leave for good}  \\
\textit{kad zauvijek odem} & \textit{when I leave for good}  \\
\textit{najdraže moje...} & \textit{oh my dearest...}
\end{tabular}
\end{verse}

Note the two lines where just words are in different positions, with a slight emphasis on \textit{zauvijek} in the second line (which I could maybe translate as \textit{really for good}).

The following verses contain \textit{nikada više ljubavi nove} which is actually the negative existential \textit{nikada više neće biti nove ljubavi}. The verb is left out, and the order of noun and adjective is reversed to make the line sound better and have the same rhythm as the other lines:

\begin{verse}
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{Nikada više} & \textit{Never again}  \\
\textbf{ljubavi nove}^\text{G} & \textit{a new love}  \\
\textbf{najdraže moje} & \textit{oh my dearest}  \\
\textbf{Tama}^\text{N} \textit{če odnijet} & \textit{Darkness will take away}  \\
\textit{sve želje}^\text{A} \textit{i sneve}^\text{A} & \textit{all wishes and dreams}  \\
(Dea Volarić)
\end{tabular}
\end{verse}

The verb \textit{odnijeti} (..) perf. \textit{take away} will be introduced in 65 \textit{Carry, Bring, Drive}:
Transport Verbs (its forms are quite irregular, so I won’t list them here).

Note the song is not completely in Standard Croatian: -i missing from some infinitives, and and there is an -i in an infinitive before the future tense auxiliary, both non-standard.

You can listen to it on YouTube™ (check this cover). Note that the song uses mostly the western stress – Novi fosili were from Zagreb (e.g. izgubim and not izgubim, the stress stays on the verb in ne vidi). The word zauvijek is once pronounced as zauvijek, another time as zauvijek, most likely to conform to the rhythm.

• Exercise

Fill in the sentences below (don’t care about commas):

Ana hoda ____ (a) Goran vozi bicikl. Ana is walking and Goran is driving his bicycle.
Hladno je ____ (b) pada kiša. It’s cold and raining.
Ana _______-20 (c) film ___-20 (d) _______ (e) ________ (f) ___________ (g). Ana is watching a movie, and I’m bored.

In the following sentence, use the verb znati know to express knowledge of a language:

____ (h) __________ (i) ___ (j) španjolski ____ (k) ___________ (l). I speak neither Spanish nor Russian.

Check answers here.
44 Genitive Plural

It’s finally the time to learn the genitive case in plural! Unfortunately, it’s not a simple form to create. For start, nouns get the following endings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type</th>
<th>G-pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns in -a (≈ fem.)</td>
<td>-a → -a* (or -i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neuter nouns (≈ in -o, -e)</td>
<td>-o, -e → -a*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. nouns not in -a</td>
<td>N-pl -i → -a*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)</td>
<td>add -i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

Goran\textsuperscript{N} se boji mrav\textsuperscript{G}. Goran is afraid of ants. \hspace{1cm} bojati se

As this form coincides with G singular, the sentence could also mean Goran is afraid of an ant.

In the beginning, I wrote I will disregard vowel length, i.e. differences between long and short vowels, since many people in Croatia don’t have that difference in their speech. However, those that keep the difference, and Standard Croatian, have the -a in G-pl always long – while -a in other case endings is always short – so forms mrava (G) and mrava (G-pl) are not really pronounced the same. That specific length in G-pl is sometimes indicated in writing by putting a circumflex sign over the long vowel: mravâ. It’s by no means mandatory, you will see it from time to time. (A recent Croatian orthography manual recommends using a macron – a line over vowel – instead, e.g. mravā; it’s still very rare.)

There are no twists for nouns ending in -a, -o or -e preceded by only one consonant: nouns just get -a in G-pl.

Other nouns can get a kind of ‘lengthening’ (I indicated it by an asterisk).

How does it work? If a neuter or feminine noun would have two consecutive consonants just before the genitive plural -a, an additional a gets inserted between those consonants:

- pjesma song → pjesama
- sestra sister → sestara
- zemlja ground, country → zemalja

Some nouns (e.g. sestra sister and zemlja ground, country listed above) move the stress to the inserted -a-. There’s only a small number of them, and a good dictionary should list such stress shift.

Observe that before the two final consonants there may be more consonants (e.g. sestra): they play no role here. Also, pay attention that lj, nj and dž are single
consonants.
This insertion never happens if those last two consonants are either \( \text{st, št, šć, zd, žd} \) or \( \text{žđ} \) (so-called \textit{non-splittable sequences}):

\[
\text{zvijezda star} \rightarrow \text{zvijezda} \quad \text{mjesto place} \rightarrow \text{mjesta}
\]
Masculine nouns that get short plural endings, and \textit{end in a consonant}, get the \(-a\) always attached to their nominative form, even if they have a specific case-base:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kolač cake} & \rightarrow \text{kolača} \\
\text{magarac (magarc-) donkey} & \rightarrow \text{magaraca} \\
\text{pas (ps-) dog} & \rightarrow \text{pasa} \\
\text{vrabac (vrapc-) sparrow} & \rightarrow \text{vrabaca}
\end{align*}
\]
This makes their G-pl form distinct from the singular genitive. For example:

Ana\(^N\) \text{ se bojala pasa}\(^G\). Ana was afraid of dogs.
Ana\(^N\) \text{ se bojala psa}\(^G\). Ana was afraid of the dog.

Few masculine nouns that end in two consonants which are not a \textit{non-splittable sequence}, get an additional \(a\) in the same way as feminine and neuter nouns:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bicikl bicycle} & \rightarrow \text{bicikala} \\
\text{koncert concert} & \rightarrow \text{koncerata} \\
\text{dokument document} & \rightarrow \text{dokumenata}
\end{align*}
\]
However, masculine nouns that end in a \textit{vowel} (in N) and get short plural endings, only add an \(-a\) to their case-base, as in any other case (therefore, they have G = G-pl):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{anđeo (anđel-) m angel} & \rightarrow \text{andela} \\
\text{auto (aut-) m car} & \rightarrow \text{auta}
\end{align*}
\]
Some nouns on \(-a\) \textit{preceded by two or more consonants} can have both \(-a\) in gen. plural (with an additional \(a\) inserted) and \(-i\). Both are used, but versions with \(-i\) prevail in everyday speech, at least in larger cities in Croatia:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{daska plank} & \rightarrow \text{dasaka / daski} \\
\text{karta card, map} & \rightarrow \text{karata / karti} \\
\text{olovka pen} & \rightarrow \text{olovaka / olovki} \\
\text{školjka shell} & \rightarrow \text{školjaka / školjki} \\
\text{voćka fruit tree} & \rightarrow \text{voćaka / voćki}
\end{align*}
\]
These nouns can have both \(-a\) and \(-i\) but they never get an additional \(a\) inserted; they mostly end in \(-nja\); the ending \(-i\) is more common in spoken language:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nepravda injustice} & \quad \text{prijetnja threat} \\
\text{pažnja care, attention} & \quad \text{šetnja walk}
\end{align*}
\]
The following often used nouns have just \(-i\) in G-pl:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nepravda injustice} & \quad \text{prijetnja threat} \\
\text{pažnja care, attention} & \quad \text{šetnja walk}
\end{align*}
\]
This also applies to a couple of masculine nouns; a frequent example is (recall, it shifts its stress in plural):

mjesec month/moon → mjeseci

The noun čovjek man/human has the irregular plural ljudi people; its G-pl is also just ljudi.

The noun sat – when meaning hour – has G-pl sati.

Some nouns get an -u or something similar, instead of the endings listed above. These three nouns get always -u:

noga leg ruka arm sluga m servant

This noun gets -iju:

gost guest → gostiju

The strange plurals of oko eye and uho ear get -iju as well:

oči f pl. eyes → očiju uši f pl. ears → ušiju

The following nouns can have both -a (or -i) and -iju:

kost f bone → kosti / kostiju
prst finger/toe → prsta / prstiju
nokat (nokt-) fingernail, toenail → nokata / naktiju
vrata n. pl. door → vrata / vratiju

Additionally, the following colloquial noun can get both -i and -iju, but the latter ending is seen as very colloquial:

dečko (dečk-) m boy → dečki / dečkiju

All such unexpected forms in the G-pl are listed in the Core Dictionary.

Compared to all the twists I had to explain for nouns, the genitive plural forms of adjectives are as simple as possible:
The adjective-often-used-as-pronoun *sav* (*sv-* +) has an alternative, non-standard form that’s sometimes seen is *G-pl*: *sviju*, besides the expected *svih*.

We can review endings of adjectives in DL, G and I cases in both singular and plural:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adj.</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>DL</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>-oj</td>
<td>-om</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>-om</td>
<td>-im</td>
<td>-og</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>(-em)</td>
<td>(-em)</td>
<td>(-eg)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plur.</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>-im(+a)</td>
<td>-ih</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, they are much simpler than they could be in principle.

In the following chapters, we’ll see many uses of *G-pl* in counting and measuring.

*®* Besides *plahta*, words *čaršav* or *čaršaf* are often used in Bosnia and completely prevail in Serbia, in meaning *thin sheets*, while *plahta* is used for thick covers.

The noun *dečko* is less common outside Croatia, and it’s not even used in some Croatian regions; it’s most common in Zagreb and surrounding areas.

### • Something Possibly Interesting

Many prescriptive manuals, dictionaries and grammars (i.e. books telling people how they *should* speak) demand stress shift left in *G-pl* in words like:

*policajac* (*policajc*-) *policeman* → *policajaca* *G-pl*

Very few people use that stress in *G-pl* in real life – people say simply *policajaca*. Consequently, the stress in *G-pl* of such words is a matter of dispute in Bosnia and Serbia, where certain local “linguists” insist on the dictionary stress, which consequently appears on the Public TV. This is much less debated in Croatia, where most people don’t care much what dictionaries prescribe.
• Examples

The song **Potraži me u predgrađu** *Look for me in the suburbia* is a well-known ‘old school’ Croatian pop song. It has not too complicated grammar. The form **potraži** is not yet explained – it’s called imperative, and it’s used to form commands:

- **Potraži me**\textsuperscript{A} u predgrađu\textsuperscript{DL}  *Look for me in the suburbia*  
- Na ulici\textsuperscript{DL}, na raskršću\textsuperscript{DL}  *On the street, in the intersection*  
- Gdje ti\textsuperscript{N} je jorgovan\textsuperscript{N} rasuo perle\textsuperscript{A}  *Where the lilac scattered your beads*  
- Gdje nam\textsuperscript{N} je proljeće\textsuperscript{N} dotaklo usne\textsuperscript{A} i pobjeglo  *Where the spring touched our lips and ran away*  

The third and fourth line contain possessive DL, one time for **perle beads** (not **pearls**), another time for **usne lips**. In the last three verses, perfective verbs from these difficult pairs are used:

- rasipati ~ rasuti (raspe, rasuo) scatter  
- dotićati (dotiče) ~ dotaći (dotakne, dotakao, dotakla) touch  
- bježati (bježi) ~ pobjeći (pobjegne, pobjegao, pobjegla) run away

(You probably see now the case endings are not the most complex feature in Croatian.)

Note that suburbia – especially at the time the song was written – was the poorer outer part of cities in Croatia, with narrow, sometimes unpaved streets, and small houses.

- **Potraži me**\textsuperscript{A} u predgrađu\textsuperscript{DL}  *Look for me in the suburbia*  
- Kraj vlakova\textsuperscript{G} što prolaze  *Beside the passing trains*  
- Bit čemo sami\textsuperscript{N} u svitanje\textsuperscript{DL} dana\textsuperscript{G}  *We’ll be alone in the dawn of the day*  
- Bit čemo sami\textsuperscript{N} u pjesmama\textsuperscript{DL} ptica\textsuperscript{G} ko nekada  *We’ll be alone in songs of the birds like long ago*  

The word **kraj** means *beside* when used with a noun in G; the same can be expressed with **pokraj**. The construction **vlakovi što prolaze** means *passing trains*, literally *trains that are passing*. The third and fourth line is of course the future tense. The word **ko** is a colloquially shortened form of **kao like, as**.

The first line uses nouns **rublje clothes, underwear** and **cvijeće flowers**: they are so-called **collective nouns** – they stand for a whole heap of things, but are in singular (they will be explained in #47 Of Flowers, Thorns and Counting Children):

- Drijemaju jedra\textsuperscript{N} od rublja\textsuperscript{G} i cvijeća\textsuperscript{G}  *Sails of cloth and flowers nap*  
- Čekaju vjetar\textsuperscript{A} da nekuda plove  *They wait for the wind to sail somewhere*  
- Čuješ li, naše\textsuperscript{N} nas\textsuperscript{A} predgrađe\textsuperscript{N} zove  *Do you hear, our suburbia is calling us*  

---

1. Examples
2. Potraži me u predgrađu
3. Look for me in the suburbia
4. On the street, in the intersection
5. Where the lilac scattered your beads
6. Where the spring touched our lips and ran away
7. Beside the passing trains
8. We’ll be alone in the dawn of the day
9. We’ll be alone in songs of the birds like long ago
10. Sails of cloth and flowers nap
11. They wait for the wind to sail somewhere
12. Do you hear, our suburbia is calling us
13. Old houses and streets are looking for you
(Drago Britvić)

The second line contains a so-called **purpose clause** – the part after **da**, explaining intentions – which will be explained later. In the third line, **naše predgrade** is split by **A nas**²; this is kind of strict placement. The last line has an adjective after the noun, which is not uncommon in poetry.

This song has been popular for five decades so far, and there are many performances on YouTube™. Check a **performance** on **A strana**, a **cover** from 1980’s, and performances from 1960’s by **Lado Leskovar** and **Dorđe Marjanović** (which is partially “Ekavized”).

The song was composed by – at the time – a little known 21-year-old student of electrical engineering from Split, a math lover and self-taught composer: **Zdenko Runjić**. Over the following 40 years, he composed about 700 tunes, many of them becoming major hits, today considered classics of Croatian popular music.

**• Exercise**

Complete the following sentences:

Nema ___________________(a). **There are no documents.**

On je prijatelj __________(b) ______________(c). **He is my sisters’ friend.**

Bojim se __________(d) __________(e). **I’m afraid of big birds.**

Auto je kod __________(f). **The car is by the palm trees.**

Meso je ______(g) __________(h). **The meat is without bones.**

________(i) __________(j) ______(k) nebu. **There are no stars in the sky.**

Nema _______(l). **There are no secrets.**

Evo __________(m). **Here are some glasses.**

Check answers [here](#).
Quantities (*some water, many people*) can be expressed in several ways in Croatian. It’s important to make first a distinction between *countable* and *uncountable* nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>countable</th>
<th>uncountable</th>
<th>can be both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>auto m car</td>
<td>kosa hair (on head)</td>
<td>kava coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jabuka apple</td>
<td>sol f salt</td>
<td>kruh bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problem problem</td>
<td>sreća luck</td>
<td>papir paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prozor window</td>
<td>vrijeme (vremen-) time</td>
<td>sok juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana (name)</td>
<td>zrak air</td>
<td>voda water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In English, you can e.g. use *few* with countable nouns (*few cars*) but not with uncountable ones (*no few salt* but rather *little salt*). And you cannot use numbers with uncountable ones (that’s why they are called so). Finally, there are nouns, such as *water*, which can be both countable and uncountable. But let’s look at the simpler nouns first.

In Croatian, there’s a **shortcut**: if you want to express *some* quantity of an uncountable noun, used as an object, you can use *just the noun in the genitive case* (instead of A):

**Imam soli**<sub>G</sub>. *I have some salt.*

If you want to express the same thing, but for countable nouns, you should use the genitive case in plural:

**Imamo jabuka**<sub>G</sub>. (G-pl) *We have some apples.*

Note how English uses the noun in singular in the first sentence, but the noun in plural in the second sentence, exactly corresponding to the Croatian forms (except for the genitive case, of course).

Of course, the verb *imati* *have* normally demands A. But using G *instead of* A is a **shortcut** to express *few* or *some* of the object. This can be done with other verbs as well, but it’s common with *imati*. A lot of meaning in Croatian is expressed with just tweaking cases!

With nouns of the third type, you can use them in G, but also count them:

**Imamo kruha**<sub>G</sub>. *We have some bread.*

**Imamo dva kruha**<sup>24</sup>. *I have ‘two breads’. (two loafs of bread)*

**Imam soka**<sub>G</sub>. *I have some juice.*

**Molim dva soka**<sup>24</sup>. ‘I’m kindly asking for two juices.’ (Two bottles/glasses of juice, please.)

As you can see, the meaning changes if you count them – they then refer to some
default ‘package’ of them.

When you use negation of the verb *imati* have, uncountable objects are normally in G instead of A – meaning ‘any’:

**Nemam vremena**\(^G\). (G) *I don’t have any time.*
**On nema sreće**\(^G\). (G) *He has no luck.*

You will very, very rarely hear or see A of uncountable nouns with such negative sentences – just check these results from Google™ (on the .hr domain):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;nemam vremena&quot;</td>
<td>109000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;nemam vrijeme&quot;</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With some nouns that can be both uncountable and countable, you can use both A and G in positive and negative sentences, expressing different meanings. The most common examples are these nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>countable</th>
<th>uncountable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mjesto</td>
<td><em>place</em></td>
<td><em>place</em> (as <em>space, room</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posao</td>
<td><em>job</em></td>
<td><em>work</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

**Imam posao**\(^A\). (A) *I have a job.*
**Imam posla**\(^G\). (G) *I have some work.* (i.e. *I’m busy.*)
**Nemam posao**\(^A\). (A) *I don’t have a job.*

The noun *mjesto* when used as countable, has an additional meaning: *inhabited place*.

Even with countable nouns, you can use G-*pl* in negative sentences to express *any*: it’s mostly used for things that are often found in large numbers, and, of course, it’s optional:

**Nemam jabuka**\(^G\). (G-*pl*) *I don’t have any apples.*
**Soba nema prozora**\(^G\). (G-*pl*) *The room has no windows.*

This is virtually never done with things that always come in small numbers or are individualized (*parents, passport, husband, wife, forum avatar*, etc.) – the plain old A is used then.

Next, before nouns in genitive, you can place one of the following *adverbs of quantity*:

- **malo** *a bit / few*  
- **premalo** *too little / few*  
- **dosta** *quite a few*  
- **previše** *too much / many*
**dovoljno enough**  **nedovoljno not enough**

While English distinguishes *few* (for countable nouns) vs. *little* (for uncountable ones), not such distinction exists in Croatian – you can use the adverbs above for both – but you still need to pay attention to put countable nouns in G-pl and uncountable ones in G! Then, there are two words that mean the same:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>puno</th>
<th>much, many, a lot of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>mnogo</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word **puno** is more colloquial than **mnogo**. These words can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns, but the nouns should be in genitive singular (if uncountable) or plural (if countable):

- **Imamo premalo kruha**. (G) *We have too little bread.*
- **Imamo puno jabuka**. (G-pl) *We have a lot of apples.*

Such quantities – if only a genitive is used and if a quantity adverb is used – act as being *neuter singular*, so verbs and other words must be set accordingly if such quantities are used as subjects:

**Puno ljudi je bilo ovdje.** *A lot of people were here.*

This is quite unlike English! You can use *personal pronouns* instead of nouns (again in G-pl, there’s no change in grammar of other parts):

**Puno ih je bilo ovdje.** *A lot of them were here.*

As you can see, you can use the short forms of pers. pronouns, but they must be at the second position. Unlike English, words like **puno a lot** can be separated from the nouns and pronouns, without much change in meaning:

**Puno je ljudi ovdje.**

**Ovdje ih je puno.**

It’s obvious that **puno** refers to **ljudi** and **ih**, since the noun and the pronoun are in G-pl.

There are two more words, used to for indefinite amounts of countable nouns only; they behave grammatically exactly as other quantity adverbs:

- **nekoliko several**
- **par a couple of**

For example:

**Imamo nekoliko jabuka.** *We have several apples.*

**Par ljudi je bilo pred kućom.** *A couple of people were in front of the house.*

(Many Croatian language manuals condemn using **par** for anything than exactly **two**, but, like in English, *a couple of* can be more than a *pair*. There’s also a noun **par** meaning *couple, pair*, but these words don’t behave the same; more in the following
There’s another word reused to express small and indefinite quantities, like English some:

nešto some (adverb)

The word nešto does not change in case when in this role, and behaves like malo, but it emphasizes that the quantity is small and not really known. It can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns:

Imam nešto kave\(^G\). (G) I have some coffee.
Imam nešto limuna\(^G\). (G-pl) I have few lemons.

Next, we’re able to express existence of any, usually indefinite amount of something (e.g. there are some apples). While English uses dummy there, Croatian uses the verb imati have in the impersonal form (without any subject, in the 3rd person singular). The nouns are again in G-pl for countable nouns, G-sg for uncountables:

Ima\(^°\) jabuka\(^G\). (G-pl) There are some apples.
Ima\(^°\) vode\(^G\). (G) There is some water.

Pay attention that countable nouns always use G-pl in any constructions involving quantities. The only exception is with numbers 2-4, neki and koji.

Since these sentences are impersonal (literally: it has some apples), as with any impersonal sentence, the past tense forms must be in neuter singular. Like in the negative existential construction, in the past and future tenses, you have to use the verb biti (je\(^2\) +) be instead of imati:

Bilo je jabuka\(^G\). There were some apples.
Bilo je vode\(^G\). There was some water.
Bit će krvi\(^G\). There will be blood.

We have already encountered negative existential constructions, which behave exactly the same, but use negative forms. They include a very common phrase, corresponding to English no problem (enter it into Google™):

Nema\(^°\) problema\(^G\). There are no problems.

Such sentences are no way limited to indefinite amounts ("some") – they can express existence (or negation of existence) of any quantity:

Bilo je previše problema\(^G\). There were too many problems.
Ima\(^°\) dosta ljudi\(^G\). There are quite a few people.

However, to express existence of a definite quantity of something countable, such impersonal constructions are less used. This verb can be used instead:

postojati (postojiti) exist

Another way is to use definite (i.e. counted) quantity, but in the nominative case
with the existential constructions – however, they *have* to be counted then, i.e. you can’t omit even *jedan* (*jedn-*) *one*. For example:

**Postoji** (*jedan*) *otok* *gdje*… *There’s an island where…* 
**Ima** *jedan otok* *gdje*… *(the same meaning, but *jedan* is mandatory)*

You can use any expression (I personally prefer the first one). You can also use such existential expressions to say that *there’s someone* (but I then prefer the *exist* verb even more).

If you want to express existence of indefinite quantity at some location, the neutral expression is:

**Ima** *vode* *u boci*. *(N)* *There is some water in the bottle.* 
**Bilo je vode** *u boci*. *(N)* *There was some water in the bottle.*

The following expression specifically talks about *what’s in the bottle*, literally *in bottle is water* *(the noun *voda* is in the nominative case):*

**U boci** *je voda*. *(N)* *(N)* *There is water in the bottle.*

If we change the word order, there’s a subtle change in meaning: we’re no more talking about *the bottle*, we’re talking about *the water*, and where it is:

**Voda** *je u boci*. *(N)* *The water is in the bottle.*

The word order in Croatian is mostly such that what we’re talking about comes first, and the information we want to give comes later. This is also a way of expressing definiteness, since Croatian has no articles. Another example:

**Ključevi** *su u ladici*. *(N)* *(N)* *The keys are in the drawer.* 
**U ladici** *su (*nek*) ključevi*. *(N)* *(N)* *(N)* *There are (some) keys in the drawer.*

In the first sentence, we’re talking about *where the keys are*, but in the second, we’re discussing *what’s in the drawer*, what we have found.

*In Serbia, and most of Bosnia, the following words and forms are used instead (on the right side of arrows):*

- **kava** *coffee* → **kafa**
- **sol** *salt* → **so** *(sol-)* *f*
- **kruh** *bread* → **hljeb**, **hleb**
- **zrak** *air* → **vazduh**
- **otok** *island* → **ostrvo**

While **ladica** is used in Serbia as well, the word **fioka** is much more common there for the **drawer**.

Using **nešto** as a quantity-adverb *few, some* is much rarer in Serbia, and using it to express *few people* *(nešto ljudi)* is very rare there.

Recall that the future tense is not spelled **bit će**, but **biće** in Serbia and often in Bosnia.
It seems that expressions like ima jedan prijatelj and like are much more common in Bosnia and Serbia.

• Examples

This pop hit – Plešem sama I dance alone by Detour, a Croatian laid-back pop group, contains two existential constructions:

A bit će teških dana\(^G\) And there will be hard days
I jutra\(^G\) koja me\(^A\) ne vole And mornings that don’t like me 1
I ne znaš gdje im\(^{DL}\) je kraj\(^N\) And you don’t know where they end 3pl

Nema te\(^G\) You’re not here 2
I sad plešem sama\(^N\) And now I dance alone plesati
Zatvorim oči\(^A\) i sanjam I close my eyes and dream f

(N. Borgudan)

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

The first existential construction expresses that there will be some amount of težak dan i jutro; all this is put into G-pl.

The phrase koja me ne vole is a relative clause; the expression kraj je\(^2\) + DL means that something (expressed in the DL case) ends, ‘it’s the end to it’.

The second existential construction, nema te is a negative existential, introduced long ago.

Using secondary predicates such as sam alone was introduced back in 35 Tools and Means, With and Without. Here it reveals that the subject is female.

The verb zatvoriti («) close is from the pair:

zatvarati («) ~ zatvoriti («) close

Why is a perfective verb used in the present tense? Likely, the sentence doesn’t refer to the present moment, as if onda then or ponekad then are somehow implied. Observe that its object is just oči f pl. eyes: the possession of body parts is, as usual, implied.
46 More than Four Things

Counting more than 4 items is quite simple: just use the number and put the noun in *genitive plural* after it:

**Imam pet jabuka**⁶. *I have five apples.*

If you want to use one of adjectives that come before numbers (that is, determiners as *taj* (t-) *that* or possessives), they should be in G-*pl* as well:

**Imam ovih**⁶ pet jabuka⁶. *I have these five apples.*

If you use them as a subject, it behaves as *neuter singular*:

**Pet jabuka**⁶ *je bilo u kutiji*⁶(pl). *Five apples were in the box.*

These table summarize use of various numbers in Croatian (for masc. nouns on the left, for feminine on the right):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>jedan</th>
<th>čovjek</th>
<th>je pjevao</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>neki</td>
<td>vrabac</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svaki</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dva</td>
<td>čovjeka</td>
<td>su pjevala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tri</td>
<td>vrapca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>četiri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pet</td>
<td>ljudi</td>
<td>je pjevalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puno</td>
<td>vrabaca</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nekoliko</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jedna</td>
<td>sestra</td>
<td>je pjevala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neka</td>
<td>ptica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svaka</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dvice</td>
<td>sestre</td>
<td>su pjevale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tri</td>
<td>ptice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>četiri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pet</td>
<td>sestra</td>
<td>je pjevalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puno</td>
<td>ptica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nekoliko</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can see e.g. **30 minuta** on a 30-minute Zagreb public transport short ride ticket (*karta*):

![30 minutes ticket](image)

Some numbers greater than 4 behave as numbers 1-4: it all depends on the last word in the number:

21 **dvadeset i jedan** → behaves as **jedan** (jedn-)
53 **pedeset i tri** → behaves as **tri**

So, for such numbers, rules for using nouns and adjectives with numbers 1-4 apply:
Imam dvadeset i jednu jabuku. I have 21 apples. (A)
Imam pedeset i tri jabuke. I have 53 apples. (G)

In the same manner, rules for 1-4 don’t apply to numbers 11, 12, 13 and 14: they don’t end with any of the words above, but with -naest, which makes them behave like 5 or 10. (This applies to English as well: 12 is twelve — does it end in two in speech?)

The number zero also behaves as a number greater than 4 (note that English requires here plural as well!):

Imam nula jabuka. I have 0 apples.

For numbers with decimal points (in Croatian, a comma is often used instead of the decimal point) it again depends on the last word:

Imam dva cijela pet kilograma. I have 2.5 kilos. (G-pl)
Imam dva cijela jedan kilogram. I have 2.1 kilos. (A)

Instead of cijela, words točka dot and zarez comma are also used.

Now, we can finally say how old someone is. In Croatian, the primary way to specify age is to say that someone ‘has years’:

Imam dvadeset i jednu godinu. I’m 21 years old. (lit. ‘I have 21 years.’)
Goran ima osam godina. Goran is 8 years old. (lit. ‘Goran has 8 years.’)

If you know some Spanish, you will notice it uses exactly the same construction to express this (Goran tiene 8 años).

Alternatively, ‘having years’ is sometimes expressed with the person in DL, and years in N; second position words usually split number + year:

Dvadeset i jedna mi je godina. (the same meaning, but less frequent)
Goran je osam godina. (the same meaning, but less frequent)

This is rarer than using imati have, but you’ll sometimes read and hear it, especially in literature and songs.

To ask how old someone is, use again the question word koliko how many (sometimes stressed as koliko) – as this is a quantity adverb, the word it refers to (here godina year) must be in genitive plural:

Koliko imaš godina? How old are you? (lit. ‘How many years do you have?’)
— Osam. Eight.

The same holds for any question about quantity of something countable, even if one who is asking knows it’s less than five:

Koliko imaš jabuka? How many apples do you have?
— Tri. Three.

You’ll sometimes see the DL for age in questions as well:
There’s a useful way to express at what age you did something:

\[ s' / sa' + \text{age (in instrumental)} = \text{at the age of...} \]

For example:

**Prvi put sam letio avionom' s dvanaest godina**. I flew in an airplane for the first time at the age of twelve.

You’ll sometimes see just \( s' \) + number, years are assumed then. However, it’s also usual to express this with an embedded time clause, starting with \( \text{kad(a)} \):

**Prvi put sam letio avionom' kad sam imao dvanaest**. I flew in an airplane for the first time when I was twelve.

Such clauses are really sentences-within-a-sentence; any second-position words (e.g. \( \text{sam}^2 \)) come right after the word \( \text{kad(a)} \).

Bigger numbers use the following words – there’s more than one word for numbers 100 and 1000:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>( \text{sto (adv.)} / \text{stotina} )</td>
<td>one hundred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>( \text{tisuća}^* / \text{hiljada (colloq.)}^* )</td>
<td>one thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>milliard</strong></td>
<td>( \text{milijun}^* )</td>
<td>million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above words are nouns (except \( \text{sto} \)) and can change case according to usual roles (the counted noun is always in G-pl, of course):

**Imam tisuću dolara**. I have one thousand dollars.

**Tisuća dolara je u ladici**. One thousand dollars are in the drawer. *

The Standard Croatian noun for 1000 is \( \text{tisuća} \), while the noun \( \text{hiljada} \) is colloquial; both words are used in speech (I personally use \( \text{tisuća} \)).

The Croatian verb is in singular, since we’re talking about a thousand – only one thousand, like one box containing small pieces of paper.

Pay attention that **milijun million** is always a noun in Croatian. While you usually say in English \textit{five million men}, in Croatian you have to adjust the word to the number before it, and a noun after the **million always goes into G-pl**:

**U Hrvatskoj živi četiri milijuna ljudi**. Four million people live in Croatia.

The nouns listed above – except **milijun million** – are often used as ‘adverbs’ (identical to the 
\textit{accusative forms} of nouns), regardless of their role, especially \( \text{tisuća} \):

**Tisuću dolara je u ladici**. One thousand dollars are in the drawer.

If you use the accusative form as subject (i.e. an ‘adverb’), don’t forget it then
behaves as any quantity adverb, that is, adjectives and past forms of verbs must be put to neuter singular. Compare the following sentences:

Tisuću dolara\textsuperscript{G} je bilo u ladici\textsuperscript{D}. (adverb) *One thousand dollars were in the drawer.*

Tisuća\textsuperscript{N} dolara\textsuperscript{G} je bila u ladici\textsuperscript{D}. (fem. noun, the same meaning)

While in English it’s a rule to say *one thousand* (or *one million*), in Croatian it’s a rule to use just *tisuća* (or *milijun*) – it’s assumed there’s one if the word is in singular.

If you have *two thousands* (or more) you don’t have an option to use accusative, you have to follow rules for *counting two things* (or more) – things counted are *thousands*. Therefore the word *tisuća* goes into either G or G-\textsubscript{pl}, the same as if you were counting money in *bags* or any other noun:

Imam dvije tisuće\textsuperscript{24} dolara\textsuperscript{G}. *I have two thousand dollars.*

Imam pet tisuća\textsuperscript{G} dolara\textsuperscript{G}. *I have five thousand dollars.*

Hundreds are expressed as:

| 200 | dvjesto | 600 | šesto |
| 300 | tristo | 700 | sedamsto |
| 400 | četiristo | 800 | osamsto |
| 500 | petsto | 900 | devetsto |

(There are archaic forms dvjesta 200 and trista 300 \textsuperscript{®} as well, dvjesta appears on banknotes.) Since they are derived from sto, they never change their form. You’ll occasionally see the number 600 spelled as šeststo. In Croatian, numbers bigger that 1000 are *never* expressed as *nineteen hundred*, always as *one thousand and nine hundred*.

Ordinals derived from sto, tisuća and milijun are a bit irregular and end in \textsubscript{-ti}:

| stot\textsubscript{I} | hundredth |
| tisuć\textsubscript{iti} | thousandth \textsuperscript{®} |
| milij\textsubscript{inti} | millionth \textsuperscript{®} |

Thousands are, of course, used for years, as ordinal numbers; in singular, the adverb form *tisuću* is only used:

1996. *tisuću* devetsto devedeset (i) šesta

2015. dvije tisuće (i) petnaesta

In speech, years are often referred to with shortened ordinals, where the word for *thousand* is left out (and often the number of hundreds, if there’s no confusion):

1996. *devetsto* devedeset šesta (colloq.)

1996. *devedeset* šesta (colloq.)

2015. dvije i petnaesta (colloq.)

Unfortunately, there’s one more complication left. Some nouns don’t have a real plural: *dijete* child and *brat* brother use so-called *collective nouns*, which are not
really plural. So, if you want to count children and brothers, you have to use a specific way of counting them, which will be described in the following chapter.

Besides zarez comma, the word zapeta is also used in Serbia. You will also occasionally hear koma. Instead of točka, tačka is used in Serbia and parts of Bosnia.

Using DL to express ‘possession’ of years seems to be very rare in Serbia.

While ladica is used in Serbia as well, the word fioka is much more common there for the drawer.

Instead of tisuća and milijun, words hiljada and milion are used in Bosnia and Serbia, and are often heard in Croatia as well. The ordinals are hiljaditi and milionti.

The forms dvjesta and trista are much more common in Serbia and Bosnia, and in the “Ikavian” forms (e.g. dvista) in Dalmatia, a part of Croatia.

• Examples

This cjenik price list for driving toy cars nicely illustrates use of various noun forms with numbers:

![Cjenik price list](image)

You can see how much longer G-pl is used with the number 10. The noun krug is literally circle, but is used for rounds in games and play as well.
We learned how to make the plural of nouns. However, if you ask an average Croatian speaker what the plural of list leaf is, chances are he or she will answer it’s lišće, and not listovi, the form you learned so hard! What’s going on?

Also, what is going on with the noun brat brother? How do you talk about brothers in Croatian? Or children?

It turns out that for some words standing for things that exist as individual items, but which often come in hard-to-count heaps, there’s another singular noun that stands for the whole heap. Such noun is usually called a collective or mass noun.

Mass nouns in singular stand for any amount, except for a single item (that is, if you see a single leaf, you should use list). English hasn’t many mass nouns, but has one for leaves – foliage.

Mass nouns are more frequent in Croatian. Actually, they are so often used for any larger amount of some things that regular plurals of certain nouns are used very rarely.

Common nouns having often used mass nouns are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>mass noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cvijet flower</td>
<td>cvijeće</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grana branch</td>
<td>granje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grm bush</td>
<td>grmlje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kamen stone</td>
<td>kamenje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>list leaf</td>
<td>lišće</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trn thorn</td>
<td>trnje</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, all mass nouns above are neuter, and end in either -će or -je. For instance, if Ana likes flowers, you would say:

Ana^N voli cvijeće^. Ana likes flowers.

Bear in mind that cvijeće is a singular noun:

Cvijeće^N raste. Flowers grow.  rasti

The noun list doesn’t mean only leaf of a plant; as in English, it could also mean leaf of paper (list papira), e.g. in a book. For such ‘leaves’, the mass noun is never used – the regular plural noun is used instead.

There are a couple of mass nouns where the original, individual noun is no longer used; such nouns are used for any amount, but have singular forms only:

piće drink(s) smeće garbage
The noun *piće* drink is sometimes seen in plural, when it stands for more than one single drink, but it can be used in singular for a number of drinks on a table. The noun *rublje* stands both for a mass of clothes that needs to be washed, dried etc. and for underwear and other frequently washed items of clothing. (Colloquially, you will often hear another mass noun, *veš* – with exactly the same meaning – instead of *rublje*.)

Two more common mass nouns are similar to the nouns above, but they end in -a. They are feminine (singular, of course, but stand for any amount):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun (no pl.)</th>
<th>Collective noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>brat</em> brother</td>
<td><em>braća</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dijete</em> child</td>
<td><em>djeca</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At first, they appear as normal, feminine singular nouns ending in -a:

Čekam *djecu*. *I’m waiting for my children.*

Pomažem *tvojoj braći* <sup>pl</sup>. *I’m helping your brothers.*

However, when they are subjects of a sentence, verbs come in plural:

Djeca<sup>N</sup> *čekaju* <sup>N</sup> *mamu*. *Children are waiting for their mum.*

Braća<sup>N</sup> *su gladna*. *Brothers are hungry.*

Braća<sup>N</sup> *su bila gladna*. *Brothers were hungry.*

Adjectives and past forms of verbs always have feminine singular forms with these two nouns, even when the verbs come in plural.

(This special behavior doesn’t apply to e.g. *odjeća*, only to *braća* and *djeca*.)

What about collective nouns in *I have no…* sentences? Is A or G used? It seems the special collective nouns *djeca* children and *braća* brothers are used in both G and A with negative sentences, with the same frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;nemam djece&quot; &lt;sup&gt;G&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;nemam djecu&quot; &lt;sup&gt;A&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, how to count *children* in Croatian? If you have less than 5 children, you can
use forms of the singular *dijete* (*djetet-*), but what if you have 5 or more? *Is there a way to count more than 4 children?* What about counting *ljudi* m pl. *people*, which has plural only?

Luckily, there’s another set of numbers, used to count plural and collective nouns, usually called *collective numbers*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collective numbers</th>
<th>2 friends</th>
<th>2 guests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong> p<strong>etero</strong></td>
<td><strong>dva prijatelj</strong>^I^</td>
<td><strong>dva gosta</strong>^I^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> š<strong>estero</strong></td>
<td>dvije prijateljice^I^</td>
<td>dvije gošće^I^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong> sedm-ero</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>etc.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern for larger numbers is: take an ordinal adjective (e.g. *osm-i*), remove the final -i and add -ero. You will sometimes hear versions of these numbers with -oro (e.g. *četvoro*).®

They are used to with nouns in G-pl:

**Imam p**etero d**jcede**^G^. *I have five children.*

**Razgov**arao sam s **troje** **ljudi**^G^. *I talked to three people.*

(You’ll sometimes also see and hear simply *pet d**jcede** and like: this is both uncommon and non-standard.)

The collective numbers are secondary: if you can use the normal numbers (as with most numbers) you will not use the collective ones! Therefore, they are mostly used to count the three nouns (*ljudi*, *djeca* and *braća*), but even with *braća* you will very often hear and read:

**Imam d**va b**rata**^24. *I have two brothers.*

Collective numbers can be used, but for some reason people prefer *dva brata* to *dvoje braće*.

However, when you have e.g. two friends or two guests of opposite sex, you have to use collective numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2 friends</th>
<th>2 guests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all-male</td>
<td><strong>dva prijatelj</strong>^24</td>
<td><strong>dva gosta</strong>^24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all-female</td>
<td><strong>dvije prijateljice</strong>^24</td>
<td><strong>dvije gošće</strong>^24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed (G-pl!)</td>
<td><strong>dvoje prijatelja</strong>^G</td>
<td><strong>dvoje gostiju</strong>^G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the solution to the ‘mixed-sex’ problem in counting. Pay attention that the last form is in G-pl, while the first two are just ordinary forms used with numbers 2-4 (like G for nouns). They coincide with G-pl for the noun *prijatelj friend* (in writing,
not for those who have different vowel length in speech), but not for e.g. the noun gost guest.

The collective numbers can be used on their own, and they imply a number of people, of mixed or unknown sex. They behave as other adverbs, as if in neuter singular, but you'll sometimes see masculine plural as well:

ObojeN je otišlo. Both left.
ObojeN su otišli. (sometimes used)

Some collective nouns have shifted their meaning, and are used as nouns independent of the base noun. Common ones are:

- grob tomb → groblje cemetery
- osoba person → osoblje staff, personnel

Finally, what about nouns like pile (pilet-) chicken? There are two ways to handle plural for them.

First, you simply avoid such nouns. For most of them, Croatian has other nouns with the same meaning, but completely regular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>replacement(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mače (mačet-) kitten</td>
<td>mačić</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pile (pilet-) chick</td>
<td>pilić</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>štene (štene-) puppy</td>
<td>psić</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>štenac (štenc-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact, people are avoiding such nouns so much that nowadays mačić is much more often used than mače in Croatian.

The second way is to use mass nouns ending in -ad that behave as feminine nouns ending in a consonant. They are not often used in the the spoken Croatian:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun</th>
<th>mass noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mače (mačet-) kitten</td>
<td>mačad f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pile (pilet-) chick</td>
<td>pilad f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>štene (štene-) puppy</td>
<td>štenad f</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certain nouns that are taken from English are treated as singular, mass nouns in Croatian. An example is čips, known in American English as potato chips, and in British English as crisps:

Ovaj čipsN je stvarno dobarN. These potato chips are really good.

Observe how the Croatian sentence uses only (masculine) singular forms of adjectives and verbs!
The preposition *među among* is used when there are more than two things, but it can be also used with collective nouns, e.g. *među lišćem among the leaves*; alternatively, you can use *u* + DL (e.g. *u lišće*).

Besides *grm*, in Bosnia and Serbia, another word is used, especially for larger bushes: *žbun*; from it, there’s a collective noun *žbunje*.

The individual noun *sud* vessel, pot is very rare in Croatia, but often heard in Bosnia and Serbia. Its regular plural *sudovi* is common in these countries.

Forms like *četvoro* are very frequent and standard in Bosnia and Serbia.

Using *A djecu* with negative *imati* have is much more common in Bosnia, and prevails in Serbia – if you Google™ on the .rs domain for "nemam decu" and "nemam dece", you’ll get a ratio bigger than 10:1.

• **Exercise**

Complete the following sentences:

*Cvijeće ______(a) na podu. The flowers are on the floor.*

*Jedem ______________(b). I’m eating fruits.*

*________________(c) ______(d) u školi. Children are in the school.*

*Darovi su za ______(e) __________________(f). The gifts are for your children.*

*Razgovaram s ____________ (g) ____________ (h). I’m talking to your brothers.*

*Djeca ___(i) ______________(j). Children are playing.*

Check answers [here](#).
### 48 Wholes, Parts, Heaps and Pairs

How to express *half an apple*? Or *third*? If you think you can just use ordinal numbers (e.g. *treći* third) to express parts (e.h. *third of an apple*), you cannot. They must be ‘adjusted’ a bit.

In English, *third* is both an adjective (*the third man*) and a noun (*two thirds*). The Croatian form *treći* corresponds to the adjective meaning only!

However, it’s simple to make a noun from it: just add -*na* and you have the *partial noun* you need (except for the word for *half* does not fit to this scheme at all). For 1/2 and 1/4 there are additional words that behave like adverbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1/2</th>
<th>polovina</th>
<th>pol(a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>trećina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4</td>
<td>četvrtna</td>
<td>četvr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>petina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have listed also a generic noun meaning just *part*. How to use them? Well, just use the above nouns as any nouns on -*na*, and the other noun (one you want to express part of) goes after it, in the genitive singular:

**Ovo**[^1] je **trećina**[^2] **jabuke**[^3]. *This is a third of an apple.*  
**Imam** **trećinu**[^4] **jabuke**[^3]. *I have a third of an apple.*

Instead of *polovina*, adverb *pol(a)* is much more frequent; it doesn’t change, of course, since it’s not a noun, but an adverb:

**Ovo**[^1] je **pola** **jabuke**[^3]. *This is half an apple.*  
**Imam** **pola** **jabuke**[^3]. *I have half of an apple.*

Such *partial quantities* are in singular; *pol(a)* is neuter and other partial nouns are feminine, as expected:

**Pola** **jabuke**[^3] **je bilo** **na stolu**[^5]. *Half of an apple was on the table.*  
**Trećina**[^2] **jabuke**[^3] **je bila** **na stolu**[^5]. *A third of an apple was on the table.*

Just remember that you are talking about a *third* (of something) and not about *something*.

In Croatia, bread is usually sold in loaves and some types are cut in half if required by the customer. So you can ask at the bread counter, or in a bakery:

**Molim Vas**[^6] **pola** **kruha**[^3]. *‘A half of bread, please.’* (i.e. *a half of a loaf of bread*)

[^1]: Ovo
[^2]: trećina
[^3]: jabuke
[^4]: trećinu
[^5]: na stolu
[^6]: molim Vas
It’s possible to use parts with nouns in genitive plural, meaning a part of some plural quantity, possibly the total quantity; then partial quantities get verbs in plural sometimes:

**Pola jabuka**

**je bilo zrelo**. *Half of apples were ripe.*

**Pola ljudi**

**su bili žene**. *Half of the people were women.*

The use of plural in such sentences prevails with people and animals, while singular is common with other things (*apples, stones*...).

The generic **dio** (*dijel*) m *part* can be used with both singular and plural nouns (in genitive, of course):

**Imam dio jabuke**. *I have a part of an apple.*

**Imam dio jabuka**. *I have ‘a part’ of apples. (i.e. *a part of some set of apples*)*

This is unlike English, where *part* cannot be used with plural nouns!

The quantity in Croatian has always gender of the quantity-word (neuter for adverbs). For instance, since **dio** (*dijel*) is masculine, the whole quantity is masculine singular:

**Dio jabuke**

**je bio na stolu**. *A part of the apple was on the table.*

**Dio ljudi**

**je plesao**. *Some people were dancing.*

There are two very useful words:

**komad** *piece*

**kriška** *slice*

The word **komad** is very often used, in a similar way as English *piece*. You can have a piece of something, but all countable, material stuff (e.g. *screws*) is very often expressed in pieces:

**Jedem komad kruha**. *I’m eating a piece of bread.*

(You will maybe occasionally hear the word also stressed as **komad**.)

The word **kriška** *slice* usually gets -i in G-pl, so you would ask:

**Molim Vas deset kriški šunke**. *Ten slices of ham, please.*

(Besides the word **kriška** for *slice*, you’ll often hear and read colloquial words **šnita** and **feta**: the former prevails inland, while the latter dominates on the Croatian coast.)

There are two more useful generic *quantity nouns*:

**manjina** *minority*

**većina** *majority, most*

These nouns can be used either as measures or on its own:

**Većina ljudi**

**je gledala utakmicu**. *Most people watched the match.*

**Većina**

**je gledala utakmicu**. *Most watched the match.*
There are several other nouns that can be used as measures of countable nouns in plural and uncountable in singular. The result behaves as the quantity noun.

- **gomila** bunch, big quantity
- **kutija** box
- **vreća** bag, sack
- **hrpa** heap
- **žlica** spoon

For example:

**Gomila** je bila na trgu. A large crowd of people was at the town square.

**Hrpa** je bila u dvorištu. A heap of sand was in the yard.

While **gomila** is very generic, there are specific words for various groups of animals (which are, nevertheless, a bit less specific than in English):

- **krdo** herd (of wild animals, sometimes cattle)
- **stado** herd (of domesticated animals)
- **jato** flock / school (of fish)
- **roj** swarm
- **čopor** pack (of carnivores)

For example:

**Vidim stado** ovaca. I see a herd of sheep.

(The noun **ovca** sheep is one of nouns that shift their stress to the inserted -a- in G-pl.)

Then, there’s a **noun** which is also used as an adverb:

**par** pair

This noun is used primarily with things that come in pairs, like gloves, shoes, socks, and such pairs can be counted:

**Imam dva para** cipela. I have two pairs of shoes.

Of course, the noun which is in pair comes in G-pl. Exactly like in English, this noun is often used to enable counting of the noun hlače f pl. pants, trousers since that noun cannot be counted by normal means – it doesn’t have singular forms at all, including the form needed after numbers 2, 3, 4 – but it has G-pl:

**Imaš tri para** hlače. You have three pairs of pants.

**Be careful**: with nouns that don’t normally come in pairs, the word par is rather a quantity adverb which doesn’t change, and, when subject, causes verbs to be in 3rd person neuter singular:

**Imam par majica**. I have a couple of T-shirts. (adverb)

**U ormaru je bilo par majica**. A couple of T-shirts were in the wardrobe. (adverb)

**U ormaru je bio par cipela**. A pair of shoes was in the wardrobe. (noun)
Croatia uses the Metric system. Main measures are:

- **kilogram**
- **dekagram** $1/100$ kilogram
- **tona** metric ton
- **kila** (colloq.) kilogram
- **deka** (colloq.) $1/100$ kilogram
- **litra** liter

All these words are *nouns*. The $1/100$ kg unit, *decagram*, is frequently used to measure food. For example, if you would like a specific amount of cheese, you would ask at the counter:

**Molim Vas** deset deka sira. (colloq.) *Ten decagrams of cheese, please.*

There are more *units* and it’s interesting the masculine ones always have plural in just -i, regardless of the number of syllables:

- **gram** $\rightarrow$ **grami**

As you can see, the noun **sat** in the meaning *hour* fits into this group too.

There’s an *adjective* used to express the opposite of parts:

- **cijel** whole (adjective!)

This word behaves like any adjective – it doesn’t affect the noun, but agrees with it (i.e. change case, gender, singular/plural according to the noun). For example:

**Trebam cijelu jabuku**. *I need a whole apple.*

There are three more words used to express quantities – only of countable nouns – they behave like adjectives too:

- **koji** few (+ sing.)
- **mnogi** many (+ plur.)
- **neki** one, some (+ sing./plur.)

Words **neki** and **koji** are of course adjectives (**koji** has special shortened forms as well). They are used with countable nouns only and don’t change the case of the following noun, they don’t use the G-pl. For example:

**Imam koju jabuku**. (A) *I have few apples.*
**Imam neku jabuku** negde. *I have an apple somewhere.*

The word **neki** just expresses indefiniteness, while **koji** stands for a unknown, but likely small number of things of some kind. Here singular is used with **koji**, but the meaning is plural.

Now the confusing part: the *adjective mnogi* is used with nouns in plural. The problem is that its neuter singular form – **mnogo** – is used as a quantity *adverb*. So both can be said:

1. **Mnogo ptica** leti na jug. *Many birds fly south.*
2. **Mnoge** ptice leti na jug. *More or less the same meaning*
Observe the different verb forms: the subject of the sentence #1 behaves as neuter singular (due to the quantity adverb), while the subject of the sentence #2 is just a noun (in plural) with an adjective, as if we said big birds or gray birds. In the past tense:

(1) Mnogo pticaG je letjelo na jugA. Many birds were flying south.
(2) MnogeN pticeN su letjele na jugA. (more or less the same meaning)

If there’s any difference in meaning, it’s so subtle that I don’t have any idea. However, sentences like #2 are much more common with nouns like ljudi pl. people, žena woman/wife.

Of course, like other generic adjectives, mnogi can be also used as a pronoun:

MnogiN ne vole mlijekoA. Many don’t like milk.
Razgovarao sam s mnogimaI. I talked to many.

Such use is more common than in English. However, the related adverb mnogo cannot be used as a pronoun! To use it generically, you have to add some pronoun, most often the 3rd pers. plural pronoun:

Mnogo ihG leti na jugA. Many are flying south.

This holds generally: quantity adverbs cannot be used as pronouns. They need a noun or pronoun (in G) beside them.

Here are three generic adjectives often-used-as-pronouns (you’ll encounter more in the future):

neki some
mnogi many
sav (sv- +) all

Of course, these are masc. pl. forms, for all-female groups, you would use fem. pl. forms.

You can combine numbers with parts, but observe different behaviors:

Imam dvije trećine24 limunaG. I have two thirds of an lemon.
Imam dva cijela limuna24. I have two whole lemons.

In the first sentence, two counts thirds – so we have feminine gender – while in the second, it counts (whole) lemons.

© In Serbia, the word dio (di jel-) m part has an unexpected “Ekavian” form deo (del-) m.

In Serbia, komad is used only in meaning whole piece, i.e. as a unit (e.g. buy two pieces, get one for free), while piece as a part (e.g. piece of pizza or piece of cake) is expressed with the noun parče (parčet-).
Instead of *kruh*, in most of Bosnia, the word *hljeb* is used for *bread*; in Serbia, it has “Ekavian” form *hleb*.

In Serbia and most of Bosnia instead of *žlica spoon*, *kašika* is used.

In Serbia and Bosnia instead of *hlače f pl. trousers*, *pantalone f pl.* is used.

Using *deka* (colloq.) *decagram* to measure food is uncommon in Serbia – *grams* are used there, so one would ask for 100 grams of cheese. This is very rare in Croatia.

In Serbia, the word *čijel whole* has an unexpected “Ekavian” form *ceo* (*cel-*).

**Something Possibly Interesting**

Ten decagrams of cheese, and ten decagrams of ham, with a quarter of loaf of bread, is a common lunch for many employees in Croatia, especially ones doing manual labor. So, people who work at the cold cut and cheese counters in shops in Croatia know exactly how many slices of *šunka ham* and *sir cheese* are approximately 10 *deka*, but they will always weigh it as well.
49 For 7 Hours: Definite Periods

We know how to say two hours and five days, and now we are going to make use of these expressions to say how long some action or state lasts (or lasted).

If you want to say that something took a specific amount of time (two hours, three days, etc.) you don’t have to – you must not – use any prepositions in Croatian, the only thing you need is to put the time period into the accusative case:

- Plijavao sam dva sata. I was swimming for two hours.
- Ana je živjela u Zagrebu pet godina. Ana lived in Zagreb for five years.

Recall that constructions with numbers greater than 1 look the same in all cases. However, when something took one year (or one week, etc.), both words must go to the accusative case, since jedan (jedn-) one is an adjective:

- Trčao sam jedan sat. I was running for one hour.
- Ana je živjela u Zadru jednu godinu. Ana lived in Zadar for one year.

Don’t forget that G-pl, used with numbers 5 and on, often has a slightly specific form:

- dva tjedna two weeks ('G')
- pet tjedana five weeks (G-pl)

Now, there’s a very important rule, the time-phrase rule, basically saying that you have to say how many hours (or years, weeks...) something took: you cannot just say "trčao sam sat"!

However, there are four often used special phrases:

- godina dana 1 year
- mjesec dana 1 month
- sat vremena 1 hour

They are just words for time periods + another word, dan day or vrijeme (vremen-) time/weather in the genitive case. Literally, they mean a year of days, and so on.

The first word is free to change case, so the two sentences above often look like this when phrases are put to the accusative case as they must be if used as time periods:

- Trčao sam sat vremena. I was running for an hour.
- Ana je živjela u Zadru godinu dana. Ana lived in Zadar for a year.

Of course, you can also say jedna godina, etc. (Observe there are no special phrases for one day or one minute).

You don’t have to use numbers, can use parts, or adjectives. All grammar rules we already learned for expressing parts still apply, of course:

- Plijavao sam pola sata. I was swimming for half an hour.
- Ana je živjela u Osijeku cijelu godinu. Ana lived in Osijek for a whole year.
Ana živjela u Zagrebu mnogo godina. *Ana lived in Osijek for many years.*

As time nouns (i.e. *dan* day etc.) don’t normally come in pairs, the word *par* means *a couple of* with them. Of course, you can use *nekoliko* several too:

Hodao sam *par* sati. *I was walking for a couple of hours.*

Ana živjela u Rijeci *nekoliko mjeseci*. *Ana lived in Osijek for a several months.*

These time expressions *look like objects* – and are a bit similar to objects: you can *eat the whole cake*, likewise, you could *live the whole year*. But they aren’t really objects.

These rules also apply when you use other nouns for time periods such as:

- *jutro* morning
- *prijepodne* (*prijepodnev*) *time before noon*
- *popodne* (*popodnev*) *afternoon*
- *noć* f night
- *večer* f evening *
- *trenutak* (*trenutk*) *moment*
- *vikend* weekend
- *vječnost* f eternity

For example:

Plesali smo cijelu noć. *We were dancing for the whole night.*

Such use of cijeli also translates English phrases like *all day long*. It applies to seasons as well:

Kiša padala cijelu zimu. *It was raining for the whole winter.*

There’s a verb expressing duration of some event or state (e.g. *predavanje* lecture, *kiša* rain, *oluja* storm, etc.) expressed by a noun:

trajati (traje) *last, take time*

For example (observe that the time-phrase rule still holds):

Film trajao dva sata. *The movie lasted for two hours.*

*Predavanje* je trajalo jedan sat. *The lecture lasted for one hour.*

But what if you’re still reading or waiting, or the it? In English, you should use the *Present Perfect* tense (*have been*), but in Croatian you should use the *present tense*:

Ivan živio u Zagrebu. *Ivan lived in Zagreb for two years.* (but not now)

Ivan *živi* u Zagrebu. *Ivan has lived in Zagreb for two years.* (and still does)
This is worth remembering:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>not anymore</th>
<th>still ongoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatian</td>
<td>past tense</td>
<td>present tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Past</td>
<td>Present Perfect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you use the present tense, it means it still goes on; if it’s something that happened only in the past, use the past tense. Croatian is here much simpler and logical (at least from my point of view) than English.

In all uses described above, the periods in currently ongoing actions are often emphasized with već *already*, which has a weakened meaning and is often not translated:

Ivan* N već dvije godine živi u Zagrebu* DL. *Ivan has lived in Zagreb for two years.*

With almost all perfective verbs, it’s impossible to say how long the action lasted, but it’s possible to express the ‘time frame’ of the action, and the meaning is more or less the same. Interestingly, English also distinguishes duration from ‘frames’: ‘time frames’ use the preposition in. In Croatian, you should use the preposition za* + time phrase*:

Čitao sam knjigu* A dva dana* 24. *I was reading the book for two days.* (impf.)

Pročitao sam knjigu* A za dva dana* 24. *I’ve read the book in two days.* (perf.)

This gives you a good clue when to use perf. verbs in Croatian: if you feel that an expression like in a day would fit into the sentence, use a perf. verb in Croatian.

Pay attention that Croatian za* usually translates to English for, but it’s not so here. The same works for times until a moment in the future, they are expressed with za* + time phrase* as well:

Pročitam ću knjigu* A za jedan dan* A. *I’ll read the book in a day.*

Pročitam ću knjigu* A za par dana* 6. *I’ll read the book in a couple of days.*

The time-phrase rule is a bit relaxed when you use za*, so you’ll occasionally hear expressions with only one word:

Pročitao sam knjigu* A za jedan dan* A. *I’ve read the book in a day.*

Pročitao sam knjigu* A za jednu noć* A. *I’ve read the book in a night.*

Pročitao sam knjigu* A za dan* A. *The same meaning, sometimes heard*

Now, the English preposition for is also used in sentences like this:

(1) I’m leaving for two days.

(2) I’ll leave for a week.

There’s a subtle difference. In Croatian, ‘leave’ is a motion, going somewhere else. It won’t take two days (or a week) to get there, you will rather go somewhere, *spend*
some time there, and then you’ll return, and the whole thing will take two days (or a week).

In Croatian, if you want to express duration of the whole ‘round-trip’, that is, going somewhere – staying there – going back, where going back is implied, you have to use the preposition na¨ + A:

(1) Odlazim na dva dana\textsuperscript{24}.
(2) Otići ću na tjedan\textsuperscript{A} dana\textsuperscript{G}.

If you construct the sentence #1 without the na¨, it will sound extremely weird, as if you spent two days trying to leave, but you haven’t left yet. The sentence #2 will be ungrammatical without a preposition, since the verb is, of course, perfective.

Such ‘round-trip periods’ apply to all motion verbs that imply going somewhere, e.g. ići (ide, išao, išla) go, and to some other verbs that will be explained later (e.g. meaning borrow, etc.)

This summarizes common time periods in English and Croatian (the accusative time phrases, marked with A*, must consist of two or more words, special phrases may be used.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Croatian Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definite period</td>
<td>A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>for two days</strong></td>
<td>dva dana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘time frame’</td>
<td>za¨ + A((*))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>in two days</strong></td>
<td>za dva dana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘round-trip’ (e.g. leave)</td>
<td>na¨ + A*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>for two days</strong></td>
<td>na dva dana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To ask how long something lasted, you can use koliko dugo (lit. ‘how much long’) or just koliko:

Koliko dugo si živio tamo? How long did you live there?
— Jednu godinu\textsuperscript{A}. For a year.
Koliko ste bili u Hrvatskoj\textsuperscript{D}l? How long were you in Croatia?
— Tjedan\textsuperscript{A} dana\textsuperscript{G}. For a week.

Answers must be proper time periods, that is, in A, at least 2 words, special phrases can be used, prepositions according to the rules for time periods.

To ask about a ‘round-trip period’, you have to use na¨ before the question words explained above. Answers will be again ‘round-trip periods’:

Na koliko odlaziš? How long are you leaving for?
— Na tjedan\textsuperscript{A} dana\textsuperscript{G}. For a week.

These were ways to express how long something took. You often have to express something else – when something was going on, in relation to the present or some
other moment. For example:

Živio sam u Zagrebu\textsuperscript{DL} prije dvije godine\textsuperscript{24}. I lived in Zagreb two years ago.
Živio sam u Njemačkoj\textsuperscript{DL} prije godinu\textsuperscript{A} dana\textsuperscript{G}. I lived in Germany one year ago.

Now, the time periods – if special phrases are not used – can be sometimes in G as well.

This is relative reference to something else said before, not to the present:

Radio sam u Splitu\textsuperscript{DL} dvije godine\textsuperscript{24} ranije. I worked in Zagreb two years earlier.
Živio sam u Americi\textsuperscript{DL} jednu godinu\textsuperscript{A} ranije. I lived in America a year earlier.

Now again, you must use time expressions in A, and ranije comes after them. Instead of ranije, you can use prije toga before that, or even just prije – but it must be placed after the time expression. A similar expression is used to refer to a time after something else:

Radio sam u školi\textsuperscript{DL} dvije godine\textsuperscript{24} kasnije. I worked in a school two years later.

Again, instead of kasnije, you can use poslije toga, or even only poslije. Also, it’s common to put these reference at the front:

Dvije godine\textsuperscript{24} ranije radio sam u Splitu\textsuperscript{DL}. Two years earlier, I worked in Split.
Dvije godine\textsuperscript{24} kasnije radio sam u školi\textsuperscript{DL}. Two years later, I worked in a school.

References to the future times, relative to now, use the same ‘time frame’ way in both English and Croatian:

Vraćam se za dva mjeseca\textsuperscript{24}. I’m coming back in two months.

This table summarizes relative time references:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>before now</th>
<th>a year ago</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prije + A* (G*)</td>
<td>prije jedne godine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after now</td>
<td>in a year</td>
<td>za” + A*</td>
<td>za jednu godinu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>something else a year earlier</td>
<td>A* ranije</td>
<td>jednu godinu ranije</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A* prije (toga)</td>
<td>jednu godinu prije (toga)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>something else a year later</td>
<td>A* kasnije</td>
<td>jednu godinu kasnije</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A* poslije (toga)</td>
<td>jednu godinu poslije (toga)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To ask about references to the past or future time, use the question-word kad(a) when. The answer is a proper past reference (for the past) or a proper ‘time frame’
for the future. Of course, absolute times can be used as well (e.g. a month, date, etc.):

**Kad si se vratio?** When did you come back?
— *Prije dva mjeseca*. Two months ago.
— *U trećem mjesecu* (colloq.) In *March*. (lit. ‘in the 3rd month’) ✡

**Kad se vraćaš?** When are you coming back?
— *Za mjesec* dana. In a month.
— *U desetom mjesecu* (colloq.) In *October*. (lit. ‘in the 10th month’) ✡

Also, pay attention that in the first question, we have used a perfective verb *vratiti* return. Here we ask about one, specific event in the past. In then second question, we used an ordinary impf. verb, since we used the present tense to talk about a scheduled event in the future.

```
**Instead of tjedan, the word nedjelja is used in parts of Bosnia, colloquially in parts of Croatia, and in the “Ekavian” form nedelja in Serbia; so you’ll hear and read nedjelja dana or nedelju dana. The word sedmica is also sometimes used in Serbia and Bosnia.**
```

The word *večer* has the form *veče* in Serbia and most of Bosnia. It’s neuter, but all case forms are derived from *večer-* and then it’s feminine.

Colloquial reference to months by ordinals (e.g. *deseti mjesec* = *October*) is not used in Bosnia and Serbia.

• **Exercise**

Fill in the missing words:

*Gradili smo kuću ______(a) __________(b). We were building the house for three years.*

*Gradili smo kuću ______(c) __________(d). We were building the house for six years.*

*Odlazim _____(e) _____(f) ___________(g). I’m leaving for three weeks.*

*Odlazim _____(h) _____(i) ___________(j). I’m leaving in six weeks.*

*Vratio sam se ______(k) ______(l) ______(m). I came back three days ago.*

*Vraćam se _____(n) _____(o) ____________(p). I’m coming back in two months.*

Check answers [here](#).
50 Because, In Order To, Why: Reasons

Nothing so far was really exciting. The most complicated thing you could say was something like *I wrote two long letters to your brothers.* All such sentences were *simple* (maybe it was not so simple to create them, but they are nevertheless called *simple*).

Now, the exciting things: how to express things or events that *caused* something?

The simplest way to indicate cause of something is by using the preposition *zbog.* It’s used when cause is a *thing,* or an *event expressed by a noun.* Words after it should be in the *genitive* case. It corresponds to English *because of* and *due to:*

\[
\text{Trava}^N \text{ je mokra}^N \text{ zbog } \text{kiše}^6. \text{ The grass is wet because of the rain.}
\]

(It’s not hard to remember, since the English *of* often corresponds to the Croatian genitive case.)

If something was not caused by a thing, but a whole event, normally expressed by a sentence, there’s a small difference. (There’s a difference in English too, where you have to use *because,* and not *because of.*) In such cases, the main way is to use the conjunction *jer:*

\[
\text{Trava}^N \text{ je mokra}^N \text{ jer je padala } \text{kiša}^N. \text{ The grass is wet because it has rained.}
\]

The word *jer* and words after it are a kind of *sentence-within-a-sentence.* There will be a verb inside, a subject, possibly an object and who knows what. Such sub-sentences are usually called *clauses* (more precisely, this kind is called *reason clause*). I will often emphasize clauses by enclosing them in square brackets [...].

(I called *jer* a *conjunction,* and *zbog* a *preposition* due to tradition – you will find such classification in other grammar books. However, it’s often hard to tell if a word is a preposition, a conjunction or something else. What is important for you is how to use a word and not how it is classified.)

The *word order* in clauses is the same as in any other sentence; the word *jer* holds the *first position,* so all the second-position words must come right after it. Therefore, there are two "second positions" in one sentence, both filled in our example by the word *je²:*

\[
\text{Trava}^N \text{ je}^2 \text{ mokra}^N [\text{jer}^1 \text{ je}^2 \text{ padala } \text{kiša}^N].
\]

A reason clause can be in any tense, for example in the present tense, or in the future tense, if you predict that something will happen:

\[
\text{Trava}^N \text{ je mokra}^N \text{ jer pada } \text{kiša}^N. \text{ The grass is wet because it's raining.}
\]

\[
\text{Uzeo sam } \text{kišobran}^N \text{ jer će padati } \text{kiša}^N. \text{ I took an umbrella because it's going to rain.}
\]

Another, less often used way is to use *zato što* instead of *jer;* everything else is the same:
Trava\textsuperscript{N} je mokra\textsuperscript{N} zato što je\textsuperscript{2} padala kiša\textsuperscript{N}. (the same meaning)

There’s one more way, using zbog toga što. (Colloquially, you will also hear and sometimes read zato jer in such sentences.)

All such sentences express reasons that \textit{caused} something: it rained and it made the grass wet. However, it’s possible that somebody is doing something because he or she wants something to happen \textit{later} (or, not to happen). In English, such sentences look like these:

(1) I took an umbrella [so (that) I don’t get wet].
(2) I need ten kunas [to buy a sandwich].
(3) I’m learning Croatian [so (that) I can talk to Ana].
(4) I’ll buy you a new phone [so (that) you can call me].

The sentences above contain clauses in square brackets known as \textit{purpose clauses}. English here uses a variety of conjunctions (\textit{to, in order to, so that, so}). Croatian is way simpler – it just uses one word: \textit{da}. These four sentences translate as:

(1) Uzeo sam kišobran\textsuperscript{A} da se ne smočim.
(2) Trebam deset kuna\textsuperscript{G} da kupim sendvič\textsuperscript{A}.
(3) Učim hrvatski\textsuperscript{A} da mogu razgovarati s Anom\textsuperscript{I}. \textit{moći} \textit{pres-1}
(4) Kupit ću ti\textsuperscript{DL} novi telefon\textsuperscript{A} da me\textsuperscript{A} možeš zvati. \textit{moći} \textit{pres-2}

We have here used the perfective member of the verb pair (because we want something done and accomplished, not just going to shops and checking stuff):

\textit{kupovati} (kupuje) \textit{~ kupiti} \textit{buy}

Now, there’s a \textit{special rule}: verbs after \textit{da} should be in the \textit{present tense only}. Perfective verbs are often used (e.g. in sentences \#1 and \#2). The verb smočiti is a perfective verb that can be used with an object (in A) meaning \textit{make wet}, but with se\textsuperscript{2} it means \textit{get wet}. (There are many verbs like that.)

As with jer and zato što, any fixed-position words come right after \textit{da}, e.g. check the sentence \#4:

Kupit\textsuperscript{1} ću\textsuperscript{2} ti\textsuperscript{DL2} novi telefon\textsuperscript{A} [da\textsuperscript{1} me\textsuperscript{A2} možeš zvati]. \textit{moći} \textit{pres-2}

There’s another \textit{special rule}: instead of the verb biti (je\textsuperscript{2} +), the \textit{potential} verb (bude) must be used in purpose clauses:

Trebaš kaput\textsuperscript{A} [da ti\textsuperscript{DL} ne bude hladno]. \textit{You need a coat so that you don’t get cold.} \textit{2}

In such sentences, the potential verb (bude) is often translated as English \textit{get} or \textit{become}. To see that the verb was replaced, compare the sentence above to the desired outcome; obviously, nije was replaced by \textit{ne bude}:

Nije ti\textsuperscript{DL} hladno. \textit{You are not cold.} \textit{2}

Sometimes, you’ll hear and read the conditional instead of the present tense in
purpose clauses. Keep in mind that in such clauses, both present and conditional imply future, possible events and states. The conjunction da has other roles as well, it’s one of the most used words in Croatian.

There’s an interesting phrase za slučaj da, followed by a reason, expressed usually in the present tense (perfective verbs allowed), indicating precaution, as English just in case:

**Uzet ću kišobran**, za slučaj da pada kiša. *I’ll take an umbrella, just in case it rains.*

If you want to express general precaution, like English just in case followed by nothing specific (or like to be on the safe side), use za svaki slučaj:

**Zatvorić ću prozor**, za svaki slučaj. *I’ll close the window, just in case.*

While reason and purpose clauses cannot be rearranged, and usually aren’t separated by a comma, the precautions can be placed before the main sentence, and usually are separated by a comma:

**Za svaki slučaj, zatvorić ću prozor**. (the same meaning)

Next, you can use just zato to refer to something said before as a reason; it’s common to start a sentence with that word:

**Padat će kiša**. *It will rain.*

**Zato trebam kišobran**. *That’s why I need an umbrella.*

There’s one more way to express purpose, and it’s used only with verbs of motion. When you go somewhere to “get”, “take” or “pick up” somebody or something, the common way to express it is simply by po″ + A:

**Vraćam se po novčanik**. *I’m going back to get my wallet.*

Let’s summarize ways of expressing reasons in Croatian:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expressing reasons in Croatian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>because of...</em> zbog + thing in G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>because...</em> jeerto  što + clause in any tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(in order) to... da + clause in pres. tense</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(so (that)... biti (je² +) → (bude)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>just in case...</strong> za slučaj da + clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>just in case</strong> za svaki slučaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(motion) to get... po″ + thing in A</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(In the Standard Croatian, there’s another conjunction: radi. It’s similar to zbog, but it expresses a purpose instead of cause. Very few people maintain such distinction and both are used interchangeably in real life, meaning just a cause.)
If you want to *ask why* something happened (or something is done) start a question with the word *zašto why* ®. As with other question-words, no rearrangement of the rest is needed:

**Zašto je trava mokra**? *Why is the grass wet?*

— *Zbog kiše*. *Because of the rain.*

— *Jer je padala kiša*. *Because it has rained.*

— *Jer pada kiša*. *Because it’s raining.*

— *Pada kiša*. *It’s raining.*

You usually answer just with the cause, preceded by the right conjunction, as above (conjunctions can be even left out). The same goes for purpose clauses and precautions, but *da cannot be left out* in any case:

**Zašto trebaš deset kuna**? *Why do you need ten kunas?*

— *Da kupim sendvič*. *To buy a sandwich.*

**Zašto si zatvrio prozor**? *Why did you close the window?*

— *Za svaki slučaj*. *Just in case.*

With *po** + A:

**Zašto se vraćaš**? *Why are you going back?*

— *Po kišobran*. *To get the umbrella.*

There are two more conjunctions that indicate cause. Both are used mostly in writing; reason clauses using them are normally placed at the beginning:

\[
\text{budući da pošto} \quad \text{since}
\]

The conjunction *pošto* is discouraged (in this role) in formal Croatian. Both conjunctions are seldom used in answers.

There’s one fine point left. Sometimes, you’ll see, when short time adverbs – such as *sad(a) now, još still and već already* – are placed after *jer*, second position words come *after the adverb*. For example:

**Ne želim knjigu** [jer¹ *već¹ sam ju² pročitao*]. *I don’t want the book [because I’ve already read it].*

The same can happen with stressed pronouns (e.g. *meni*).

This is much rarer than the default word order, but don’t panic if you see it once a while. This is likely done only be some speakers, when they want to specially emphasize an adverb or a stressed pronoun.

® In Bosnia and Serbia, you will often hear just *što* instead of *zašto*. 
• Examples

Zbog jedne divne crne žene *Because of a Gorgeous Black Woman* is one of greatest hits by Croatian singer-songwriter Krunoslav Slabinić (usually known under his nickname Kičo) from 1970’s. (Note that crna žena in Croatia means just a woman with black hair and dark eyes. There are very few black women in Croatia in e.g. the American sense, and if somebody would refer to any, a special term Crnkinja would be used.)

The chorus contains a number of *because* constructions, but all are of *because of* (i.e. a noun or a noun phrase follows):

- Zbog jedne divne crne žene*G*  
  *Because of a gorgeous black woman*
- Zbog njene divne crne kose*G*  
  *Because of her gorgeous black hair*
- Zbog jednog pogleda tužnog *u noći*DL  
  *Because of a sad look in the night*
- Zbog obećanja*G*  
  *Because of the promise*
  
  da će miDL doći  
  *she is going to come to me*
- Tužan**N** i sam**N**, čekam jaN  
  *Sad and alone, I’m waiting for her*

(Krunoslav Slabinac)

The third verse has one adjective after the noun, likely for rhythmic purposes; this is not ungrammatical, just uncommon in everyday speech. The fourth verse has a content clause (what was promised?) They will be introduced in Knowing and Telling: Content and Noun Clauses. They are quite different than purpose clauses, despite both starting with *da*.

You can find various performances on YouTube™.

• Exercise

Complete the following sentences:

- Cesta je zatvorena ______(a) ________(b). *The road is closed due to snow.*
- Nismo otišli na plažu ______(c) ______(d) ________(e) hladno. *We didn’t go to the beach because it was cold.*
- Moramo požuriti ______(f) ______(g) zakasnimo na vlak. *We have to hurry in order not to be late for the train.*
- Ovdje sam ______(h) ______(i) ______(j). *I’m here to see you.*
- Zaključala sam ______(k), ______(l) ______(m) ______(n). *I’ve locked the door, just in case.*
- Idem u sobu ______(o) ________(p). *I’m going to my room to get my coat.*

Check answers [here](#).
51 For Days: Approximate Periods, Repetions and References

There are two very frequent words used to express approximate duration of some state or action:

- **dugo** *for a long time*
- **kratko** *for a short time*

While English uses both *for a long time* and *long* in different sentences (e.g. *long* is used in questions), Croatian uses only one word in all kinds of sentences. The words can be placed at any position, but they are often found at the first position. For example:

**Dugo smo gledali filmove**. *We watched movies for a long time.*

**Kratko je padala kiša**. *It rained for a short time.*

It’s possible to modify the meaning, using *adverbs of intensity* (except for *malo*); you can also use other intensifiers, such as *stvarno really* and *užasno / strašno terribly*:

**Jako dugo sam čitao knjigu**. *I was reading the book for a very long time.*

**Stvarno dugo učim hrvatski**. *I’ve been learning Croatian for a really long time.*

Then, the *instrumental case* can be used to express time, when something lasted *for days, for years*, and also that something happens *on Tuesdays*.

Simply put, when something was going on *for days*, you should use *instrumental plural*. You will find the following words useful:

- **dan** day
- **godina** year
- **mjesec** month
- **sat** (N-*pl* sati) hour
- **tjedan** (tjedn-) *®* week
- **tjedni** (tjedni-) *®* weeks

For example:

**Čitao sam knjigu tjednima**. *I was reading the book for weeks.*

**Čekao sam te satima**. *I was waiting for you for hours.*

Both sentences mean the action or state is over now, that is, you are no longer reading the book or waiting.

If you want to say that something happens *on Fridays*, that is, repeats, you should use weekdays in instrumental *singular*:

**Petkom igramo nogomet**. *We play football on Fridays.*

**Vikendom idemo u kino**. *We go to cinema on weekends.*

The word **vikend weekend** is of course not a day of week, but has a similar role.

Rough time periods in *I-* can be also used with the verb **trajati (traje) last**:

**Predavanje je trajalo satima**. *The lecture lasted for hours.*
There’s another, a bit unexpected way to express approximate duration – using short expressions for *a day or two*, *a week or two* and so on: just append the number *two* to the noun, e.g. *dan-dva*. Of course, the number must be in the right gender, according to the noun it’s after:

**Na moru**[^1] *ću biti tjedan*-dva. *I’ll be at the seaside for a week or two.*

**Radovi**[^1] *će trajati mjesec*-dva. *The works will last for a month or two.*

**Učila sam hrvatski**[^1] *godinu*-dvije. *I was studying Croatian for a year or two.*

(Standard orthography demands they are separated by a hyphen; you’ll also see a comma or other ways.)

Don’t forget that ongoing periods use the present tense in Croatian, and that they’re often emphasized with *već already*, which is often not translated:

**Ana**[^1] *je dugo živjela u Splitu*. *Ana lived in Split for a long time.* (but not now)

**Ana**[^1] *dugo živi u Zagrebu*. *Ana has lived in Zagreb for a long time.* (and still does)

**Ivan**[^1] *već godinama živi u Zagrebu*. *Ivan has lived in Zagreb for years.*

This table summarizes approximate time periods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adverb</th>
<th>for a short time</th>
<th>for a long time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I-pl</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for hours</td>
<td><em>satima</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for days</td>
<td><em>danima</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun-number (A)</th>
<th>for an hour or two</th>
<th>for a year or two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>sat-dva</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>godinu-dvije</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When *asked* how long something lasted, you can answer just with approximate periods:

**Koliko dugo si živio tamo?** *How long did you live there?*

— **Jako dugo.** *For a very long time.*

— **Godinama**[^1]. *For years.*

**Koliko (dugo) ste bili u Hrvatskoj?** *How long were you in Croatia?*

— **Kratko.** *For a short time.*

It’s possible to express approximate ‘round-trips’ with *na* + *kratko* or *dugo*, but *not* with *I-pl* (e.g. *danima* for days). Both are used also with *vrijeme*, e.g. *na dugo vrijeme*:

**Odlazim na jako kratko vrijeme**[^1]. *I’m leaving for a very short time.*

Next, it’s possible to say that something happens or is done *during* something else. If that ‘something else’ is expressed by a noun (with optional adjectives to describe it), the most common way is to use:

**za vrijeme + G during**

[^1]: Easy Croatian (rev. 47b) / 51 For Days: Approximate Periods, Repetions and References
When something happens or is done in winter (or other season), one option is to use specific adverbs:

- zimi in winter
- ljeti in summer
- u proljeće in spring
- najesen in fall

For example:

Ljeti idemo na more. *We go to the seaside in summer.* (regularly, usually)

The most common way to express roughly when something happened or will happen is to use combinations of ‘determiners’ (specific adjectives, really) and nouns for time periods, in A (only A forms are listed, which are identical to N for these nouns and masculine inanimate gender): *

- **jedan** one
- **ovaj** this
- **prošli** last + **tjedan** week *
- **sljedeći** next *
- **svaki** each

Instead of **sljedeći**, sometimes **idući** is used, without any difference in meaning.

The noun **dan** day is a partial exception, explained below.

However, with the feminine nouns **godina** year and **noć** night, it’s more common to use phrases in G (all words are here listed in G):

- **jedne** one
- **ove** this
- **prošle** last + **godine** year
- **sljedeće** next *
- **svake** each

Again, sometimes **idući** is used. There are two specific (and a bit old-fashioned) adverbs that can be used instead of **prošle godine** and **prošle večeri**:

- **lani** last year *
- **sinoć** last evening

For example:

Ove godine putujemo u Pariz. *We’re traveling to Paris this year.*

Prošli tjedan sam bila bolesna. *I was sick last week.*

Sljedeći mjesec odlazimo na more. *We’re leaving for the seaside next month.*

There are exceptions to this pattern: the noun **dan** day, and **jutro** morning. With them, adjectives are used in both A and G to get phrases meaning **one day, that day, the first day**, etc.:

Jednog dana smo jeli palačinke s medom. *One day we ate pancakes with honey.*
**Prvi dan**^ nisam razumio ništa^. *I didn’t understand anything the first day.*

You can use any way you like, A or G (of course, A is simpler to create). Of course, you can add additional adjectives to these phrases:

**Jednog hladnog zimskog dana**^G smo samo gledali filmove^. *On one cold winter day, we just watched movies.*

You will sometimes see such long time phrases separated by a comma, after which word-counting restarts:

**Jednog hladnog zimskog dana**^G, samo smo gledali filmove^. *(the same meaning)*

° Instead of *tjedan*, the word *nedjelja* is used in parts of Bosnia, colloquially in parts of Croatia, and in the “Ekavian” form *nedelja* in Serbia; as other feminine time nouns, it prefers G, so you’ll hear and read *svake nedjelje*. The word *sedmica* is also used in Bosnia and Serbia.

Instead of *nogomet* and *kino*, words *fudbal* and *bioskop* are used in Serbia and most of Bosnia for *football* and *cinema*.

Use of the accusative case for phrases like *prošli mjesec* is much more common in Croatia than in Serbia; in Serbia and parts of Bosnia, the genitive case prevails for all nouns, regardless of gender.

The adverb *lani* has an unexpected “Ekavian” form *lane* in Serbia.

**Exercise**

Fill in the missing words:

**Gradili smo kuću** ____________(a). *We were building the house for years.*

**Kiša pada** ____________(b). *It has been raining for weeks.*

____________(c) idemo na bazen. *We go to the swimming pool on Fridays.*

_______(d) si spavala. *You were sleeping for a long time.*

Check answers [here](#).
52 Stand, Become, Exist, Cease

There’s a very important group of Croatian verbs having similar forms, so it’s worth learning them together. It’s also interesting that some of them can behave as imperfective verbs, despite being basically perfective.

First, the following verb has a simple meaning, just physically *stand somewhere*. Unfortunately, it’s a bit irregular:

\[ \text{stajati (stoji) stand} \]

For example:

\[ \text{Stajo sam tamo satima} I was standing there for hours. \]

There’s an important verb similar to it, but more regular:

\[ \text{postojati (postoji) exist} \]

It’s used without objects, just to express that something exists (or not):

\[ \text{Jeti ne postoji. The Yeti doesn’t exist.} \]

You will sometimes hear its present forms stressed as *postoji*.

Next, there is a verb pair that means *stop, come to stand*:

\[ \text{stajati (staje) ~ stati (stane) stop} \]

Since this verb implies a kind of motion (that’s coming to stand), it’s used with destinations, while *stajati (stoji)* is a static verb, therefore it’s usually used with locations:

\[ \text{Stao sam pred vrata. I stood in front of the door. (pred“ + A = dest.)} \]
\[ \text{Stajo sam pred vratima. I was standing in front of the door. (pred“ + I = loc.)} \]

This verb has one more meaning: *fit into* (e.g. vine into a bottle, clothes into a suitcase). In that meaning, the perf. verb is common in the present tense as well, including the true present (that is, things going on at the very moment of speaking):

\[ \text{Hlače ne stanu u kofer. The pants don’t fit into the suitcase.} \]

Be careful: this means only *fit into* physically, it doesn’t cover the meaning *belong* (e.g. *fit into the crowd*): for the second meaning, use the verb *pripadati belong*.

Furthermore, the verb *stati (stane)* needs destinations, including this use.

The past form of the perf. verb, in neuter singular, is used in a phrase:

\[ \text{DL + biti (je²“) + stalo (+ do“ G) = DL cares (about G)} \]

This phrase is a way to express that someone cares about somebody or something. Here the word *stalo* has *no* past meaning: it’s used as an adverb, like *žao* or *dosadno*. The verb *biti* is here impersonal, and can be in any tense:
Nije mu stalo. He doesn’t care.
Ani je stalo do Gorana. Ana cares about Goran. / Goran matters to Ana.
Ani je bilo stalo do mene. Ana cared about me.

Compare it with e.g. Ani je bilo drago – it’s exactly the same structure, apart from the do + G.

The infinitive (and consequently, past forms) of the impf. verb stajati (staje) are exactly the same as for the verb meaning stand, but since the impf. verbs are mostly used in the present tense, confusion is rare.

The pair stajati (staje) ~ stati (stane) is likely the most important pair in Croatian, since there’s a number of very common and important verbs derived from it:

- nastajati (nastaje) ~ nastati (nastane) come to exist
- nestajati (nestaje) ~ nestati (nestane) disappear
- ostajati (ostaje) ~ ostati (ostane) stay, remain
- postajati (postaje) ~ postati (postane) become
- prestajati (prestaje) ~ prestati (prestane) stop (doing something), cease

The perf. verbs in the pairs above are sometimes stressed as nastati (nastane) – the ‘western’ stress is on a different syllable in present forms. (The stress never moves to the negation in the present tense of these pairs.)

If you are confused by similarity of impf. and perf. verbs listed above, there’s one simple difference: the impf. verbs have a -j- in all their forms – infinitive, present, past, some forms I haven’t explained yet – and the perf. verbs never have it in any form.

The verb pair derived with o- has come curious properties. The perf. verb ostati (ostane / ostane) behaves a bit like an imperfective verb. For example, it can be used with time periods, unlike other perf. verbs. Compare:

Ostao je u bolnici dva sata. He remained in hospital for two hours.
Čekao je u bolnici dva sata. He waited in hospital for two hours.

You cannot do it with e.g. napisati (napiše) perf. write. Therefore, the impf. verb ostajati (ostaje) is basically used in the present tense only.

Otherwise, the verb is very similar to English stay and remain: you can stay somewhere, something, with someone, etc. It’s a very versatile verb:

Ostao je kod kuće. He stayed at home.
Ostali su zajedno. They stayed together.

The past form of the perf. verb is used as a real quantity adjective (as with other past forms used as adjectives, the form with -i, ostali is the basic form):

Ostalo tijesto je u frižideru. The remaining pastry is in the fridge.

It’s often used as a pronoun as well; in the same way as other adjectives, e.g. sav
(sv- +), the neuter singular forms are used for things, and masc. plural forms for people:

**Ostali**[^1] će doći sutra. The rest (of them) will come tomorrow.

**Ostalo**[^1] će doći sutra. The rest (of it) will come tomorrow.

These two adjectives-used-as-pronouns are often used together, meaning *all the rest*:

**Svi ostali**[^1] su u dvorištu[^2]DL. ‘All others are in the yard.’

**Sve ostalo**[^1] je u kutiji[^2]DL. All the rest is in the box.

The verb pair derived with **po-** is similar to **biti**[^3] (je² +) *be* – it corresponds to English *become* or to English *get* with adjectives:

**Postat će tata**[^1]N. He’ll become a dad.

**Postajem gladna**[^1]. I’m becoming/getting hungry. (imperf., I = female) **postajati**

This verb, like *be*, usually uses objects in N (e.g. **tata**[^1] dad is obviously in N)! It’s also used with weather expressions and subjective experiences of the environment, again in the similar way as **biti** (je² +) *be*:

**Postaje° vruće.** It’s getting hot. (imperf.) **postajati**

**Postalo je hladno.** It became cold.

**Postaje° nam[^2]DL vruće.** We’re getting hot. (imperf.) **postajati | 1pl**

**Postalo mi[^2] je hladno.** I got/became cold. 1

The verb pair derived with **ne-** means roughly *disappear*, but it also covers meaning *run out*, and is also used when e.g. there’s suddenly no electricity, water... or even beer in the fridge. The prefix comes from negation historically, but it’s *always spelled together* with the verb in this case.

What is interesting with this verb pair is that often uses indefinite quantities (expressed by nouns in G) as their subjects, and consequently, as default for quantities, the verb behaves as if the subject is neuter singular:

**Nestalo je benzīna[^2].** The petrol ran out.

**Nestalo je struje[^2].** The electricity is out.

The same thing can be expressed also with the negative existential:

**Nema° više benzīna[^2].** There’s no more petrol.

**Nema° više struje[^2].** The electricity is out.

The verb pair derived with **pre-** is usually used with impf. verbs in infinitive, or with some noun that can "last" and then "stop" (e.g. **rain**, **road**, **danger**):

**Kiša[^1] je prestala.** The rain stopped.

**Goran[^1] je prestao plakati.** Goran stopped crying.

You’ll often see the base pair used in the first construction (just a subject) with the same meaning:
Kiša\textsuperscript{N} je stala. The rain stopped.

The opposite meaning – begin, start – is expressed with an unrelated verb pair (the perf. verb has a bit unexpected -n- in present!):

\textit{počinjati (počinje / počinje)} \textit{~ početi (počne)} \textit{start, begin}

The verb pair is used in the same way as the \textit{pre-} pair. For example:

Kiša\textsuperscript{N} je počela. The rain started.

Goran\textsuperscript{N} je počeo plakati. Goran started crying.

Such verbs that indicate start or end points are often called \textit{phase verbs}. Pay attention that with these verbs, only impf. verbs in \textit{inf} (e.g. plakati) are used. There’s no accomplishment, the focus in on starting or stopping an activity.

The following verb pair has a very simple meaning:

\textit{ustajati (ustaje)} \textit{~ uстати (устане)} \textit{stand up}

The following verbs follow exactly the same pattern:

\textit{pristajati (пристаје)} \textit{~ пристати (пристане)} \textit{consent, agree}

\textit{odustajati (одустaje)} \textit{~ odустати (одустане)} \textit{give up}

The first verb is often used with \textit{content clauses} (I will introduce them in a short while), or with na” + A. The second verb uses od” + G to describe what you’re giving up:

Ana\textsuperscript{N} je pristala na ručak\textsuperscript{A}. Ana has agreed to have a lunch.

Ana\textsuperscript{N} je odustala od izleta\textsuperscript{G}. Ana has given up on the excursion.

The following verb pairs have opposite meanings:

\textit{sastajati (sastaje) se}\textsuperscript{2} \textit{~ sastati (сastane) se}\textsuperscript{2} \textit{get together, meet}

\textit{rastajati (rastaje) se}\textsuperscript{2} \textit{~ rastati (растане) se}\textsuperscript{2} \textit{split, separate}

While English usually makes derived verbs with detached prepositions, Croatian always uses prefixes. You will notice that often these two Croatian verb prefixes match the English prepositions used to derive verb meaning:

\textit{ra- / ras- / raz-} \textit{apart} \textit{s- / sa-} \textit{together}

Then, there’s a verb derived with \textit{nedo-} (again, the \textit{ne} is always spelled together). It’s already covered in 23 \textit{I’m Cold: Basic Impressions}. There’s no perf. verb corresponding to it.

This table summarizes all verbs derived from the ‘base’ verb pair:
There are more verb pairs derived from this base pair, e.g. with zao- meaning lag, fall behind and so on.

A final remark: the perfective verb stati (stane) is sometimes – mostly in literature and in speech, in parts of Dalmatia, and some rural areas – used as a phase verb meaning start. This is quite unexpected, because it otherwise means stand and even stop! For example, in a novel written by Marija Jurić Zagorka, you can read:

Stao je hodati kolibom. He started walking over the hut.

I don’t use it, but be prepared to hear and read it from time to time.

® In Serbia and Bosnia, instead of hlače f pl. pants, trousers, pantalone f pl. is used.

• Examples

Haustor (meaning entryway, doorway, in inland parts of Croatia, from German), fronted by Darko Rundek, was a very popular band from Zagreb, still very popular in many former parts of Yugoslavia. This song, Bi mogo da mogu Could if I could (a construction yet unexplained) is from 1988:

Uvijek s malo, premalo paraG Always with little, too little cash
Kad upale se svjetlaN, ode dimN When lights turn on, smoke leaves
A mirisN noćiG And the smell of night
opet postaje stvaranN f is becoming real again
(Darko Rundek, Srđan Gulić)
The noun pare f pl. is a colloquial word for money. The verb upaliti («) is a perfective verb meaning ignite, turn on. Here nobody has turned on the lights, they ignited, turned on, so a se² must be used.

The word a¨ in the third line will be explained in the following chapters: it’s another word for and. We have the verb postajati (postaje) become in that line, and, as expected, what it becomes is again in N (stvaran real, which agrees with miris, a masculine inanimate noun).

Ko mnogo puta do sada  Like many times before
On sanja               He’s dreaming
Kako beskrajno pada...  Of falling endlessly...

The word ko is a colloquial form of kao as, like.

The lines on sanja kako beskrajno pada contain a content clause, which will be explained in 59 Knowing and Telling: Content and Noun Clauses. It literally means he’s dreaming that he’s endlessly falling.

Bilo je rano jutro tada  It was early morning then
kad je ostavio sve        when he left everything
Čulo se samo kako ptice pjevaju  Only birds singing could be heard
Onda je stajao još dugo   Then he was standing for a long time
s druge strane ulice       on the other side of the street

The verb pair ostavljati ~ ostaviti leave (e.g. keys) was introduced in previous chapters. It’s, of course, also used to leave everything. Compare it with the second line, where otići (ode, otišao, otišla) leave, depart is used, because the smoke goes away, departs.

The line čulo se samo kako ptice pjevaju will be explained later, in 80 Present Adverbs and Adjectives. It contains also a content clause and a se²-passive, which will be explained in the following chapters.

The construction s druge strane ulice means literally ‘from the other side of the street’, but the meaning is on (such use will be explained in 76 Inner, Outer, Step by Step: More on Space and Time).

You can listen to it on YouTube™. Note that Darko Rundek mostly uses the standard stress here, despite being from Zagreb.
• Exercise

Fill in the sentences below using the verbs you’ve learned here (use short forms of pronouns when possible, and frižider for fridge):

(a) ____ (b) ____ (c) dosadno. We got bored.

(d) ovdje. I’m staying here.

Ana je ____ (e) _________ (f) knjigu. Ana has started reading a book.

Snijeg je _________ (g) _________ (h). It has stopped snowing.

Gdje je _________ (i) _________ (j)? Where’s all the rest?

Lonac ____ (k) _________ (l) u _________ (m)! The pot doesn’t fit into the fridge!

Netko _________ (n) _________ (o) vratima. Somebody is standing in front of the door.

(p) ____ (q) ____ (r) do _________ (s). We care about you. (you = singular)

Check answers here.
53 Giving Orders

Croatian has special forms of verbs used to give orders: imperatives (imper for short). In English, the imperative is just a verb without a personal pronoun:

*Wait for me!*

In Croatian, there’s a special verb form (it’s quite similar to the present tense forms):

Čekaj me! *Wait for me!*

Imperatives exist only for the 2nd person singular and plural (I can give orders to you) and for the 1st person plural (I can give orders to us).

If you know the imper-2 form, it’s very easy to get other forms – all are regular – and it’s easy to get the imper-2 if you know its pres-3pl:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pres-3pl</th>
<th>imper-2</th>
<th>imper-1pl</th>
<th>imper-2pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-u, -e</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-imo</td>
<td>-ite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ju, (-je)</td>
<td>-j</td>
<td>-jmo</td>
<td>-jte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ku</td>
<td>-ci</td>
<td>-cimo</td>
<td>-cite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, here are the imper-2 forms of some frequent verbs:

- *gledati* watch → *gledaj*
- *učiti* learn → *uči*
- *pisati* (piše) write → *piši*
- *ići* (ide, išao, išla) go → *idi*

The imperative *gledaj* watch! is often shortened to just *gle*. There’s one completely irregular imperative:

- *biti* (je² +) be → *budi*

Most verbs have stress in imperatives like in the infinitive. Verbs in -iti which, in the standard stress scheme, shift their stress left in the present tense, don’t do it in the imperative, and that distinguishes some forms which are equal in writing:

- *govoriti* («) *speak* → *govori* = pres-3
  *govori* = imper-2  (Std. stress scheme!)

Only a handful of otherwise ‘irregular’ verbs have the pres-3pl ending in -ku. Such commonly used verbs are:

- *reći* (reče, rekao, rekla) perf. *tell* → *reći*
- *tući* (tuče, tukao, tukla) *beat, smack* → *tući*
- *vući* (vuče, vukao, vukla) *pull* → *vući*

The verb *reći* is almost never used in the present tense, but its imperative is often used:
Reci mi, gdje si bio? Tell me, where have you been?

Other very often used imperatives are (I have listed only their imper-2 forms):

čekaj! wait!  
pazi! take care!  
dodi! come here!  
stani! stop!

As you can see, imperative forms of perfective verbs are often used (more details below).

Only a few verbs end in -je in pres-3pl; some get imperatives on -j, others on -ji:

bojati (boji) paint \(\rightarrow\) boj \(\hat{n}\) 
brojati (broji) count \(\rightarrow\) broji \(\hat{n}\) 
bojati (boji) se\textsuperscript{2} be afraid \(\rightarrow\) boj se\textsuperscript{2}

(The verb brojati (broji) is very common, although the Standard Croatian has a slightly different verb brojiti. The same goes for bojati (boji) – the Standard, but seldom used verb is bojiti. For more details, check 58 Colloquial and Formal.)

For verbs that end in -je in pres-3pl, the imper-2 form is listed in the Core Dictionary.

Now, there’s a problem: should you use an impf. or a perf. verb when you use imperatives? If we want someone to finish something, perf. verbs are used:

Pročitaj knjigu\(\hat{n}\). Read the book. (perf. = the whole book)

If it’s not important that someone reads the whole book (e.g. the important part is somewhere in the middle), then the impf. verb is used:

Čitaj knjigu\(\hat{n}\). Read the book.

Impf. verbs are also often used to express that someone should do some activity regularly, or when the object is very generic:

Čitajte knjige\(\hat{n}\). Read books.

Peri zube\(\hat{n}\) svaki dan\(\hat{n}\). ‘Wash’ your teeth every day. (i.e. brush)

In the last example (with teeth) the perf. verb could be also used, but using impf. verbs is more common. Impf. verbs are also used when we want somebody to do something repeatedly, while perf. verbs usually imply that something should be done once:

Baci mi\(\hat{n}\) loptu\(\hat{n}\). Throw me the ball. (perf. = once)

Bacaj loptu\(\hat{n}\). Throw the ball. (impf. = one to many times)

Impf. verbs are sometimes used in imperatives to indicate that we want someone to start something immediately.°

Negation (don’t sing!) can be constructed in two ways. First, by simply putting the usual word ne\(\hat{n}\) in front of the imperative:

Ne čekajte me\(\hat{n}\)! Don’t wait for me! (pl.)
**Ne pjevaj! Don’t sing!**

The stress, in the standard scheme, can shift to ne˘, but never for verbs that have any underline (in my notation), and additionally never for these common verbs:

- *graditi* build
- *pisati* (piše) write
- *ići* (ide, išao, išla) go
- *skakati* (skače) jump
- *lagati* (laže) lie, tell lies
- *vikati* (viče) yell
- *nositi* carry, wear
- *voziti* drive

Additionally, verbs that have an additional vowel in *pres-3* which is underlined, don’t shift the stress too; common ones are:

- *prati* (pere) wash
- *zvati* (zove) call

In the ‘western’ scheme, stress shifts to ne˘ only in very short verbs (one syllable in *imper-2*) e.g. *ne daj* don’t give (from *dati* perf. give). Consequently, you’ll sometimes see non-standard spellings such as *nedaj* and like.

For instance, this sign is written above the door of a building in Zagreb, saying don’t *park* – the verb is *parkirati* («) park – and the hyphen between words is likely just decorative:

![NE - PARKIRAJ](image)

This works for imperfective verbs, but *not for most perfective verbs*.

Another method is to use a special *negative imperative verb* and the *infinitive of the verb*. This special verb has only imperatives: its *imper-2* is *nemoj*. This works for all verbs:

- **Nemojte me˘ čekati! Don’t wait for me!** (pl.)
- **Nemoj otići! Don’t leave!**

If you were careful, you could see that the combination ne˘ + verb behaves as one unit (as usual) so mi², me² etc. come right after it, but *nemoj* is a word on its own and words that want to be at the second position come right after it (but the verb in infinitive cannot come before *nemoj*).

If a verb requires the word se², it’s required in imperative as well:

- **Ne boj se! Don’t be afraid!**

As in English, there’s no special imperative form for the 3rd person, but you can use *neka* + verb in present, similar to English *let*, but without changes in case (English changes case: it’s not *let she* but *let her*):

- **Neka uđe. Let him/her come in.**
Neka Ana vozi. Let Ana drive.

The word neka doesn’t change. It has no connection to neki adj. some. You will sometimes see and hear it shortened to nek.

What about impf. and perf. verbs in negative imperatives? In many cases, perf. verbs make no sense in negative imperative. Consider this:

Nemoj pročitati knjigu. Don’t read the book. (perf. = the whole book)

It would mean: you can read the book, just don’t read the whole book. Makes no sense. However, it makes sense with some other verbs and objects:

Nemoj jesti kolače. Don’t eat the cakes. (impf. = not even a tiny bit)
Nemoj pojesti kolače. Don’t eat up the cakes. (perf. = not all of them)

The first sentence means don’t even start eating them, while the second one means don’t finish the cakes, i.e. leave something. This example is also interesting:

Nemoj bacati knjige u smeće. Don’t throw books into the trash. (impf. = any book, anytime)
Nemoj baciti knjigu u smeće. Don’t throw the book into the trash. (perf. = a specific instance/book)

(I’ve used nemoj to negate impf. imperatives, but I could have used ne bacaj and ne jedi in the previous example instead).

The first sentence is about throwing any books, or an unspecified group: you can throw one today, another the next day, etc. It forbids any throwing. The second one is about throwing a specific book, which can be thrown only once, and then it’s gone. In other circumstances, we would use bacati even for a specific object – you can throw a specific ball many times against a wall.

The rule is: when we do something to a specific object – something irreversible, so it can be done only once – we use perf. verbs in negative imperative.

For example, we don’t want somebody open a window. Since windows can be open, and then easily closed, and open again, and we don’t want any of it, we would use an impf. verb:

Nemoj otvarati prozor. Don’t open the window. (impf.)

But, for breaking a specific window, we would use a perf. verb, since it’s an irreversible action (true, windows can be repaired, but it cannot be done immediately):

Nemoj razbiti prozor. Don’t break the window. (perf.)

Contrary, if we would speak in general, not about a specific window, or a specific set of them, we would use an impf. verb:

Nemoj razbijati prozore. Don’t break windows. (impf.)
So, this is a way Croatian expresses indefiniteness of objects: by using imperfective verbs for irreversible actions.

There is another “special verb” – **hajde** – also having only imperative forms, that is used to **encourage** (like *c’mon!*):

**Hajde, dodi! C’mon, come!**

Both special verbs can be used on their own in speech:

**Nemoj!** *Don’t!*

**Hajde! C’mon!**

The verb **hajde** has slightly irregular forms and also has several colloquial forms. They are all listed here, together with forms of the verb **nemoj**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>imper-2</th>
<th>imper-1pl</th>
<th>imper-2pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>nemoj</td>
<td>nemojmo</td>
<td>nemojte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encouraging (colloq.)</td>
<td>hajde</td>
<td>hajdemo</td>
<td>hajde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ajde</td>
<td>ajmo</td>
<td>ajde</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There’s another verb that can be used colloquially to encourage or strengthen imperatives:

**dati** perf. *give*

This is a perfective verb, and its imperative is used together the imperative of the main verb. For example:

**Daj, čekaj me!** *C’mon, wait for me!*  

There are few exceptions to the rules above, relating to the 1st person plural. For the verb **ići** (*ide, išao, išla*), instead of the expected **idimo**, the present tense form **idemo** is used; it applies only to the **imper-1pl** – other forms are as expected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>imper-2</th>
<th>imper-1pl</th>
<th>imper-2pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>idi</td>
<td>idemo</td>
<td>idite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, in colloquial speech, **imper-1pl** forms aren’t often used. Instead, **hajdemo** / **ajmo** + inf is more common.

However, there’s one **imper-1pl** frequent in speech and writing: **recimo**, derived from the already mentioned **reći**, meaning of course *let’s say* (and therefore *suppose, for example* etc.).

® In the “Ekavian” pronunciation, which completely prevails in Serbia, there’s an exception in speech from this rule for the “Ekavian” verb **razumeti** *understand*: its
imper-2 a bit unexpected razumi, and so on. However, Standard Serbian insists on the imper-2 form razumej – according to the above rules – which is followed by very few people in real life, and a source of endless debates on the Internet about what is ‘right’. Even very educated public figures in Serbia vowed they will stick with razumi, regardless of what the official Serbian grammar says.

Standard Serbian insists on the imper-2 forms boj and broj, which are rare in speech, while Croatian allows boji and broji.

Using impf. verb in imperatives to say that we want somebody to start immediately doing something seems (to me) less common in Croatia, and more common in Bosnia and Serbia.

• Examples

The song Sanjaj me Dream of me, was the breakthrough hit by Novi fosići in 1977; they soon became the most popular Croatian pop group.

The song contains just two parts, both are sung twice. The first part has a characteristic melody:

UgASNUT ćE JEDNOM LJUBAV NAŠA
NEGĐJE DRUGDJE GNJEZDA ĆEMO SVITI
USPOMENE ODNIJET ĆE VRIJEME
U ALBUMU NI SLIKE NEĆE BITI

Our love will die out once
We’ll weave nests somewhere else
Time will carry away memories
There won’t be a single picture in the album

Note how the word order is unusual, subject coming last, emphasizing words that come first, adjectives coming after nouns. The phrase negdje drugdje somewhere else (lit. ‘somewhere elsewhere’) is very common. The verb sviti (svije) perf. bend, weave is seldom used, mostly with gnijezdo nest as the object. The verb odnijeti perf. carry away is irregular; it will be explained in 65 Carry, Bring, Drive: Transport Verbs.

The rare verb ugasnuti (ugasne) perf. go out, die out was also used in the song used as an example in 43 And, Or, But: Basic Conjunctions – both are written by the same person.

The last verse uses ni + G to enhance negation, meaning not even a; such constructions will be explained in 67 Only, Except, Too: Inclusion and Exclusion.

The second part, the chorus, has a simple melody. The form sanjaj is an imperative. The Croatian verb sanjati dream can be used both with A and o” + DL, and using just A if quite common.

The second verse is a time clause (they will be explained in the next chapter). Within it, there’s za me for me i.e. preposition + short form of pronoun, which is archaic in speech in most regions (za mene is normally used) but found in poetry. That verse contain a negative existential phrase with two things in G, linked by ni”.

Note how the word order is unusual, subject coming last, emphasizing words that
Sanjaj me<sup>¹</sup>, sanjaj me<sup>²</sup> noćas  
[Kad za me<sup>¹</sup> nema  
spokoja<sup>³</sup> ni snova<sup>³</sup>]
Noćas me<sup>¹</sup> sanjaj  
jer možda već sutra  
U snove<sup>³</sup> ti<sup>pl</sup> uđe ljubav nova<sup>⁴</sup>  
(Dea Volarić)

Dream of me, dream of me tonight  
[When, for me, there’s  
no tranquillity nor dreams]
Dream of me tonight  
because maybe already tomorrow  
A new love will enter your dreams

The last verse has possessive DL for dreams. Note how again the adjective comes after ljubav f love. The verse has also present tense of the perfective verb ući (uđe, ušao, ušla) come in, enter used to express future, which is not standard, but common in speech in Zagreb and the region around it.

Note how each verse has a pronoun, three have me<sup>²</sup>, the fourth one ti<sup>²</sup>.

Rajko Dujmić, a member of Novi fosilji, heard a short poem by Dea Volarić on the radio and decided to compose a tune. Then a young poet, Volarić wrote this poem with some others in her notebook as a teenager. A number of them became hits for Novi fosilji.

You can listen to it on YouTube™; check many covers.
54 When, While, Until, Before, After

How to say *we’ll go to the beach when the rain stops*? Like this:

**Otići ćemo na plažu** kad kiša prestane.  

This sentence is very similar to the English sentence. We have two parts, linked with the adverb-used-as-conjunction *kad(a) when*. As in English, it’s the same word that’s used to create questions (*when...?*).

We can use the verb *prestati* (*prestane*) perf. *stop, cease* (introduced in 52 *Stand, Become, Exist, Cease*), because we refer to an ‘accomplished change’ (and not to some process) at an unknown point in time, in the future: it’s definitely not now, since it’s obviously raining now! It’s the same trick as in English, we use the present tense but it’s really about some future event. The verb *otići* (...) perf. *go, leave* is also used since we are going to accomplish that, not just start an activity and who knows if we make the beach...

The word *kad(a)* starts a *time clause*. The word order is the same as in other kinds of clauses: check the previous sentence in the past tense (word positions in superscripts):

Otisli smo na plažu [kad je kiša prestala]. *We went to the beach  otići past-pl [when the rain stopped].*

Such use of the present tense of perfective verbs in clauses to express future events is widespread in Croatian.

We can use impf. verbs in time clauses too:

**Idem tramvajem kad pada kiša**. *I go by tram when it’s raining.*

The sentence above has both verbs in the present tense, meaning it’s universal, it happened and it will happen again. There are no very strict rules how to use tenses in time clauses, but the main uses are summarized in the following table. It also indicates that in some cases we can use only one type of verbs (impf. or perf.). We *have* to use perf. verbs if we are just waiting for a defined point in time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>kad</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>past</td>
<td>kad</td>
<td>past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pres.</td>
<td>kad</td>
<td>pres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pres.</td>
<td>kad</td>
<td>pres. (perf.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>biti (je²⁺) → (bude)</td>
<td>immediate future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>future</td>
<td>kad</td>
<td>(pot.) future (impf.) biti (je²⁺) → (bude)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Like in *purpose clauses*, the verb *biti* (je² +) be is replaced by *bude* in such time clauses – but only for future events, instead of the ordinary present forms.

**Otišli smo na plažu**^A** kad je bilo toplo.** We went to the beach when it **otići** past-mpl was warm. (past)

**Odlazimo na plažu**^A** kad je toplo.** We go to the beach when it’s warm. (universal)

**Odemo na plažu**^A** kad je toplo.** We go to the beach when it’s warm. **otići** (universal)

**Otići ćemo na plažu**^A** kad bude toplo.** We’ll go to the beach when it gets warm. (future)

**Odlazimo na plažu**^A** kad bude toplo.** (immediate future, the same meaning)

In such use, the verb (*bude*) is usually translated with *get, become*. English does not use the future tense in such sentences, but when Croatian time clauses contain an imperfective verb, future should be used, actually the *potential future* tense (i.e. one that uses *bude*):

**Trebat ću kišobran**^A** kad bude padala kiša**^N. I’ll need an umbrella when it’s raining.

Any *future actions* (employing impf. verbs) in time clauses must use the potential future tense in the Standard Croatian. In real life, you’ll often see and hear just the common future tense as well.

There are *six more conjunctions* often used in time clauses (some of which consist of more than one word, but behave as one unit, and some of which have alternative forms):

- **dok while (+ until)**
- **prije nego što before**
- **nakon što after**
- **čim as soon**
- **kad god / kadgod whenever**
- **otkad(a) / otkako since**

There’s not much to say about conjunctions in the right column – use them instead of **kad(a)** and you’ll have a different meaning but everything said above stays the same. For example:

**Radi otkad je došla.** She has been working since she arrived. **doći** past-f

Croatian uses the present tense for an ongoing action (as usual), and the whole sentence is much shorter, with the exactly same meaning.

The conjunction **dok** actually means *while*. When used with impf. verbs, it corresponds to English *while*. The main action lasts while the action in the clause lasts (which is a period of time, since it has an impf. verb):

**Kuham dok su djeca**^N** u školi**^DL. I cook *while children are at school.*

*Negated perfective verbs* indicate that some event (still) didn’t happen; we can do something while it still doesn’t happen, i.e. *until it happens*. And that’s how Croatian expresses *until*:

^A = adaptive case
^N = nominal
^DL = double letter
Kuham meso dok ne postane mekano. I cook meat until it gets soft.

The verb postati (postane) perf. become is another verb that can be translated as get. Actually, we could have used (bude) in this sentence, with almost no difference in meaning. The conjunction is not dok ne, the verb in the clause is just negated. Let’s put it to the past tense:

Kuhala sam meso dok nije postalo mekano. I cooked meat until it got soft.

The action (cooking) lasts until the event in the time clause happens (which is an instant, since it’s a perf. verb). Also, we don’t use a subject pronoun in the clauses above, since it’s obvious that the subject is meso meat.

Something important: negation in this case is not an ordinary one: it’s a kind of limited, almost ‘empty’. It implies that something will be accomplished. Therefore, words like nikad(a) never, ništa nothing and so are normally not used in such clauses. Despite the negated verb, the overall meaning of the clause is not negative. So it’s normal to say:

Pokušavao sam dok nisam našao nešto. I tried until I found something.

This is an apparent exception to the ‘all-negative’ rule. Actually, the sentence implies that the speaker eventually found something, not nothing. So nešto something will be used here.

It’s common to emphasize dok (in this role) as sve dok:

Kuhala sam meso sve dok nije postalo mekano. Perfective-like verbs, such as vidjeti see are usually understood as plain perfective verbs, so they can be used only with dok + negation (i.e. meaning until); so, we can’t say while I see... in Croatian:

Ne znam dok ne vidim. I don’t know until I see.

If something happens when you see something, use kad(a).

You must pay attention when you need prije nego što and nakon što: Croatian cannot simply reuse prije or poslije with clauses. For example:

(1) I’ll clean the yard before the rain. (before + noun)
(2) I’ll clean the house [before the guests arrive]. (before starts a clause)

Here English just uses the same word to start a clause as the one put before a noun. The Croatian conjunction is more complicated:

(1) Ocistit ću dvorište prije kiše.
(2) Ocistit ću kuću prije nego što dođu gosti.

The three words prije nego što behave as one unit, and second-place words must
come right after it. The same holds for nakon što, corresponding to both prepositions nakon and poslije. The word order is illustrated by the sentence #2 put to the past tense:

Očistio sam kuću prije nego što su došli gosti.

Sometimes, when perfective verbs are used after prije nego što, you will find ‘empty’ negations:

Zaustavi ga prije nego što ne bude prekasno. (sometimes) Stop him before it’s too late. (or: it gets)

This is not mandatory (unlike when expressing until), you don’t have to use it, but be prepared to hear and read such negations once a while, and apply your common sense then.

Expressing after with nakon što is very similar:

Očistit ću kuću nakon što odu gosti. I’ll clean the house after the guests leave.

There’s never an ‘empty’ negation with nakon što.

After prije nego što and nakon što you can use any tense. It includes using perfective verbs in the present tense (as in the examples above) – it refers to the future then. If you want to express that something happened before something else, and both things happened in the past (from your point of speaking), both verbs should be in the past (see the examples above). You can also put both parts in the future, but with perf. verbs, using the present tense for future events is much more common.

This compares prepositions with conjunctions (used to start time clauses):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>+ noun (in G)</th>
<th>+ clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>while</td>
<td>za vrijeme</td>
<td>dok (impf.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>until</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>dok (perf.) + “neg.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before</td>
<td>prije</td>
<td>prije nego što</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>after</td>
<td>poslije</td>
<td>nakon što</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here “neg.” stands for the mandatory, but ‘empty’ negation. (Of course, nouns can be with one or more adjectives, with appended nouns in genitive etc.)

You will sometimes hear and read just prije nego without što. It’s not common in speech, at least mine.

It not uncommon to start a sentence with a time clause; as in English, a comma (,) is used then:
Čim padne noc[^1], idemo spavati. As soon the night falls, we are going to sleep.

Sometimes, you’ll encounter two weird things involving dok. First, in some regions, colloquially, it’s used also in the meaning when, that is, instead of kad(a).[^2] This is from the Internet:

Dok dođe vrijeme ručka baš i nisam gladna[^3]. (colloq., sometimes) When the lunch time comes, I’m not really hungry.

(The baš i is here a way to say really. There’s no comma: in colloquial writing, commas are often left out.)

Second, the mandatory negation after dok + perf. verb to express until is... not 100% mandatory. It can be (rarely) left out. It’s not really clear if there’s a small difference in meaning or not; I don’t think there is.

These two weird things collide. Due to the first thing, dok + perf. verb could mean when; due to the second thing, until. You’ll have to apply your common sense if you hear or read a weird sentence with dok.[^4]

[^1]: Instead of kuhati, the form kuvati is used in Serbia, and in parts of Bosnia and Croatia (however, it’s not standard in Croatia).

Leaving the ‘empty’ negation out after dok seems to be more common in Serbia; however, using dok in meaning when is known only in Croatia, and likely mostly in the northern regions. It seems that people who use dok as when never leave the ‘empty’ negation out when expressing until, which could explain why leaving the ‘empty’ negation out is less common in Croatia.

**Something Possibly Interesting**

The ‘empty’ negation of perfective verbs after dok is also called ‘pleonastic’, ‘expletive’, ‘paratactic’, and maybe there are more weird names. (In this case, ‘expletive’ doesn’t mean vulgar!) You’ll see in the following chapters there’s a number of constructions where such negation is used, mostly with perfective verbs in various clauses.

Various ‘empty’ negations – often in expressions which translate to English until – are a feature of many languages, including French, Spanish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and of course, languages closely related to Croatian, such as Russian.

It’s interesting that Russian has future tense only for impf. verbs. When you want to express future for perf. verbs, you simply use their present tense forms. Confusingly, present tense forms of perf. verbs are often listed in Russian grammars as ‘future tense’. This is an oversimplification: of course, they can express everyday events and similar things.
• Examples

A song by late singer-songwriter Arsen Dedić, Takvim sjajem može sjati It can shine with such radiance, contains a number of time clauses (I’ve put them in brackets [...]). In most of them, the verb (bude) is used.

The first verses contain some archaic words: ljeto here means year, and bješe is the so-called imperfect tense, which is extremely rare today, so rare I don’t know other forms. It was simply another past tense, no real difference in meaning. Also, the adjective naš is placed after the noun, which is often done in poetry, but almost never in speech.

Ljubav našaN ranih ljetaG za obojeN bješe jadN sad je pravaN, sad je svetaN [kada više nisam mladN] (Arsen Dedić)

Our love of early years was misery for both now it’s true, now it’s sacred [when I’m not young anymore]

The adjective pravi corresponds to many related English meanings: correct, true, right; it will be explained in detail in 79 You’re Wrong and Other Phrases.

The following verses have a similar structure:

Ove bitkeN, ove raneN otkrit će ljepotu svuN [kada budu stvari davneN] [kad ne budu više tu] These battles, these wounds will uncover all beauty [when they become things long gone] [when they aren’t here anymore]

The second verse uses the perfective verb otkriti (otkrije) perf. uncover, discover. The last two verses have (bude) instead of biti (je² +) be.

In the following verse, što te muče is a short relative clause, literally which bother you; such clauses will be introduced later.

Ova jutraN što teA muče Pružit će i tebiN sveA [kada sutra bude jučer a tiN budeš koN zna gdje] These mornings bothering you will offer everything to you as well [when tomorrow becomes yesterday and you get who knows where]

In the second verse, there is a perfective verb from the pair with various meanings:

pružati ~ pružiti stretch, extend; offer

This verb pair basically means extend, stretch (e.g. legs) but also offer (e.g. help, support) to someone (expressed in DL, of course). The last two verses have again (bude).

In the last verse, ko is a colloquial form of tko who.

You can listen to it on YouTube™.
Exercise

Complete the following sentences:

Ne idemo na more ______(a) ____ (b) ______(c). We don’t go to the seaside when it’s cold.
____(d) ______(e) _____ (f) vozim. I don’t drink while I drive.
______(g) kiša ______(h) _____ (i) ______(j). It has been raining since we arrived.
Doći ________(k) ________(l) _____(m) toplo. We’ll come when it gets warm.

Check answers here.
55 More Prepositions

It might be a surprise to you that in Croatian, most prepositions require nouns in genitive.

There are various spatial prepositions that indicate closeness; they are shown here from the closest to the most distant:

- dož + G by
- poredž + G beside
- uzž + A next to
- kodž + G at, by
- okož + G around
- blizuž + G near

Not all prepositions listed above use the genitive case, but are listed here because they belong to this group. The word blizu is not strictly a preposition, as it can be used on its own.

There a very interesting preposition that indicates (when used with DL, you’ll see other uses later!) that a motion is along surface, broadly understood:

- pož + DL on the surface of

For example, if somebody (e.g. a child) is crawling on the floor – Croatian has the verb puzati (puže) – you would use this preposition to indicate space where the motion happens. It’s not a direction (you don’t indicate what the goal is) but a kind of location:

DijeteN puže po poduDL. The child is crawling on the floor.

The preposition naž + DL is not used when you describe motion.

Another classic use of this preposition with DL is to describe a motion that’s constantly against some surface, e.g. jumping or banging:

GoranN skače po krevetuDL. Goran is jumping on the bed.

The difference between naž + A and pož + DL when expressing motion can be nicely illustrated with the following sentences:

Trčim na plažuA. (A) I’m running to the beach.
Trčim po plažiDL. (DL) I’m running on the beach.

The first sentence expresses destination, the second location (as a surface) where the entire motion happens. Another common use of pož + DL is when someone is traveling across a country, i.e. visiting many parts (regardless of the country not perceived as a surface):

Putujemo po EuropiDL. We’re traveling across Europe.

There’s another preposition:

premaž + DL towards / according to

This preposition is used to describe orientation or direction, not a destination, e.g.
when you tell someone to move two steps in the direction of something, or you turn towards something (which can be a cardinal direction).

It’s also used to express ‘according to’, either a person or something else:

Ovo^N nije prema pravilima^DL. This is not according to the rules.
Prema karti^DL, imamo još dva kilometra\(^{24}\) do vrha^G. According to the map, we have two kilometers more to the top.

Together with the generic pronoun to, it’s used in a frequent phrase to start a sentence:

Prema tome,... ‘According to that,...’ = Therefore,...

Some nouns have specific meanings with prepositions. One of most common is red. This noun has one generic meaning: order. For instance, the TV series Law & Order is translated as Zakon i red.

A common phrase that includes a preposition and this word is:

u redu^DL alright, OK

This is, for example, used in a frequent phrase:

Sve^N je u redu^DL. Everything is OK.

However, there’s a derived meaning of this noun: an order of waiting, either a physical waiting line, or a waiting list. When you are waiting and someone else is also waiting, there are specific meanings with prepositions u^- and na^-:

u^- + red (DL / A) waiting, in line
na^- + red (DL / A) at the front, about to be served

I wrote (DL / A) to remind you that the usual distinction of location (DL) vs. destination (A) applies here as well, no matter how metaphorical the place is. For instance, when you want to tell someone that it’s his or her turn to be served, you should say (politely, or to a group):

Vi^N ste na redu^DL. You’re next.

(The Croatian expression is also used when people are talking turns, it corresponds to It’s your turn. then.). However, there’s another way (a bit rarer) to express this, which used ‘rotated’ cases, now one who is about to be served is expressed with na^-:

Red^N je na vas^A. (the same meaning)

Another example, if you ask who should be served (you can hear it in shops, when more than one person is waiting at one counter):

Tko^N je na redu^DL? Who’s next?

There’s yet another preposition which is used in waiting:
preko reda bypassing the line

There’s another often used preposition:

**o**" + DL about

It’s mostly used with the following verbs:

- **brinuti** (brine) se^2^ care
- **pisati** (piše) write
- **ovisiti** depend
- **razgovarati** («) talk

For example (recall, you must use a stressed pronoun with a preposition):

**Sve^N^ ovisi o njemu^DL^**. *Everything depends on him.*

However, with the verb **misliti** think, this preposition is not used in the way you maybe expect. It’s rather:

**misliti**

+ **na**" + A think about

+ A + **o**" + DL have opinion on

For example:

**Ne mislim na nju^A^**. *I’m not thinking about her.*

There are more ‘quasi-locations’. One example, which corresponds to an English phrase, is:

**u obliku** + G in the shape of

(The word **oblik** (oblik-) is an exception to stress-shift rules.) For example:

**Imam kutiju^A^ u obliku^DL^ srca^G^**. *I have a heart-shaped box.*

Another interesting construction uses two prepositions, and can be roughly translated as **unlike**:

**za razliku od** + G unlike X, Y

It’s usually used to contrast subject of the sentence with something else. An example will make it clearer:

**Za razliku^A^ od Austrije^G^, Hrvatska^DL^ ima more^A^**. *Unlike Austria, Croatia has the sea.*

There’s something interesting when prepositions are used with **indefinite pronouns and adverbs**. When they are used with ones starting with **ni-**, the prefix **ni-** gets detached and becomes a separate word that is placed **before the preposition**. As you can see from the table, this doesn’t happen for other indefinite pronouns, and it doesn’t happen when the preposition **bez**" without is used – something unexpected happens then:
The same holds for e.g. *nitko* *nobody* and adverbs like *nikuda*. However, in colloquial communication, the ‘split pronoun rule’ is not really respected, so you’ll hear and see *od ničega* quite often.

* Instead of *Europa*, a slightly different word *Evropa* is used in Serbia.
Let me explain how to say *I want her to dance* in Croatian, and more. In such expressions, Croatian has a completely different approach than English, and frankly, Croatian approach is simpler.

English is a *subject-oriented* language. You *have to express a subject* even when it does not make any sense (*e.g.* *it rains*). When you express desires, you basically express wishes about someone or something (don’t worry, it will get really clear soon). Croatian is quite *verb-oriented* – subjects are usually omitted, they *cannot be expressed* when they would make no sense; when you express wishes, you express that you want something to happen.

This sounds really abstract, but an example will make it perfectly clear:

\[ X = \text{ona}^N \text{she} \]
\[ Y = (\text{ona}^N) \text{pleše} \text{ she dances} \]

Now, how to express that you want X and then Y in English? The sentence *I want X* just takes an object you wish (X), and if it’s a pronoun, it goes to the object case (the equivalent of the accusative case in Croatian):

*I want X = I want her.*

However, if you *want Y*, you have to rephrase the action, you still want *her*, but *to do* something:

*I want Y = I want her to dance.*

From *she dances* we arrived to *her to dance*, quite a transformation in English. Spanish is verb-oriented, like Croatian, but it requires a special form of verb (*subjunctive*) after *que* in desired or imagined events... Croatian is way simpler:

Ž*elim nju*. *I want her.*

Ž*elim da (ona) pleše*. *I want her to dance.* (lit. *da* + *she dances*)

The first sentence uses exactly the same construction as in English, but the second one is completely different. It uses the conjunction *da* and then simply what you want to happen!

Verbs after *da* obviously don’t refer to anything going on right now: they are just desired events and processes. Therefore, you can freely use perf. verbs, and you have to do so, if you want something to get accomplished:

Ž*elim da pročitaš knjigu*. *I want you to read the book.* (lit. ‘*that you read the book completely’*)

The part starting with *da* is again a clause – a *desire clause*, very similar to purpose clause (introduced in 50 *Because, In Order To, Why: Reasons*). The placement of words follows the same rules:
Htiō sām² [da¹ me^A² nazoveš]. *I wanted you to call me.*

It will likely be some effort to learn such sentences, since their structure is completely different than in English, and they often use perf. verbs:

Želim da se Ana^N vratiti. *I want Ana to come back.* (lit. ‘that Ana comes back’, perf.)

There’s nothing special about negation in this kind of clauses:

Želim da ne pada kiša^N. *I want it not to rain.* (lit. ‘that the rain doesn’t fall’)

Like in purpose clauses, there are two restrictions. First, you can use only the present tense after da (but you can use perf. verbs). Second, the verb biti (je^²+) *be* is almost always replaced by (bude), for example:

Toplo je. *It’s warm.*

Želim da bude toplo. *I want it to be warm.*

If you now think that the conjunction da is some special word that introduces imagined, desired events and processes in Croatian, and that verbs in clauses after it always come in the present tense, stop immediately.

The word da has about a zillion uses in Croatian, and demands on verbs after da are determined by the main verb.

For other verbs in the main sentence, there can be other rules for use of verbs in clauses. There are four main types of clauses in Croatian, regarding behavior of verbs in them (I’ve invented the names, there are no established names):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main types of clauses in Croatian</th>
<th>indicative (the default)</th>
<th>(counter)factual</th>
<th>atemporal</th>
<th>infinitive ® (see below!)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>any tense</td>
<td>no perf. verbs in present</td>
<td>only past or present</td>
<td>perf. verbs allowed</td>
<td>only verbs in inf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no perf. verbs in present</td>
<td></td>
<td>no perf. verbs in present</td>
<td>biti (je^²+) → (bude)</td>
<td>perf. verbs allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no conjunction used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Atemporal-type clauses – like ones with željeti above – express the subject, but not tense. Infinitive-type clauses cannot even express the subject, and they aren’t really clauses at all, as words attached to inf can be scattered in the sentence:

Želim piti čaj^A. *I want to drink tea.*

Željela te^A je vidjeti. *She wanted to see you.*
(Such sentences have been covered in 38 Needs, Wishes and Intentions.)

The division above is general, it does not say what conjunction you should use with indicative and atemporal-type. Reason clauses start with jer and are of indicative-type. Desire clauses start with da and are of atemporal-type. There are other clauses that start with da and are of indicative-type, as you’ll see soon.

Also, there are clauses that don’t fall into any of types above, e.g. time clauses with kad – they have special rules.

There are four more common verbs (actually, two of them are verb pairs) that use an object and a clause of atemporal-type:

- moliti (+ A) (+ DC) kindly ask
- pozivati (») ▷ pozvati (pozove) (+ A) (+ DC) call, invite
- slati (šalje) ▷ po- (+ A) (+ DC) send
- zahtijevati (») (+ od G) (+ DC) demand

The DC stands, of course, for a ‘desire clause’. This is how you politely ask someone to do something. For example:

**Molim te da zatvoriš prozor**. Please, close the window. (lit. ‘I’m kindly asking you that you close the window.’)

Pay attention that in all such sentences, the optional object of the main verb is the same as the subject in the clause: te above is 2nd pers. sing., and zatvoriš is in the same person (and number).

Another example (unfortunately, I don’t know a simple translation to English):

**Poslala sam ga da kupi kruh**. lit. ‘I’ve sent him that he buys bread.’

You could, in principle, use infinitives with slati, instead of clauses, but it’s quite rare in speech.

So far we have seen a few atemporal-type clauses: purpose clauses and desire clauses. Atemporal clauses don’t always have to do anything with purposes or desires. In fact, there’s a common verb that uses atemporal da-clauses:

**čekati wait**

The following example illustrates again how Croatian is sometimes simpler than English: in Croatian you just wait for an event, while in English you wait for someone to do something (recall, Croatian is verb-oriented):

**Čekam da me nazoveš**. I’m waiting for you to call me. (lit. ‘that you call me’)

In all these sentences, clauses are really objects – and ‘things’, actually events – therefore you can just ask:

**Što želiš? What do you want?**
— Da zatvoriš prozor\(^*\). lit. ‘That you close the window.’

Answers are usually short, but they must be full clauses, what is desired, i.e. da is mandatory.

Next, there are a couple of impersonal phrases (with an experiencer in DL) that can use atemporal clauses:

\begin{itemize}
  \item bitno
  \item stalo + DL + biti (je\(^2\) +)° + da...
  \item važno
\end{itemize}

They mean *it’s important, it matters to DL that...* For example:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Bitno mi\(^{pl}\) je da ga\(^A\) nazoveš. lit. ‘It’s important to me that you call him.’
  \item Stalo mi\(^{pl}\) je da dođeš. lit. ‘I care that you come.’
\end{itemize}

(The idiomatic use of *stalo* was introduced in 52 *Stand, Become, Exist, Cease.*)

Of course, you can further strengthen these expressions by putting *stvarno really, jako much, a lot or prilično quite a lot* in front of adverbs:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Ani\(^{pl}\) je jako važno da vratiš novce\(^A\). *It’s very important to Ana that you return the money.*
\end{itemize}

(In Croatian, the noun novac (novc-) *money* is sometimes used in plural as well.)

The phrases, except ones with *stalo*, can be also used without any experiencer, as ‘objective’, ‘independent’ statements:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Važno je da vratiš novce\(^A\). *It’s important that you return the money.*
\end{itemize}

Suggestions and permissions use the same grammar: they will be described in 71 *Suggestions, Permissions and More Verbs*.

However, other superficially similar impersonal expressions, like *drago mi je...* use a different type of clauses – indicative-type clauses, so you can use any tense, but not perf. verbs in the present tense. They will be introduced in 59 *Knowing and Telling: Content and Noun Clauses*.

If both a desire clause and a purpose clause are used in the same sentence, the purpose clause comes last:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Želim [da kupiš mobitel\(^A\)] [da možemo razgovarati svaki dan\(^A\)]. \(3m/n\) moći pres-1pl
    \begin{itemize}
      \item want you to buy a cellphone so that we can talk every day. \(\star\)
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

Finally, there’s a form that extends the rules described above: the verb *voljeti* (voli,...) *used in conditional*. (Hopefully, you recall this verb shifts its meaning a bit in conditional.) It is a very common way to express wishes. When talking about *possible future things* (or even things possible right now) with this verb in conditional, *inf* is used \(\star\). Using *inf* is possible only if someone expresses a desire
about himself or herself. If the subject is different – or there’s none, i.e. it’s something impersonal – a desire clause must be used:

(1) Voljela bih [imati veliku kuću\(^4\)]. I’d like [to have a big house]. (I = female)

Voljela bih [da bude sunčano]. I wish [it would be sunny].

So, with wishes for the future, the conditional of voljeti (voli,\(\ldots\)) behaves like any verb expressing desires.

However, this form also allows you to express wishes about the present and the past, like the English verb wish: wishes that are opposed to the past or the present state. The conditional is then used with da-clauses in both past and present tense:

(2) Volio bih [da sam to\(^4\) znao]. I wish [I had known that]. (I = male)

Volio bih [da imamo veću kuću\(^4\)]. I wish [we had a bigger house].

(The adjective veći bigger is a comparative adjective; comparatives will be introduced in 63 Bigger and Better: Comparatives).

There’s a very important difference: in English, wishes about the past or present have time-shifted verbs (had known, had; actually, subjunctive) since they relate to imaginary states or events. Not so in Croatian: there’s no time-shift for unreal, imaginary states and actions.

Be careful. Clauses in sentences #2 are not desire clauses: they can be in the past tense as well, and biti (je\(^2\) +) be is not replaced by (bude):

Volio bih da je sunčano. I wish it were sunny. (about now: it isn’t)

Clauses of the type #2 are (counter)factual. We’ll meet them again in 70 If I Were: Conditional Sentences. In the present tense, they look almost the same as desire clauses, but when using the verb biti (je\(^2\) +) be the difference is clear – desire clauses use (bude) instead:

Voljela bih da bude sunčano. I wish it would be sunny. (wish for the future)

In most circumstances, this is a very fine difference. The same construction is possible with the verbs htjeti (\(\ldots\)) and željeti (\(\ldots\)) in conditional, but they are significantly less used so.

\[®\] There’s a preference in Serbia (actually, the preference is stronger more you go to southeast) to use atemporal clauses starting with da instead of infinitive clauses:

Želim [da pijem čaj\(^4\)]. I want to drink tea. (Serbia, esp. southeast)

Since da bude is then used instead of biti (due to the the rule in atemporal clauses) many Serbian grammars consider bude as the pres-3 form of the verb biti be, which is just absurd, especially from the Croatian standpoint.
In Bosnia, instead of *kruh*, *hljeb* is mostly used; in Serbia, it’s “Ekavian” *hleb*.

In Bosnia and Serbia, *mobile phone* is called *mobilni* (changes as an adjective).

In Serbia, there seem to be no difference in *volio bih da...* vs *volio bih + inf*, and infinitives are rare in speech there anyway.

**Examples**

The song *Korak od sna A step away from dream*, is a pop song by *Prljavo kazalište Dirty Theater*, a pop-rock band from Zagreb, from 1983. It has fairly simple lyrics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jedan tako običan dan</td>
<td>One so ordinary day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jedna djevojka</td>
<td>one girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koju jedva da znam</td>
<td>who I barely know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I jedan prazan stan</td>
<td>and an empty apartment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dovoljan razlog</td>
<td>a sufficient reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>za još jednu laž</td>
<td>for one more lie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The construction *koju jedva da znam* is a *relative clause*: they will be covered in the following chapters. The noun *laž* f *lie* is another feminine noun not in -a to remember.

The next verses are simple, note that Croatian never switches case in constructions like *you and me*: only ‘you and I’ is possible when in position requiring the N case:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ti i ja</td>
<td>You and me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi smo korak sad od sna</td>
<td>we are now a step away from dream</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the expression *korak od sna*, *korak* is actually a *quantity*, and therefore in A (which is equal to N for this noun). If we would take e.g. *sekunda second*, the matching expression would be *sekundu od sna*.

And then we have a desire clause in the following verses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ne želim [da mi kažeš]</td>
<td>I don’t want [you to tell me]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o sebi sve</td>
<td>all about yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jer ovo nije vrijeme</td>
<td>because this is not a time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romea i Julije</td>
<td>of Romeo and Juliet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moje namjere nisu loše</td>
<td>my intentions aren’t bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o ne, ja ne ostavljam nikakve tragove</td>
<td>oh no, I don’t leave any tracks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Jasenko Houra)

The preposition *o’ about* requires DL, and consequently reflexive DL *sebi* is used. The normal word order would be ... *sve o sebi*, but it’s tweaked here to make it rhyme.

You can listen to it on YouTube™. Check the *performance* on *A strana* and the original version.
• Exercise

Fill in the sentences below:

Želim (a) ______ (b) ovamo. I want you to come here.
Čekamo (c) _____(d) ____________(e). We’re waiting for you to call us.
Ana (f) je molila da ______________(g) vrata. Ana asked them kindly to

open the door.

Volio bih (h) _____(i) ______________(j). I wish it were summer.

Voljela (k) _______(l) _____(m) ______________(n). I’d like to go to the

seaside.

Check answers here.
57 Whose, What Thing and What Like

There are two questions that look quite different in English:

*Whose is this book?*
*What is this book like?*

However, they are quite similar in Croatian, since both use question-words that are really adjectives:

ćiji whose  
kakav (kakv-) what... like / what kind

The questions above look like this in Croatian:

Čija[^1] je ova knjiga[^2]? Whose is this book?  
Kakva[^1] je ova knjiga[^2]? What is this book like?

Bear in mind that both words change in case, gender and number as any other adjectives: you can ask questions whose or what...like not only for subjects, but for any noun in a sentence:

Čiju knjigu žiceš? Whose book do you read?

You would answer with a possessive adjective, in the right case, matching the case of the question-word (obviously, the accusative case here), number (singular) and gender (feminine):

— Aninu. Ana’s.  
— Tvoju. Yours.

You can ask questions of type whose X is that. The word to is always in singular then (recall to su moje knjige):

Čija knjiga je to je? Whose book is that?  
Čija je to knjiga? (an alternative word order)  
— Moja. Mine.

With kakav (kakv-), it’s possible to ask two kinds of questions – about kind and impression.

To ask about impressions, use the verb biti (je² +) be. An answer is basically an adjective standing for a subjective experience:

Kakva je ta knjiga? What is that book like?  
— Malo dosadna. A bit boring.

It’s also possible to ask about kind – then the noun we’re asking is usually placed immediately after the question-word:

Kakvu knjigu čičeš? What kind of book are you reading?  
— Ljubavnu. A romance book. (lit. ‘Love.’)
Pay attention how both **kakvu** and **ljubavnu** are forms that again exactly match the gender and case of the noun you are asking about – here, feminine singular, the accusative case – as obvious from their endings!

Of course, it’s also possible to ask:

**Kakva knjiga**

| je to
|?

*What kind of book is that?*

**Kakva**

| je to
| **knjiga**

| (an alternative word order)

— **Ljubavna**

. lit. ‘Love.’

Colloquially, it’s possible to ask about personal opinions by adding the person in DL (recall 23 *I’m Cold: Basic Impressions*):

**Kakva**

| ti
ti
| DL
| je
|**knjiga**

| (colloq.) lit. ‘What is the book like to you?’

— **Dosadna**

. Boring.

This question would be best translated *how you like the book*. As you can see, superficially similar words (**ta**, **to**, **ti**) produce completely different meanings.

Finally, it’s possible to ask what book. Pay attention, not simply what (answers could be a book, a magazine, newspapers etc.), but what book.

For questions of type what book, what car, Croatian uses a specific question-adjective:

**koji** (a bit specific forms) what... / which

Its forms basically follow the same pattern as **moj** my – there are longer and shorter forms. You can in principle use both forms, but longer, regular ones – **kojeg**, **kojem** – are much more common, and standard in Croatia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DL</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>koja</td>
<td>koku</td>
<td>kojoy</td>
<td>koje</td>
<td>kojom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>koje</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>koj(u)</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td><strong>kojem(u)</strong></td>
<td><strong>kojeg(a)</strong></td>
<td><strong>kojim</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(not p/a)</td>
<td>kom(e) ®</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>koj</td>
<td>= G</td>
<td><strong>kog(a)</strong> ®</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(p/a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Forms for the fem. gender are, as usual, plain adjective forms, they are listed here just for completeness sake.)

Some forms also have *optional* vowels at their end. There’s absolutely no difference between **kojeg** and **kojega**, and both forms are used (unlike common adjectives, where such vowels are used only occasionally in writing). For instance:

**Koju knjigu**

| Ćitaš?
|? What book are you reading?
| (you would answer with the title of the book)
Croatian makes no difference between such questions and *which*-questions (asking what item from a given selection). In fact, the word *koji* is often translated as *which* and I personally have problems when to use *what* and when *which* in English, since my native language has no such distinction!

Croatian has no pronoun matching the English *one*. You can answer such questions using the determining adjective only (in the right case, gender and number, of course):

Koju jabuku^želiš? *Which apple do you want?*
— Zelenu^Ž. *The green one.*

Koje vino^želiš? *Which wine do you want?*
— Crno^². *Red.* (lit. ‘black’)

Don’t forget that prepositions also go before the question word, but with these questions, prepositions *can be left out in answers*:

Na kojem trgu^DL je koncert^N? *‘Which city square is the concert on?’*
— Na glavnom^DL. *On the main one.*
— Glavnom^DL. *The main one.*

Likewise, if the context is known, you can ask just:

Koju^želiš? *Which one do you want?*

The word _to that_ can be added to most *čiji, kakav (kakv-) and koji* questions, emphasizing they’re about something present, visible, close to speaker:

Čiju^A to^N knjigu^A čitaš? *Whose book are you reading?* (I saw you reading it)

Kakvu^A to^N knjigu^A čitaš? *What kind of book are you reading?* (I saw you reading it)

From the adjectives *čiji* and *kakav (kakv-)* there are the following generic adjectives (sometimes called ‘pronouns’):

- *svačiji* everybody’s
- *svakakav (svakakv-) of every kind, diverse*
- *nečiji* someone’s
- *nekakav (nekakv-) of some kind*
- *ničiji* nobody’s
- *nikakav (nikakv-) of no kind, of poor quality*

The adjectives derived from *kakav (kakv-)* cannot be easily translated into English.

For example:

Nečiji pas^N je pred ulazom¹. *Someone’s dog is in front of the entrance.*

Nekakav pas^N je pred ulazom¹. *A dog of some sort is in front of the entrance.*

Adjectives above starting with _ni-_ require the verb to be negated as well, as usual:

Ne vidim nikakvog psa^A. *I don’t see any dog.* (lit. ‘I don’t see no kind of dog.’)

Here *nikakav (nikakv-) has meaning close to English *no*, but keep in mind it _requires negation_ of the verb.
Shorter forms of the adjective **koji** – **kog(a)** and **kom(e)** – prevail in Bosnia and Serbia, and are also standard there (beside the longer forms).

**Exercise**

Complete the following sentences:

(a) ________ (b) želiš? **Which apple would you like?**
(c) ________ (d) to ________ (e)? **Whose keys are these?**
(f) ________ (g) želite? **What kind of sandwich would you like?**

Check answers [here](#).
58 Colloquial and Formal

If you look into a Croatian dictionary and look for a word for clothes iron (the thing to iron your shirt), very likely, you’ll find the word glačalo. However, that word is extremely rare in real use: a large majority uses another word, pegla (there’s yet another word for that term, which will be explained below).

The word glačalo is considered ‘standard’ and ‘formal’ and will be used only in formal circumstances, in written formal language; in casual writing, even in newspapers, pegla dominates, it’s more than 20 times more common. We say that the word pegla is colloquial.

There are some formal nouns that are almost never used in speech, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Std. Croatian</th>
<th>colloq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>airplane</td>
<td>zrakoplov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fridge</td>
<td>hladnjak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elevator</td>
<td>dizalo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you do a Google™ search on the .hr domain for the phrases u liftu and u dizalu (both meaning in elevator, of course), you’ll get results like these:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>colloquial word</th>
<th>count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>u liftu</td>
<td>34600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u dizalu</td>
<td>3480</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such results, 10:1 in favor of the colloquial word – in writing! – are common: many colloquial words prevail even in newspapers and fiction books, including translations. However, you will see the rare standard word from time to time.

Sometimes, Standard Croatian uses a whole phrase, while in everyday use, there is a simple word:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Std. Croatian</th>
<th>colloq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>whipped cream</td>
<td>tučeno slatko vrhnje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semolina</td>
<td>pšenična krupica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following adjectives are common but colloquial; however standard words are often used as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Std. Croatian</th>
<th>colloq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fresh</td>
<td>svjež</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violet</td>
<td>ljubičast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pink</td>
<td>ružičast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are couple of verbs as well, again the standard words are heard as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Std. Croatian</th>
<th>colloq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lack, miss</td>
<td>nedostajati (nedostaje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fry</td>
<td>pržiti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are some nouns that are specific to Croatian, and feel more formal, but they are used alongside other, international-sounding nouns, and there’s even a small difference in meaning (that’s not always observed):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>library</th>
<th>knjižnica</th>
<th>biblioteka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>music</td>
<td>glazba</td>
<td>muzika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>system</td>
<td>sustav</td>
<td>sistem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, there are some verbs that are usually used in a form that’s slightly different than in a (Standard Croatian) dictionary. Two common verbs are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>colloq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
<td>brojiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paint</td>
<td>bojiti</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the internet, colloquial forms are 3-4 times more common than the standard forms (which are basically limited to newspapers, books, and official writings), and the colloquial forms completely prevail in speech. The meaning paint above doesn’t include art, only when you paint a fence, wall, etc.

Many verbs with inf in -jeti also have a standard and a colloquial form. For example, these are standard forms:

- smrdjeti (smrdi, smrdio, smrdjela) stink
- starjeti (stari, stario, starjela) grow old
- svrbjeti (svrbi, svrbio, svrbjela) itch
- štedjeti (štedi, štedio, štedjela) save (money, resources)
- vrtjeti (vrti, vrtio, vrtjela) spin, turn

Instead of these forms, you’ll very frequently see – especially in casual writing and conversation, but also in some newspapers – the following simplified forms, having just -i-:

- smrditi stink
- stariti grow old
- svrbiti itch
- štediti save (money, resources)
- vrtiti spin, turn

[colloquial, quite common]
Just compare Google™ statistics for *past-f* forms on the Internet (.hr domain):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>...jela</th>
<th>...ila</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>smrd...</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>9700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>star...</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svrb...</td>
<td>2800</td>
<td>2200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šted...</td>
<td>11000</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vrt...</td>
<td>14000</td>
<td>24000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bear in mind that the Internet also includes edited text (laws, newspapers) where colloquial forms are quite rare.

This applies also to derived verbs, simple *ostariti* is much more common than standard forms. For more information about such verbs, check A3 Verbs.

I will list all those verbs with both forms in the infinitive, e.g.

* vrtjeti / vrtiti spin, turn

There are nouns that are used in two forms in real life, one masculine, another feminine – and the feminine form actually prevails – while Standard Croatian insists on the masculine form only. The common ones are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>common (colloq.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>planet</td>
<td>planet</td>
<td>planeta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visit</td>
<td>posjet</td>
<td>posjeta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, Standard Croatian insists on three-way demonstrative adverbs of place and destination:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>loc.</th>
<th>dest.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>close</td>
<td>ovdje</td>
<td>ovamo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mid</td>
<td>tu</td>
<td>tamo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distant</td>
<td>ondje</td>
<td>onamo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the adverb *ondje* is quite rare in real life – you can find it mostly in books – most speakers use only two-way distinctions, while *tamo* serves two roles:
For example, on the newspaper site jutarnji.hr, the adverb *tamo* is 5 times more frequent than *ondje*. On the discussion site forum.hr, it’s 27 times more frequent. The adverb *onamo* is also less frequent than the others, so I’ve put it into brackets.

Sometimes, the Standard Croatian slowly accepts forms actually used. One example is the verb *koristiti* *use*. It can be used in three ways, and two of them have the same meaning:

- *koristiti* + A (very common, but non-standard)
- *koristiti se*² + I (less common, but standard)

Using this verb simply with A is being gradually accepted as standard.

Other colloquial words are regional, they are known only in one region, e.g. *šlapa* *house slipper*, to the point that frequently people from other regions will not be able to understand it.

The following colloquial nouns are commonly used in the coastal region (this is just a short list, there are many more):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Std./inland</th>
<th>coast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>bed sheet</em></td>
<td><em>plahta</em></td>
<td><em>lancun</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>fork</em></td>
<td><em>vilica</em></td>
<td><em>pirun</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>pillow</em></td>
<td><em>jastuk</em></td>
<td><em>kušin</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>towel</em></td>
<td><em>ručnik</em></td>
<td><em>šugaman</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you’ll see later, many such terms are related to home, especially food an cooking.

Often, there are *triplets* – one colloquial word dominates inland, another dominates coastal areas, and there’s a standard word which is used only rarely:
So, here’s the third term used for the *clothing iron* in Croatia. Some coastal-specific terms, such as *šumpreš*, are getting rare, at least in public, while inland (or standard) terms dominate. (Try Googling™ for *šumpreš*). However, *marenda* or *pomidor* are very common.

There are also triplets where all three terms are common in real life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>inland</th>
<th>coast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>screw (noun)</td>
<td>vijak (&lt;i&gt;vijk-&lt;/i&gt;)</td>
<td>šrafger</td>
<td>vida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slice (of cake, bread)</td>
<td>kriška</td>
<td>šnita</td>
<td>feta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can find more about features of language colloquially used in most coastal regions in 78 Dijete vs. Dite. (Note that colloquial use in Croatia includes also many novels, poetry and popular songs.)

Yet other colloquial words are restricted to just one age group, usually teenagers and young adults, e.g. *frend* friend (feminine version: *frendica*). It’s used at many places, but not by many grandmothers.

English has many word pairs, where one word is an inherited Germanic word, and another came from French or Latin (e.g. *freedom/liberty*, *stay/remain*, etc.). Croatian has similar pairs, where one word is inherited from Slavic, while another is Turkic or Greek:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Slavic</th>
<th>Turkic/Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bed</td>
<td>postelja</td>
<td>krevet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well</td>
<td>zdenac (&lt;i&gt;zdenc-&lt;/i&gt;)</td>
<td>bunar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kerchief</td>
<td>rubac (&lt;i&gt;rupc-&lt;/i&gt;)</td>
<td>marama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both words are used, and interestingly, often Turkic or Greek words prevail in standard use, even in actual speech, while Slavic prevail in some (western and coastal) regions, which were less influenced by Turks, and are found in poetry.

Besides colloquial words, there are colloquial ways of expressing various things. One
such thing is telling time in 12-hour manner, and in quarters and halves. It has two variants, inland and coastal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>time</th>
<th>inland</th>
<th>coast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>dva</td>
<td>dva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:15</td>
<td>frtalj tri</td>
<td>dva i kvarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>pol(a) tri (a) tri</td>
<td>dva i po(l)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:45</td>
<td>tri frtalj tri tri frtalja tri</td>
<td>tri manje kvarat dva i trikvarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>tri</td>
<td>tri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observe that inland, number of quarters is relative the last full hour, but expressions use 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 (frtalj-) comes from German ‘vierTEL’, meaning quarter). The same non-obvious scheme is common in Hungarian.

This is only a very shallow outline of the real language diversity in Croatia. If we would add neighboring countries (i.e. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) we would have more variation, especially in terms related to home and cooking, names of various tools, etc. Terms in Serbia sometimes are more common with colloquial terms in inland Croatia, due to the common German influence, so paradajz is spoken in both Zagreb and Belgrade; however, there are also many terms used in Serbia which are almost unknown in Croatia. A very brief overview of such terms is given in A9 Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin.

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* Expressing 14:30 as pola tri is also very common in Serbia and Bosnia, but tri frtalja tri = 14:45 is unknown in these countries.
• Examples

For example, this sign in front of a restaurant in Crikvenica, a coastal town in Croatia, advertises various lunches, using the plural form **marende**:

Meanwhile, this sign in Zagreb advertises lunches, using the plural form **gabeči**:
59 Knowing and Telling: Content and Noun Clauses

Let’s learn how to talk about anything else in Croatian. For instance, something has happened, for instance Ana has bought a car. Now, you know it, and you want to tell that fact. In English, you would say:

I know (that) Ana has bought a car.

In English, you simply add that + what you know, and the word that is usually left out. In Croatian, you must use the word da:

Znam da je Ana kupila auto. m

The word da holds the first position in the clause, as usual, so all second-position words (here just je²) come right after it:

Znam [da je² Ana kupila auto]. m

Such clauses that can hold any information, but follow the same rules as normal sentences, are called content clauses. The most common verbs used with such clauses are (by descending order of certainty):

znati know
vjerovati (vjeruje) believe
misliti think
pretpostavljati suppose

Out of these verbs, znati and misliti are most used in spoken language. The verb misliti normally means think, but with content clauses it maybe better translates as English guess, suppose, because it’s very uncommon to use it negated. Where you would say this in English:

I don’t think [they have fish].

In Croatian, the sentence would be phrased as:

Mislim [da nemaju ribu]. lit. ‘I think [they don’t have fish].’

Interestingly, the verb vjerovati (vjeruje) believe is mostly used in negative with content clauses:

Ne vjerujem [da imaju ribu]. I don’t believe [they have fish].

Note. The main verb is here negated, but the verb in the content clause isn’t: the all-negative-or-nothing principle works for each clause separately. Each clause – the main one and the inserted one – has its own word counting, and its own verb, which can be negative (which causes certain pronouns and adverbs to be negative) or not!

Such clauses can be used by verbs of information transfer (really, verb pairs). All of them allow for an optional recipient of information expressed in DL and a content clause (or an object in A):
čitati ~ pro- read
dokazivati (-uje «) ~ dokazati (dokaže) prove
javljati ~ javiti inform, let know
govrati («) ~ reći (reče, rekao, rekla) tell, say
objašnjavati («) ~ objasniti («) explain
pisati (piše) ~ na- («) write
pokazivati (-uje «) ~ pokazati (pokaže) show
priznavati (priznaje) ~ priznati admit

For example:
Objasnila je Ani da uči hrvatski. She explained to Ana that she has been learning Croatian.

The present tense forms of reći (...) are rare: the verb kazati (kaže) is usually used instead. This verb is also sometimes used in the true present tense, as an imperfective verb:
Kažem ti da nisam gladna. I’m telling you I’m not hungry.

Another option, common in colloquial speech in the Zagreb region, but also known elsewhere, is to use the verb (veli) which has present tense forms only:
Velim ti da nisam gladna. (colloq.) I’m telling you I’m not hungry.

This verb considered a bit archaic in other regions.

You can talk about what someone said (reported speech). For instance, someone said:
„Učim hrvatski.” “I’m learning Croatian.”

To report about it, you should (as in English) change it to the 3rd person, since you’re talking about someone else (here I assume that that person is female, but the Croatian sentence is here completely unspecific, since it’s in the present tense):
Kaže da uči hrvatski. She says she’s learning Croatian.
Znam da će padati kiša. I know it’s going to rain.

However, if you report about the past, in English the reported clause gets time-shifted, e.g.:
She said she was learning Croatian.
I knew it was going to rain.

There’s no time-shift in Croatian. We simply report things in the original tense (that’s one more thing where Croatian is simpler than English):
Rekla je da uči hrvatski.
Znala sam da će padati kiša.

Therefore, we literally say ‘I knew it will rain’.
Croatian content clauses are simply normal sentences inserted, with a da put to the front. There’s no rearrangement (except for the second position words coming after da). There’s no replacement of biti with (bude). Perfective verbs cannot be used in the present tense unless the verbs can be used in normal sentences, etc. This behavior is completely different from superficially similar desire or purpose clauses, which also start with da.

Next, you can use any information in your sentence. For example, where the car is:

**Gdje je auto?** Where is the car?  
**Znam [gdje je auto].** I know where the car is.

Pay attention how English *is* holds different positions in the question and the I-know sentence. This doesn’t happen in Croatian, *there’s no rearrangement whatsoever*. (You cannot use any other arrangement, as the question-word, here **gdje**, must start both a question and a derived clause).

Questions are simply re-used as clauses, now da must not be used, since you already have a "connecting" word to start the clause. The following examples are a ‘what’ and an ‘opinion’ clause:

**Što si rekao?** What did you say?  
**Čula sam [što si rekao].** I heard [what you said].

**Što da radim?** What *should* I do?  
**Ne znam [što da radim].** I don’t know [what I should do]. *(or what to do)*

I sometimes make mistakes in English, keeping the question word order – my native language has no rearrangement. You can use questions for reasons, time, etc.:

**Ne znam [zašto je otišla].** I don’t know why she left.

Next, you can express that you don’t know if something is true or not (or you’re trying to find out, or you’re interested in, etc.). In Croatian, you simply use yes/no questions as clauses:

**Je li kupila auto?** Did she buy a car?  
**Ne znam [je li kupila auto].** I don’t know if she bought a car.

Again, the English sentence must be rearranged – from a question to a report – but Croatian is not rearranged. You simply use questions as clauses!

However, you cannot use shortened forms of questions. In the following examples, shortened questions (S) cannot be used as clauses, only the full forms (F):

(F) **Da li da kupim auto?** Should I buy a car?  
(S) **Da kupim auto?** *(the same, but shortened)*  
**Ne znam [da li da kupim auto].** I don’t know if I should buy a car.

This applies to colloquial forms as well:
Besides znati know, and two verbs vidjeti (...) see and čuti (čuje) hear, introduced long ago, there are following common verbs of knowledge and perception:

- osjećati ~¹ osjetiti (+ A/CC) feel
- primjećivati (-uje «) ~¹ primijetiti («) (+ A/CC) notice
- razumjeti (razumije,...) (+ A/CC) understand
- shvaćati ~~ švatiti (+ A/CC) understand

You have likely noticed some special notation in the verb pair list (~¹, ~~). Actually, the perf. verbs in such pairs are not ordinary perf. verbs. They rather indicate start of state or a single instance. Therefore, osjetiti means feel for a moment, while švatiti indicates the moment you understood something – it’s implied you understand it from then on (like e.g. come to understand). Such verbs are explained in detail in 81 Sneeze Once and Start Blooming.

As with znati know, these verbs are used either with objects in A or content clauses:

- Primijetila je dana Nane⁶. She noticed that Ana wasn’t there. (lit. ‘that there was no Ana’)
- Osjećam da će padati kiša¹. I feel it’s going to rain.
- Razumijem da nema puno vremena⁶. I understand you don’t have much time.

Very similar are the following verbs and verb pairs:

- nadati se² (+ DL/CC) hope
- sanjati (+ A/CC) dream
- zamisljati («) ~ zamisliti (+ A/CC) imagine

For example:

Sanjao sam da sam na odmoru⁶. I dreamed I was on vacation.
Nadam se da je Ana¹ došla. I hope Ana has arrived.

(Observe again the tense shift in English vs. no shift in Croatian.)

You will sometimes see (mostly in writing) using kako instead of da when content clauses are objects of the verbs above. Recall this line from the example in the chapter 52 Stand, Become, Exist, Cease:

On¹ sanja [kako beskrajno pada] lit. ‘He’s dreaming [he’s falling endlessly]’

You can talk about content clauses, making them really subjects. Since they are not nouns, they behave as if neuter singular, as you can see from the past tense:

- Dobro je [da ne pada kiša¹]. It’s good [it’s not raining].
- Bilo je dobro [da nije padala kiša¹]. It was good [it wasn’t raining].
The second clause is in the past tense: we’re not reporting what somebody else said, but what was. There are a lot of similar ways to comment content, e.g. with the following words instead of *dobro*:

- **bolje** better  
- **loše** bad  
- **čudno** strange, weird  
- **očito** obvious  
- **glupo** stupid  
- **strašno** terrible  
- **jasno** clear  
- **šteta** too bad

You can use many other adjectives to comment on content, including colloquial *super great* and more. You can add also who thinks/feels that in DL:

- **Ani**[^1] je jasno da... *It’s clear to Ana that...*  
- **Ani**[^1] je bilo jasno da... *It was clear to Ana that...*

There’s one special rule – if you just comment (without who feels/thinks in DL) in the present tense, you can leave *je*[^2] out (I’m not completely sure if that’s accepted in standard or not, but it’s quite widespread):

**Dobro da ne pada kiša[^3]**. *It’s good it’s not raining.*

There are two very common and similar expressions, with stronger meaning than *dobro da*...:

- **srećom da...**  
- **sva sreća da...** *fortunately*

The expression **sva sreća da...** is especially common to express that something might have been much worse (e.g. a building collapsed, but, fortunately, nobody was in it at that moment):

**Sva sreća da ne pada kiša[^3]**. *Fortunately, it’s not raining.*

You can express feelings with dative phrases involving *drago* and *žao*:

- **Ani**[^1] je žao da... *Ana was sorry that...*  
- **Ani**[^1] je bilo drago da... *Ana was glad/happy that...*

You can *like* content (here content clauses are again subjects):

**Sviđa mi se da je Ana[^4] došla.** *I like that Ana came.*

You can also refer to the content expressed before using the general pronoun **to**. That’s often used in conversation, but also common in writing:

  — **Nisam to[^5] znao.** *I didn’t know that.*

You can use **to** and a content clause anywhere, even after prepositions (you have to change **to** into the right case):

**Razgovarali smo o tome[^1] da je Ana[^4] kupila auto[^5]**. *We discussed about Ana buying a car.* (lit. ‘about that Ana has bought a car’)

[^1]: DL stands for DeepL, a machine translation service.
[^2]: *je* is a negative copula in the past tense.
[^3]: *kiša* is the Croatian word for rain.
[^4]: *Ana* is the name of a person in the example sentences.
[^5]: *auto* is the Croatian word for car.
If you comment on a known fact, you can use što instead of da – it doesn’t change when in this role:

**Dobro je što ne pada kiša**. *It’s good it’s not raining.*

This construction is also used to thank somebody for something, but it’s mandatory to use što then:

**Hvala što ne pušite.** *Thank you for not smoking.* (lit. ‘Thank you that you don’t smoke.’)

**Hvala ti što mi pomažeš.** *Thank you for helping me.* (lit. ‘Thank you that you’re helping me.’)

The DL in the main clause (e.g. *ti* in the second example) is optional. English uses a completely different construction here, while Croatian simply uses a content clause; however, da cannot be used, only što.

You can also ask about things within content clauses, using the same way as in English:

Što misliš [da sam kupila]? *What do you think [I’ve bought]?
Gdje misliš [da je Ana]? *Where do you think [Ana is]?

Such questions are mostly ‘decomposed’ in speech, into two questions (the first starting always with što what):

Što misliš, što sam kupila? lit. ‘What do you think, what have I bought?’
štostomisliš, gdje je Ana? lit. ‘What do you think, where is Ana?’

Something interesting (but expected from everything above) happens when we ask yes/no questions and they contain context clauses. Such questions are ‘decomposed’ less often, and the interesting part are the answers – they are simply re-used as content clauses:

**Misliš li da je more toplo?** *Do you think the sea is warm?*

**Misliš da je more toplo?** (the same, but colloq.; you can use other forms too)

— Mislim da je. *I think it is.*
— Mislim da da. lit. ‘I think that yes.’
— Mislim da nije. *I think it isn’t.*
— Mislim da ne. lit. ‘I think that no.’

As you can answer a yes/no question with a verb or with a da or ne, you can answer such questions with mislim da + verb or mislim da da or mislim da ne. Again, the verb misliti is not negated, but the content clause can be: such answers are similar to English *I guess so* and *I guess not.*

Of course, you can remember some event, forget to do something, then you can expect or fear that something might happen, etc.; I will explain all such uses in 69 Memories, Expectations and Fear.
You’ll encounter rečem and so on from time to time, especially in Dalmatia, where it’s often used in everyday speech.

Instead of kino, the word used for cinema in Serbia and most of Bosnia is bioskop.

Instead of shvaćati, a slightly different verb shvatati, is common in most parts of Bosnia and in Serbia.

Although što is colloquially replaced by šta, and such replacement is complete in Bosnia and Serbia, in both the standard languages and the actual speech, it’s almost never replaced when što starts a content clause. However, it is often replaced in colloquial speech in Dalmatia. Of course, when što starts a real question (što misliš...?) it’s normally replaced by šta.

• Examples

The song Sve je u redu Everything is OK by Flyer, a pop-group from Zagreb, contains a number of desire and content clauses.

The first verse uses the verb skrivati hide and, as usual, it’s just lice face – the possession is implied:

Ne skrivam osmijeh⁸ s lica⁹ I’m not hiding the smile from my face
Želim [da znaš I want [you to know
[Da sve⁸ je u redu⁹ DL [Everything is OK
ovaj dan⁴]] on this day]]
(Mirko Kovač)

The second verse has a desire clause that contains a content clause (in the third verse). The word je² is the third word in the clause, likely due to rhythmic reasons (but also you can treat sve je u redu as a kind of phrase).

The following lines have a content clause in a content clause, but the inner clause starts with kako (it could have started with da without any difference):

Mislim [da ne misliš I think [you don’t think
[kako svemu⁸ DL je kraj⁸]] [everything is over]]
Al sve⁸ je u redu⁹ DL But everything is OK
ovaj dan⁴ on this day

The line svemu je kraj is the construction:

biti (je² +) kraj + DL

It means something (expressed in DL) is over. The noun kraj is the (formal) subject.

The word al is just ali but, colloquially shortened, which is common.

You can listen to it on YouTube™.
• Exercise

Complete the following sentences:

Ne ________(a) ________(b) ________(c) plaža. We don’t know where the beach is.

__________(d) ________(e) ____ (f) ____ (g) ________(h) hladno. She knew it was
going to be cold.

______________(i) ____ (j) ____ (k) ____ (l) nešto ________(m). I feel something is
going to happen.

______________(n) ____ (o) ____ (p) ____ (q) hladno. I don’t think it will be cold.

Check answers here.
Today, let me introduce a couple of very useful verb pairs. The first one is the main way to express success and failure in Croatian:

\textit{uspjivati («) \sim uspjeti (uspije, uspio, uspjela) succeed \dagger}

The impf. verb has the Standard stress shift to the 1st syllable (\textit{-ije-} is usually one syllable when inside a word), but the perf. verb is pronounced as three syllables in the present tense: \textit{us-pi-je}, like \textit{piti (pije)} drink.

Unlike English, this verb takes a verb in \textit{inf} – or an infinitive clause, i.e. an \textit{inf} with an object and possibly other words attached – as its object. It can be translated with English \textit{succeed} or \textit{manage}:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Uspjeli smo riješiti problem\dagger}. We succeeded in solving the problem. \dagger
  \item \textit{Uspjela je otvoriti prozor\dagger}. She managed to open the window.
  \item \textit{Nisam uspio pročitati knjigu\dagger}. I failed to read the book.
\end{itemize}

This verb is not used to \textit{\textquoteleft manage household\textquoteright} and similar things – only to manage to do something.

Like \textit{trebati} need/should, this verb pair can be – and often is – used in the \textit{\textquoteleft reverse\textquoteright} mode: what is achieved (or not) is the subject (in N), and the person (or animal) who was responsible is optionally expressed in DL. As usual, if the subject is a verb in \textit{inf}, it behaves like neuter singular:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Uspjelo nam\dagger je riješiti problem\dagger}. We succeeded in solving the problem. \dagger
  \item \textit{Uspjelo joj\dagger je otvoriti prozor\dagger}. She managed to open the window.
  \item \textit{Nije mi\dagger uspjelo pročitati knjigu\dagger}. I failed to read the book.
\end{itemize}

Note that \textit{problem, prozor} and \textit{knjiga} are not the subjects: the subjects are now the verbs in \textit{inf}: \textit{riješiti} and so on.

In this mode, the verb pair is more versatile: the subject can be also a noun: something that you succeeded in making (or failed to make). Now you must observe the gender of subject in the past tense:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Kolač\dagger je uspio}. The cake turned out fine.
  \item \textit{Uspio nam\dagger je kolač\dagger}. We succeeded in making the cake.
\end{itemize}

I have already explained important verbs derived from \textit{ići (ide, išao, išla)} go and \textit{stajati (staje) \sim stati (stane)} stand, now I will show you two more important \textquoteleft families\textquoteright. The first one is derived from the verb pair:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{stavljati \sim staviti put, place}
\end{itemize}

These verbs are simple to use – just use A for what you put, and a \textit{destination} (unlike in English!) for where you put something:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Stavio sam pivo\dagger u frižider\dagger}. (colloq.) I\’ve put the beer in the fridge.
\end{itemize}
(I marked this as colloquial, but the Standard Croatian noun hladnjak is very rare in real life.) Of course, you can also specify the location of the destination, i.e. where the fridge is (e.g. u frižider u kuhinji).

The verbs are derived from this pair in the same way as with the stand pair: the same prefix is attached to both verbs and we get a new pair with a different meaning than the original one. Two pairs we have already encountered:

ostavljeti ~ ostaviti leave (a thing)
pretpostavljeti ~ pretpostaviti suppose, assume

The verb pair ostavljeti ~ ostaviti is frequently used with a metaphoric location na miru in peace, in meaning leave alone, that is, not interfere:

Ostavio sam ga na miru<sup>DL</sup>. I left him alone.

Another frequently used verb pair is:

nastavljeti ~ nastaviti keep on, continue

This pair is usually used with another verb in inf (it can be also used with an object in A, usually some activity). This is another phase verb – the verb after it should be impf., since we describe action, and not outcomes:

Nastavio sam čitati. I continued reading.®

This can be also translated as kept on reading – this verb pair is the way to express that meaning in Croatian. Also, you likely noticed that the prefix na means on.

This verb pair translates to several meanings in English:

postavljeti ~ postaviti set

The basic meaning is set, in the meaning fix, put on an elevated place, erect (a monument), but also make ready (e.g. set the table). It’s not used in the meanings set free, set in motion (Croatian has specific verbs for such actions):

Ana<sup>^N</sup> je postavila stol<sup>^A</sup>. Ana has set the table.®

When you want to express where something is placed or fixed, you have to use destinations, like for the base pair, but again unlike in English:

Postavit ću sliku<sup>^A</sup> na zid<sup>^A</sup>. I’ll put the picture on the wall.

Interestingly, this verb is also the most common verb used to formulate and ask questions:

Postavio sam dva pitanja<sup>24</sup>. I asked two questions. (I = male)

These two verb pairs have exactly the opposite meaning:

rastavljeti ~ rastaviti take apart, disassemble
sastavljeti ~ sastaviti put together, assemble

When you disassemble something, the result is expressed in na<sup>−</sup> + A (usually in
Goran has disassembled the toy to its parts.

The following table summarizes this verb pair and its (common) family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>used with</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>A (+ dest)</td>
<td>put, place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>po-</td>
<td>A (+ dest)</td>
<td>set, place, erect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A na miru</td>
<td>leave alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na-</td>
<td>A / inf</td>
<td>continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretpo-</td>
<td>da + clause</td>
<td>suppose that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ra-</td>
<td>A (na A)</td>
<td>take apart (to...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sa-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>put together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are more verb pairs derived from this base pair; these were just the most common ones.

Another very common verb family is derived from:

*davati (daje) ~ dati give*

The verb pair is simply used with two objects, one in A (what is given) another in DL (who got it):

Ana has given Goran a chocolate.

This pair is used first in literal meaning of ‘give’, not when e.g. ‘giving a lecture’. However, it has more uses than this basic one (it could be argued that *dati* behaves as a ‘modal’ verb in some circumstances). They will be explained gradually.

It’s interesting that the perf. verb *dati* is often used in the present tense, especially when negated, to indicate intentions:

*I don’t want to give you the ball.*

The perf. verb is short (its pres-3 is only one syllable) so it’s one of few verbs where stress shifts to the negative particle *ne* even in the ‘western’ stress scheme. This is the cause of quite frequent (but non-standard) spellings like *nedamo we don’t want to give* and like.

This verb pair is also used in an interesting phrase:

*do his/her/their best*
For example:

**Dali smo sve od sebe.** *We did our best.*

All verbs derived from this pair follow the same pattern, e.g.:

**dodavati** (*dodaje / dodaje*) ~ **dodati**

I’ll show you three common derived verb pairs. Each of them behaves like the base pair: there are two objects, one in A, another, optional, in DL.

With the prefix **do-**, the meaning is *add*, but also *pass* (e.g. salt or ball in a game):

**Ivan**<sup>N</sup> *je dodao loptu*<sup>DL</sup> **A** **Marku**<sup>DL</sup>. *Ivan passed the ball to Marko.*

This verb can be used for mathematical addition, but there’s another verb pair with the specifically mathematical meaning:

**zbrajati** ~ **zbrojiti** *add* (in math)

With the prefix **pro-**, the meaning is *sell*:

**Darko**<sup>N</sup> *je prodao auto*<sup>DL</sup> **A** **Ana**<sup>m</sup>. *Darko sold the car to Ana.*

**Ivan**<sup>N</sup> *prođaje jabuke*<sup>DL</sup>. *Ivan sells apples.*

The third common verb pair is derived with **pre-**, with the meaning *hand over*:

**Poštar**<sup>N</sup> *je predao pismo*<sup>DL</sup> **A** **Ana**<sup>DL</sup>. *The postman handed the letter over to Ana.*

The impf. verb from this pair is also used in meaning *give lectures* (for more information, check 73 Learning and Renting: Verbs Shifting):

**Ivan**<sup>N</sup> *predaje matematičku*<sup>DL</sup>. *Ivan teaches math.*

All three pairs have also alternative forms of present tense of the impf. verb, which are regularized, i.e. **dodavam**, etc. They are much less common than the standard forms.

This table summarizes the four verb pairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>davati (daje) ~ dati</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>used with</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(none)</td>
<td>A (DL)</td>
<td>give</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>do-</strong></td>
<td>A (DL)</td>
<td><em>add</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pre-</strong></td>
<td>A (DL)</td>
<td><em>hand over</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pro-</strong></td>
<td>A (DL)</td>
<td><em>sell</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are more common verbs derived from this pair. One of them is derived with **u-**. It behaves differently than the pairs above, and has a bit unexpected meaning: *marry*. Moreover, its use is rather specific; for more details, check 89 Customs and Traditions.
All the pairs we have seen are simply derived from the base pair, by prefixes. This pattern of derivation can be called *symmetric*.

The pair opposite to *davati* (*daje*) ~ *dati* *give* is:

**dobivati** («) ~ **dobiti** (*dobije*) *get*

This verb pair is used with an object in A (more or less mandatory):

**Ana**

The origin can be expressed by adding *od* + G:

**Ana**

There is also an alternative, non-standard present form of the impf verb: **dobija**.

If you know only English, you should *pay attention* that this pair is used in a very restricted manner compared to English *get*: only when you physically *get* something, but also when you *get* an *e-mail*, *disease*, *idea* or *chance*.

It’s *not* used to express it’s *getting* dark, somebody *got* (understood) something, they *got* busy, or a plane *got* delayed...

Instead of the English multi-purpose *get*, other verbs (i.e. verb pairs) must be used in Croatian in the following common situations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English get</th>
<th>Croatian verb(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I got beer from the fridge</td>
<td><strong>donositi</strong> («) ~ <strong>donijeti</strong> (donese,...) <em>bring</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got what you said</td>
<td><strong>razumjeti</strong> (razumije,...) <em>understand</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got home, got to work</td>
<td><strong>dolaziti</strong> ~ <strong>doći</strong> (dođe, došao, došla) <em>come</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve got the tickets</td>
<td><strong>imati</strong> <em>have</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve got to go, gotta go</td>
<td><strong>morati</strong> <em>must</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got hungry</td>
<td><strong>postajati</strong> (postaje) ~ <strong>postati</strong> (postane) <em>become</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve got my hair cut</td>
<td><strong>postajati</strong> (postaje) ~ <strong>postati</strong> (postane) <em>become</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got my car repaired</td>
<td>rephrase, use specific verbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, if you say that you literally *got* the tickets (i.e. you wasn’t sure there were any tickets left, but you got them) you should use **dobivati** («) ~ **dobiti** (*dobije*) *get*. This is an example where English is quite imprecise.

Some of the specific verbs in the table above have been already explained; expressing *bring* will be explained in the following chapters. The last line (*got my car repaired*) is called *causative*. It can be also expressed with the verb **have**:

*I have my car repaired.*

It’s impossible to express *exactly* this in Croatian. Usually, it’s expressed either
impersonally (popravili su moj/mi auto they repaired my car) or using passive constructions (matching English my car was repaired). A Croatian passive construction will be introduced right in the next chapter.

® “Ekavian” forms, which dominate in Serbia, apply to the perf. verb uspjeti, in the same way as for razumjeti (razumije,...) understand: its “Ekavian” form is uspeti, the verb is fully regular, but the pres-3pl is uspeju.

In Serbia, infinitives are less often used in speech (and they get rarer more you go southeast), the form da + present prevails. In Serbia, it would be much more common to say:

Uspeli smo da rešimo problem^. We succeeded in solving the problem.
Uspela je da otvori prozor^. She managed to open the window.

... Nastavio sam da čitam. I continued reading.

The noun stol table has the form sto (stol-) in Serbia and most of Bosnia, but it’s still masculine.

• Exercise

Fill in the missing words:

________(a) ________(b) loptu! Pass me the ball!
________________________(c) spavati. I keep on sleeping.
________(d) ________(e) auto. I sold the car.

Check answers here.
61 Cake is Eaten: Passive Adjectives

English is well-known for reusing various verb forms. For instance, the same word (*eaten*) has two quite different meanings in the following sentences:

*Ana has eaten.* (what she did)
*The cake is eaten.* (state of the cake)

Croatian has a different approach – each meaning has a different word. Words corresponding to the second meaning – adjectives for what happened to something or someone are called passive adjectives.

Passive adjectives are verb forms, but not all verbs have a meaningful pass. adjective. Verbs that cannot have an object (e.g. *sleep* – you cannot sleep something) won’t have an adjective that’s really used.

There are some verbs (and verb pairs) that can have an object, but their pass. adjective is *never* used. Some of them are:

- **ćuti** (čuje) *hear*
- **htjeti** (hoće +,...) *want*
- **imati** *have*
- **osjećati** ~ **osjetiti** *feel*
- **razumjeti** (razumije,...) *understand*

It’s difficult to explain why the pass. adj. of **razumjeti** (...) isn’t used, while the pass. adj. of **shvatiti** perf., a verb with a very similar meaning, *is* used. Likewise, **željeti** (**želi, želio, željela**) *wish, desire* has a used pass. adj., but **htjeti** (...) doesn’t!

Likewise, there’s no pass. adj. from verbs that don’t use objects in A, such as **uspijevati** («) ~ **uspjeti** (uspije,...) *succeed* and similar ones.

Passive adjectives can be made for both impf. and perf. verbs. However, since perf. verbs indicate that the action is complete, pass. adjectives made from them are used more often. In fact, pass. adjectives of most impf. verbs are not used at all, or are extremely rare. The following impf. verbs have pass. adjectives that are frequently used in speech:

- **čistiti** *clean*
- **čitati** *read*
- **čuvati** *keep*
- **gledati** *watch*
- **graditi** *build*
- **korištiti** *use*
- **kuhati** *cook*
- **očekivati** (očekuje) *expect*
- **peći** (peče,...) *bake*
- **pratiti** *follow*
- **pržiti** *fry*
- **nositi** *carry/wear*
- **voljeti** (voli,...) *love*
- **željeti** (želi,...) *wish, desire*

It’s worth knowing that Croatian has one more way of expressing passive, introduced in 64 The Door Opens: Fun with se², with less restrictions.
All passive adjectives in Croatian end in either -n (a vast majority) or -t. Always keep in mind that they are real adjectives, that is, they must adapt to gender, case and number.

For regular verbs that have infinitive ending in -ati, it’s really simple to make a pass. adjective, just replace -ati with -an:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>pass. adj.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gledati</td>
<td>gledan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>napisati</td>
<td>napisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poslati</td>
<td>poslan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, even verbs that have a bit irregular pres-3 follow this simple pattern if their inf ends in -ati.

Since these words are adjectives, they adapt to nouns as any other adjectives do. For example:

**Pismo** je **napisano** i **poslano**. *The letter is written and sent.*

For verbs that don’t have infinitives in -ati, the rules are more complicated.

For most verbs that have pres-3 ending in -e, their pass. adjective is simply made by adding -n to the pres-3 (I have omitted all past forms for clarity):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>pass. adj.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>naći</td>
<td>nađen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peći</td>
<td>pećen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pojesti</td>
<td>pojedn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plesti</td>
<td>pleten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally we can say:

**Kolač** je **pojedn**. *The cake is eaten.*

Since this adjective is derived from a perfective verb, it’s implied that the cake is no more.

For verbs that have pres-3 ending in -i – and there are many such verbs – the -i is removed and -en is added. Unless they are Croatian-specific or an r, consonants before -en get changed, e.g. t is changed to č (I have again omitted all past forms for clarity):
verb | pass. adj.  
---|---  
nauciti («) perf. learn | naučen learned  
pričiti | pržen fried  
otvoriti («) perf. open | otvoren open  
zatvoriti («) perf. close | zatvoren closed  
plati | plačen paid  
shvatiti perf. understand | shvačen understood  
vratiti perf. return | vraćen returned  

For example:  
Škola\textsuperscript{N} je zatvorena\textsuperscript{N}. The school is closed.  
Stojim pred otvorenom vratima\textsuperscript{.} I’m standing in front of the open door.  
Knjiga\textsuperscript{N} je vraćena\textsuperscript{N}. The book is returned.  
Račun\textsuperscript{N} nije bio plačen\textsuperscript{N}. The bill was not paid.  

Other consonants and consonant groups undergo more complicated changes. Bear in mind, the infinitive is not important here, but the pres-3:  
verb | pass. adj.  
---|---  
baciti perf. throw | bačen thrown  
spasiti perf. rescue | spašen rescued  
zaraziti perf. infect | zaražen infected  
vidjeti (vidi) see | vidjen seen  
voljeti (voli) love | voljen loved  
napuniti perf. fill up | napunjjen filled up  
kupiti perf. buy | kupljen bought  
napraviti perf. make | napravljen made  
primiti perf. receive | primljjen received  

For example:  
Auto\textsuperscript{N} je napravljen\textsuperscript{N} u Poljskoj\textsuperscript{DL}, a kupljen\textsuperscript{N} ovdje. The car is made in Poland and bought here.  
Poruka je već primljena. The message is already received.  
Moj auto\textsuperscript{N} je popravljen\textsuperscript{N}. My car has been repaired.  

The last sentence can be used to translate I got my car repaired from the previous chapter (the verb is popraviti perf. repair; it will be introduced in 79 You’re Wrong and Other Phrases).  

Other verbs that have pres-3 ending in -i follow the patterns of the verbs above; if
there are two consonants before the -i, they both undergo the change (however, if the final consonants are st, some verbs get only št, while others get šć):

- **izmisliti** perf. make up → **izmišlen** made up
- **čistiti** clean → **čišćen** cleaned
- **korištiti** use → **korišten** used
- **pustiti** perf. let go → **pušten** released, freed

A few verbs with **pres-3** ending in -i don’t have the expected shift; the most common is:

- **zaposliti** («) perf. employ → **zaposlen** employed

A few verbs have pass. adjectives that don't follow the above rules, e.g.:

- **skriti** (skrije) perf. hide → **skriven** hidden

Since pass. adjectives are often used, you can remember them as separate words, not verb forms.

It’s interesting that most pass. adjectives of perf. verbs have the Standard stress on the first syllable (even if neither present nor infinitive has the stress on the first syllable), and the ‘western’ stress on the same syllable where the **inf** is stressed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>pass. adj.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pročitati</td>
<td>pročita</td>
<td>pročitan read</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, verbs in **-sti** and **-ći** that have a rightward stress shift in the present tense have pass. adjectives stressed like the present tense forms:

- **ispeći** (ispeče,...) perf. bake → **ispečen**

This also applies to some verbs in **-sti** that have a shift only in the ‘western’ scheme:

- **pojesti** (pojede) perf. eat → **pojeden**

Finally, there are verbs with infinitives in **-nuti**; they are again simple to transform into pass. adjectives – for almost all of them, just discard the final -i and you have a pass. adjective. Unlike others, it ends in -t and not in -n:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>pass. adj.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gurnuti (gurne)</td>
<td><strong>gurnut</strong> pushed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pokrenuti (pokrene)</td>
<td><strong>pokrenut</strong> started</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same holds for verbs similar to **uzeti**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>pass. adj.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zauzeti (zauzme)</td>
<td><strong>zauzet</strong> occupied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Infinitives of these verbs are similar to passive adjectives – actually, N-pl masc. forms of pass. adjectives are identical to infinitives. However, stress distinguishes some verbs from passive adjectives (in the Standard scheme):

- **pokrenuti** verb (inf.)
- **pokrenuti** pass. adj. (N-pl masc.)
- **zaizeti** verb (inf.)
- **zaizeti** pass. adj. (N-pl masc.)

* In Serbia, beside the verb **spasiti** perf. *save, rescue*, a similar verb is common: **spasti** (*spase, spasao, spasla*), with the same meaning. Its passive adjective is **spasen**, as expected. There are frequent discussions in Serbia which one of these two verbs is ‘right’ (or ‘better’). A number of Serbian ‘linguists’ have been opposed to **spasiti** for decades, but it appears to be more common in Serbia than **spasti** (!) However, you will occasionally encounter **spasti** in Croatia as well.

“Ekavian” forms, which completely dominate in Serbia, have *e* instead of *je* or *ije* in almost all places, but *this replacement doesn’t apply to suffixes forming passive adjectives*! While the “Ekavian” form of **voljeti** *love* is **voleti**, the “Ekavian” pass. adjective is **voljen**. The same applies to all other pass. adjectives formed with **-jen**.

In Serbia, few pass. adjectives have the regular Šć where they don’t in Croatia: one of them is **korišćen**. However, forms with Šć are also used colloquially in parts of Croatia, including pass. adjectives that have Št in Standard Serbian, so you’ll occasionally hear **pušćen** and others.

**Exercise**

Fill in the right forms of adjectives and other words:

- Trg**ovina je ____________(a). The shop is open.**
- Vino je ____________(b). The wine is drunk.**
- Vrata su ____________(c). The door is closed.**
- Paket je ____________(d). The package is sent.**
- Kocka je ____________(e). The dice is thrown.**
- Poruka nije ____________(f). The message is not received.**
- Hrana je ___(g) ____________(h) **kutiji. The food is in a closed box.**
- Računi _______(i) ____________(j). The bills aren’t paid.**

Check answers [here](#).
62 The Friend I Saw: Relative Clauses

It’s nice to be able to say the *red apple* or *my friend*, but it’s much more powerful to be also able to say the *apple you bought* or the *friend who called me*.

In English, such sentences have basically two forms:

1. *the friend who called me*
2. *the apple (that) you bought*

In the sentence #1, you are describing the friend by what *he did*: he’s the subject of *called me*. In the sentence #2, you are describing the apple by what *happened to it*: somebody *bought it*.

In the first sentence, English must use the ‘linking’ word *who*; in the second one, the word *that* is optional and is mostly dropped out.

In Croatian, there always must be a ‘linking’ word. It’s the same word – *koji* – in *both* sentences, but in *different cases* (and gender).

Simply said, the word *koji* stands in for the noun you describe, and adapts to *its gender and number* but also to *its role in the description*.

In the sentence #1, *prijatelj friend* is the *subject*, therefore we use *koji* in the masculine singular, nominative case:

1. *prijatelj koji me je zvao*  
   *I have eaten the apple [you bought]*.

In the sentence #2, *jabuka apple* is the *object* of the verb *kupiti perf. buy* – it’s *bought* – therefore we must use accusative, but also the feminine form, since *jabuka* is of course feminine in Croatian:

2. *jabuka koju si kupio*  
   *The friend who called me came to the beach.*

The forms of *koji* were explained in 57 *Whose, What Thing and What Like*. When you describe a noun like that, you can use it in any sentence, but the description must come right after it. For example, that friend who called you could also come to beach, so you would say:

*Prijatelj koji me je zvao je došao na plažu*. *The friend who called me came to the beach.*
This sounds a bit awkward, but Croatian is flexible and usually nouns with such descriptions attached are moved to the back:

**Došao je na plažu**^A** prijatelj**^I** koji^N me^A je zvao.** (the same meaning)  
**doći past-m | 1**

Bear in mind that the description does not change if the described noun change its case:

**Vidim prijatelja**^A** koji^N me^A je zvao.** I can see the friend who called me.  
**Razgovarao sam s prijateljem**^I** koji^N me^A je zvao.** I talked to the friend who called me.

But if you change the noun to plural, you must also change the description, since you are now really talking about something else:

**Vidim prijatelje**^A** koji^N su me^A zvali.** I can see the friends who called me.  
**Vidim prijatelje**^A** koje^N sam čekao.** I can see the friends I was waiting for.

In the first sentence, the adjective/pronoun **koji** is in **N-pl**, as the friends are the subject of the clause; in the second one, it’s in **A-pl**, since they are the object in the clause, while the subject is the first person (expressed by the 1st person verb **sam**).

It’s also obvious that forms of descriptive (i.e. relative) clauses are the same as questions starting with **koji**. Therefore, if the role in description involves a preposition, you must place it before **koji**:

**Vidim prijatelja**^A** s kojim^I** sam putovao.** I can see the friend I traveled with.  
**Došli smo na plažu**^A** na kojoj^DL je bilo mnogo ljudi^G.** ‘We came to a beach many people were on.’

English is full of reduced passive clauses; for example, instead of:

*We live in a house that was built by my grandfather.*

The normal sentence is:

*We live in a house built by my grandfather.*

Such reducing is impossible in Croatian. Such passive clauses must be actually rephrased in Croatian into non-passive:

**Živimo u kući**^DL** koju^A je izgradio moj djed**^N.** *We live in a house my grandfather built.*

You can also use relative clauses after indefinite pronouns (*somebody, everything*...). However, there’s a twist in Croatian. If you use relative clauses after indefinite pronouns, you have to use pronouns **tko who or što what** as conjunctions instead of **koji which/what**! For example:

**Vidio sam nešto**^A** [što^A ne mogu objasniti].** *I saw something [I can’t explain].*

The pronoun **što what** here changes case according to the role in the clause, and prepositions came before it:
Obući ću nešto [u čemu se osjećam udobno]. *I’ll put on something [I feel comfortable in]*.

Here, we have the u¨ + DL combination, and DL of što is čem(u). If we use an indefinite pronoun that refers to a person, we have to use forms of tko who:

Ovdje je netko [koga poznaješ]. *Here’s somebody [you know]*.

Here, the form koga is the accusative form of tko who (refer to 28 Asking Who and What), but its form coincides with shorter forms of koji; not so in nominative:

Ovdje je netko [tko će ti pomoći]. *Here’s somebody [who will help you]*.

When you append a relative clause to the adjective/pronoun sav (spec. forms) all/everything/everyone, normal relative clauses are used with plural forms, but with neuter singular forms (meaning all, everything), što is used:

Došli su svi [koje smo pozvali]. *Everyone [we invited] came*.

Ovo je sve [što imam]. *This is all [I have]*.

The same applies to the past form ostali (check 52 Stand, Become, Exist, Cease), when used as an adjective which is used as a pronoun, and to other adjectives-used-as-pronouns, such as:

- prvi the first person
- prvo the first thing
- zadnji the last person
- zadnje the last thing

(Don’t forget these are just forms of adjectives in various genders, so they change like an adjective!) For example:

Ovo je zadnje [što ću kupiti]. *This is the last thing [I’m going to buy]*.

This table summarizes which form of relative clause is used in various situations:
Forming relative clauses

nouns

svi everybody, all
adjectives in masc. used as pronouns such as ostali the rest (of people)

koji ...

netko somebody *

nitko nobody *
tko *

svatko everybody *

nešto something

ništa nothing

svašta all kinds of things

sve everything, all

što ...

adjectives in neut. used as pronouns such as ostalo the rest (of stuff)

to that, ovo this, ono

If you know German, you have likely noticed that it has more or less the same system – the pronoun der which is mandatory and changes gender and case according to the role in the clause. However, with adjectives/pronouns such as alles, the pronoun was (which matches Croatian što exactly) must be used instead:

(German) Das ist alles, was ich weiβ.

To je sve što znam. That’s all I know.

Other types of questions can be also used as relative clauses, relating to place and time. For example:

OvoN je mjestoN [gdje smo se upoznali]. This is the place [where we met for the first time].

Occasionally, you’ll see a quite different construction of relative clauses: što used after nouns as well, but always in that form, not changing cases. This is rare in speech, at least mine, but it seems more common in poetry.

Since the pronoun što in such construction doesn’t show the role in the relative clause, there’s often another personal pronoun in the clause that refers to the noun as well, so you might see:

OvoN su knjigeN [što sam ihN kupio]. These are the books [I bought]. *

lit. ‘These are the books što I bought them.’

Here ih (the 3rd pers. pl. pronoun in A) serves as the object of the clause, referring to knjige books while the word što serves as a simple conjunction. Such additional pronoun is never added if the role in the clause is being the subject.

Recall also the example song Jugo in 35 Tools and Means, With and Without; it contains two such constructions:
There’s another colloquial thing you’ll sometimes see and hear. The adjective/pronoun *koji* has the same form in masc. inanimate N and A: *koji*. Nevertheless, you’ll see and hear *kojeg(a)* in masc. inanimate A – which is the form for masc. animate A. For example:

**Film**[^n] [kojeg^A svi^N čekamo: "Pedeset nijansi§ sive^G"]. (colloq!) *The movie [we’re all waiting for: “Fifty shades of gray”].*®

Of course, you would expect *koji* in this sentence, but it’s *kojeg* in this example. You can find this feature on many internet sites and in colloquial writing (Google™ for the headline above: I found it on the internet). Teachers in schools spend a lot of time “correcting” this – obviously, not with a complete success. Again, it’s not required that you talk like that, but *don’t panic* when you hear or read such a bit weird accusative forms!

[^n]: *kojeg*a

© Instead of *što* and *tko*, forms *štata* and *ko* are used in Serbia and most of Bosnia; the same applies to derived forms, e.g. *netko* is rather *neko* there.

In parts of Croatia where *kaj* or *ča* are colloquially used instead of *što* or *štata*, they are used also after nouns, and don’t change then (and then an additional pronoun is used in the relative clause). However, in Serbia or Bosnia, in such constructions, only *što* can be used, never *štata*. Furthermore, such constructions seem a bit rarer in Serbia.

Using *kojeg* instead of *koji* for masc. inanimate A is unknown in Serbia and Bosnia.

**Something Possibly Interesting**

There are some fancy terms you’ll maybe encounter: the noun or pronoun the relative clause is attached to is called *antecedent*; the word that starts the relative clause is *relativizer*, and the additional pronoun in clause (used in rare cases when indeclinable *što* is used) is called *resumptive pronoun*. And indeclinable *što* is also called *invariant relativizer* (it doesn’t vary, i.e. *change case*). Now you can impress your friends with some fancy words! Or forget these terms immediately.

Relative clauses starting with a pronoun which changes cases (e.g. with *koji*) are a characteristic feature of European languages. Check this map in the *World Atlas of Language Structures*: [Relativization on Subjects](https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/world-atlas-language-relativization-structure.html).

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[^n]: *kojeg*a

® Easy Croatian (rev. 47b) / 62 The Friend I Saw: Relative Clauses
Comparatives are forms of adjectives used to express not a property (e.g. big) but a relative property (e.g. bigger). A comparative (short: comp.) is again an adjective. The base form (big) is sometimes called positive.

In Croatian, most adjectives form their comparatives by adding -iji to their dictionary form or case-base:

- dosadan (dosadn-) boring → dosadniji more boring
- jeftin cheap → jeftiniji cheaper
- pažljiv careful → pažljiviji more careful
- sretan (sretn-) happy → sretniji happier
- star old → stariji older

Comparatives formed in this way usually have the stress on the syllable that comes right before the added -iji (e.g. paž-ljiv-iji).

Unfortunately, most one-syllable adjectives have complicated alternations of their final consonants in comparative, so their comparative form must be remembered (or you can remember the patterns from the adjectives listed below, but you still have to remember which adjectives have alternations and which just add -iji):

- brz fast → brži
- blag gentle → blaži
- čist clean, pure → čišći
- čvrst rigid → čvršći
- dug long → duži
- glup stupid → gluplji
- mlad young → mladi
- skup expensive → skuplji
- tih quiet → tiši
- tvrd hard → tvrdi

Some one-syllable adjectives use the simpler way to create comparatives and just add -iji. Often used ones are:

- crn black
- loš bad
- nov new
- plavi blue
- spor slow
- star old
- slan salty
- strm steep
- zdrav healthy

Many two-syllable adjectives, especially ones ending in -ak or -ok, undergo an even greater transformation: they get shortened (e.g. lose -ok) and then go through the consonant alternation as most one-syllable adjectives:

- dalek distant → dalji
- dubok deep → dublji
- kratak short → krači
- nizak low → niji
- širok wide → širi
- težak heavy → teži
- uzak narrow → uži
- visok tall → viši

Few adjectives have completely irregular comparatives (everything so far was kind
of regular, believe it or not):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>comparative 1</th>
<th>comparative 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dobocr</td>
<td>bolji</td>
<td>gori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dug</td>
<td>dulji</td>
<td>manji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lak, light</td>
<td>lakši</td>
<td>mekan, soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lijep nice</td>
<td>ljepši</td>
<td>velik big</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There’s an adjective **malen** with more or less the same meaning as **mali small**; both use the same comparative. The same goes as **mek**, a bit archaic variant of **mekan soft**. The opposite happens to **loš bad** – it has a regular comparative and an irregular one! Both are used. The same happens to **dug long**, where two comparatives exist, **dulji** and **duži** (some people claim there’s a small difference in meaning, but they are used with the same meaning in the spoken language).

Comparatives always have the obligatory -i in nominative sing. masc., and in cases where there’s a choice of two endings in masc. and neut. genders (i.e. o vs. e) they **always** have e in endings, even širi wider. (Take care when making impersonal and inflected forms!)

To help you remember irregular comparatives, they will be underlined with a pale blue line, and the positive form will be printed at the right margin.

There’s an often quoted rule that -ije- is always shortened to -je- or -e- in comparatives, but it’s not always so in real life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>comparative 1</th>
<th>comparative 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bijed pale</td>
<td>bijedi</td>
<td>(sometimes: bijedi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lijep nice</td>
<td>ljepši</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vrijedan valuable</td>
<td>vredniji / vredniji / vrijedniji</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At least since 1950’s, comparative forms like **vrijedniji more valuable** have been condemned by prescriptive grammarians (i.e. the language police) but they persist. Currently, you can see three forms of this comparative, and the most common one on the .hr domain of the Internet is the non-standard one (the most recent Croatian orthography manual allows forms vredniji and vrijedniji):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vredniji</td>
<td>18700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vrijedniji</td>
<td>11600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vrijedniji</td>
<td>22900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To say that something is e.g. bigger than something else, use od+G after the comparative:

**Damir**

N je stariji od **Ane**. Damir is older than Ana.

We know now to say that something is bigger, but what about much bigger? It turns out that with comparatives you can use the **adverbs of quantity** (introduced in 45
Quantities and Existence:

Tvoj auto\textsuperscript{N} je mnogo brži\textsuperscript{N}. Your car is a lot faster.

Damir\textsuperscript{N} je dosta stariji\textsuperscript{N} od Ane\textsuperscript{G}. Damir is quite older than Ana.

While mnogo sounds a bit formal when expressing relative quantities in Croatian (e.g. mnogo ljudi many people), it’s very often used with comparatives even in very colloquial contexts.

To ask about how is something comparing to something else, use koliko / koliko how much; the comparative is not moved:

Koliko je Damir\textsuperscript{N} stariji\textsuperscript{N} od Ane\textsuperscript{G}? How much older is Damir than Ana?

— Dosta. Quite older.
— Osam godina\textsuperscript{G}. Eight years older.

There’s a very compact expression in Croatian:

što + (comp.) ... = as (comp.) ... as possible *

The word što doesn’t change case when used in this role – a kind of quantity adverb – but the comparative does, of course:

Treba mi\textsuperscript{1} što dublji\textsuperscript{N} lonac\textsuperscript{N}. I need as deep a pot as possible.

Želimo što veću\textsuperscript{A} sobu\textsuperscript{A}. We want as big a room as possible.

This phrase is more restricted in Croatian than in English: it’s rarely used for description of actual things, it’s mostly used for things required, needed, imagined and like.

This can be used to maximize comparative adverbs; frequently used ones are:

što brže as quickly as possible
što ranije as early as possible
što prije as soon as possible

For example:

**Dodi što brže!** Come as quickly as possible! doći | brzo

You will sometimes see čim instead of što in such expressions, both with adjectives and adverbs:

Dodi čim ranije. Come as early as possible. *

doći

If you want to express that something is increasing in some property, the easiest way is to use sve before the comparative: this word means all on its own, but not in such constructions:

More\textsuperscript{N} postaje sve toplije\textsuperscript{N}. The sea is getting/becoming warmer and warmer.

Filmovi\textsuperscript{N} su sve dosadniji\textsuperscript{N}. Movies are more and more boring.
Another way is to use the same expression like in English, e.g. *toplije i toplije* (but it’s less common); you can also combine both (e.g. *sve toplije i toplije*).

If you want to express a *difference*, you can put the difference in *accusative* before the comparative, or use *za*” + A after the comparative:

**More**⁴ je *stupanj*⁵ *toplije*. *The sea is warmer by one degree.*

**More**⁴ je *toplije*⁵ *za stupanj*. (the same meaning)

There are two more forms that can be derived from any adjective that has a comparative. Both are quite simple to make – just a prefix needs to be added. This table summarizes them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>mlad</em> young</td>
<td><em>premlad</em> too young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(absolute superlative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>mladi</em> younger</td>
<td><em>najmladi</em> the youngest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(superlative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the standard stress scheme, the stress moves to the prefix, while in the ‘western’ scheme it usually stays on its original place.

Some absolute superlatives don’t have ‘excessive’ meaning at all anymore. The most common are:

- *prekrasan* (*prekrasn-*) *beautiful, magnificent*
- *prelijep* *beautiful, magnificent*
- *presretan* (*presretn-*) *delighted, ecstatic*

The adjectives *prekrasan* (*prekrasn-*) and *prelijep* have more or less the same meaning.

There’s not much else to be told about these forms; you can specify what group you meant with the superlative, using *od*” + G:

**Igor**⁴ je *najmladi*⁵ *od njene djece*⁶. *Igor is the youngest of her children.*

You can also specify the context of the absolute superlative, what for is someone *too something*:

**Igor**⁴ je *premlad*⁵ *da vozi auto*⁶. *Igor too young to drive a car.*

This is really merely a purpose clause, all restrictions apply.

It’s worth knowing the verb pair meaning *compare*:

-uspoređivati (-uje) ~ uspoređiti («) *compare* ®

The pair is used in the same way as the English verb:

**Uspoređili smo dva filma**²⁴. *We have compared the two movies.*

**Uspoređila sam novi iPhone⁶ s novim Samsungom⁴. I have compared the new iPhone with the new Samsung.*
The last example uses s¨/sa¨ + I.

Finally, a few one-syllable adjectives have ‘total forms’, which are reduplicated and have appended -cat. Most common are:

- **gol golcat** all naked
- **pun puncat** completely full
- **nov novcat** brand-new
- **sam samcat** all alone

Occasionally, you’ll see just the second part used (e.g. just **novcat**) with the same meaning. They are, confusingly, sometimes also called ‘absolute superlatives’ in some grammars. You cannot use this construction with any adjective – only few one-syllable adjectives permit this.

When they are used before nouns, both parts change in case, gender and number:

*Ovo*N su ključevi*N novog novcatog auta*G. These are keys of a brand-new car.*

® In Serbia and most of Bosnia, the adjective happy has a bit different form **srećan** (**srećn-**); the comparative is **srećniji**.

In everyday speech in many regions, including parts of Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia, **višlji** is used as the comparative of **visok** tall, high. This is not accepted as standard anywhere, and sometimes it’s considered a hallmark of ‘uneducated’ speech.

Although **što** is colloquially replaced by **šta**, and such replacement is complete in Bosnia and Serbia, in both the standard languages and the actual speech, it’s **never** replaced in phrases **što** + comparative.

The phrase **čim** + comparative is specifically Croatian and sounds ungrammatical in Serbia.

The verb pair **usporedjivati** (-uje) ~ **usporediti** («) *compare* has a slightly different form in Serbia and most of Bosnia, without -s-, e.g. **uporediti** and so on.

### Something Possibly Interesting

There are basically two types of adjectives: most get -iji in comparative; a smaller group gets -(j)ji, with possible sound shifts, after they discard -ok, -ak and like. All new adjectives get -iji, and the smaller group includes many adjectives with basic meanings (**wide**, **fast**, **deep** etc.). The smaller group is likely the older one. It’s interesting that some older cousins of Croatian, like Ancient Greek and Sanskrit, have two ways to make comparatives too. This is very likely an ancient division.

Most older Croatian grammars list **gori** as the (irregular) comparative of **zao** (**zl**) evil. Such meaning of **gori** is archaic today.
• Exercise

Fill in the following sentences:

Danas je ______________(a). It’s warmer today.

Govori _____________(b). Speak slower.

More je _____________(c). The sea is colder.

Goran je ______(d) od ______(e). Goran is shorter than Ana. (be careful!)

Vlak je ______(f) od ______(g). A train is faster than a ship.

Ova vježba je ______(h) ______(i). This exercise is a bit harder. (be careful!)

Uzmi ______(j) ______(k) torbu. Take as big a bag as possible.

Check answers here.
Imagine you stand in front of a door, and the door starts to open. You don’t see who is opening the door, and it could be some automatic mechanism anyway. You would say:

*The door is opening.*

In English, many verbs like *open* can be used in two meanings: *open something* and *become open* (this is sometimes called ‘causative alternation’).

This is *not possible* in Croatian for almost all verbs (you’ll also see few exceptions). If you want to express ‘get open’, you have to use the ‘magic’ word – se²:

**Vrata** se **otvaraju.** *The door is opening.*

(In Croatian, the noun *vrata door* exists in plural only.) If you know Spanish (or a similar Romance language) this is probably quite familiar to you. Actually, everything that follows is more or less *exactly* like in Spanish – with a difference that Croatian has only one form of se². There are also many of similarities with French, German and Swedish, and – unfortunately – not much in comparison to English. Just compare the sentences:

(French)  *La porte s’ouvre.*
(Spanish)  *La puerta se abre.*
(Swedish)  *Dörren öppnas.*

**Vrata se otvaraju.**

(Swedish appends an -s to a verb, while Spanish and Croatian have free particles. French se gets fused with the following word if it starts with a vowel.)

I’m going to call this use of se² the *mediopassive* (like in Spanish grammars); it’s often also called **se²-passive**.

First, you should use the mediopassive when you don’t know who is doing something (e.g. who is opening the door), it seems as if nobody caused it, or it’s not important:

**Kuća** se **brzo prodala.** *The house sold quickly.*
**Čaša** se **razbila.** *The glass broke.*
**Lopta** se **probušila.** *The ball punctured.*

Observe how **kuća house** is really the subject here, so past forms must be in the feminine gender. The following sentences are examples of ‘anticausative’ – nobody causes the ice-cream to melt, it melts ‘on its own’ (of course, the real cause is the heat from the environment):

**More** se **ohladilo.** *The sea has cooled down.*
**Sladoled** se **topi.** *The ice-cream is melting.*

This can also be expressed with passive adjectives in Croatian:
KućaN je brzo prodanaN. The house was sold quickly.

However, you have to use the mediopassive construction if you express something ongoing: in the following sentence, the implied meaning is that people buy yogurt all the time (imperfective), not that all the yogurt has sold (perfective):

JogurtN se dobro prodaje. Yogurt sells well.

Generally, passive adjectives of impf. verbs are rarely used – except for several verbs, such as e.g. kuhan cooked, gledan watched, and so on (check 61 Cake is Eaten: Passive Adjectives). For most impf. verbs, the se²-passive is preferred.

The kinds of passives in Croatian (one with se², another with passive adjectives) correspond well to two kinds of passives in German, one with werden and another with sein:

ProzorN se zatvara. = (Ger.) Das Fenster wird geschlossen.
ProzorN je zatvoreN. = (Ger.) Das Fenster ist geschlossen.

German has also the third possibility: passives with sich, that basically translate word-for-word into Croatian se²-passive, word order aside; for example, compare translations of this Latin phrase (which uses the passive, having here ‘on its own’, i.e. ‘medial’ meaning):

(Latin) Omnia mutantur.
(German) Alles ändert sich.
(Swedish) Allting förändras.

SveN se mijenja.

Everything changes.

Swedish has again the suffix -s appended to the verb förändra.

The se²-passive is also used to express how easy (or hard) something can be done (without expressing who is doing it, since it’s not important anyway):

ProzorN se lako otvara. The window opens easily.

This again corresponds exactly to e.g. French reflexive passive – this example is almost word for word:

(French) La fenêtre s’ouvre difficilement. The window opens ‘difficultly’.

ProzorN se teško otvara. = The window is difficult to open.

The mediopassive is also used when something is ‘for sale’, or ‘for rent’, so it’s not sold yet:

Prodaje se kućaN. The house is for sale. (lit. ‘being sold’)

You can often see notices like prodaje se or iznajmljuje se for rent, for example:
Again, this is completely the same as Spanish *se vende* and *se renta*, except for the word order.

The mediopassive is also used when someone/everyone can hear, see or expect something:

**Nešto** se čuje. *Something is heard.*

**Mjesec** se vidio. *The Moon could be seen.*

**Očekuje se snijeg.** *Snow is expected.*

Such sentences translate as English passives (*is heard*). However, they don’t completely correspond to English passives, since in English you can usually add *by whom*:

*The Moon could be seen by them.*

This is *completely impossible* in Croatian: if you want to say this, you’ll have to rephrase the sentence as *they could see the Moon*, etc.

Perf-like verbs verbs of perception, i.e. *vidjeti* see and *čuti* (*čuje*) *hear*, when used in mediopassive, behave as imperfective verbs – you can express the time period:

**Dim** se vidio satima. *The smoke could be seen for hours.*

**Buka** se čula cijelu noć. *The noise could be heard the whole night.*

Next, you should use it when there’s a group of people that does something, maybe even everybody, at least in some area:

**U Argentini** se govori španjolski. *Spanish is spoken in Argentina.*

**U Japaru** se jede riža. *Rice is eaten in Japan.*

Such sentences also usually correspond to English passive sentences (*is spoken*), and to the same construction in Spanish (*se habla español en Argentina*). Sometimes such sentences are rephrased with **ljudi** m pl. *people*, e.g:

**U Argentini** ljudi govore španjolski. *People in Argentina speak Spanish.*

**U Japaru** ljudi jedu rižu. *People in Japan eat rice.*

(The same rephrasing can be used in Spanish, with *la gente*.)

This is also used when you want to say what is the custom, or how people should do something:

**Juha** se jede žlicom. *Soup is eaten with a spoon.*

Again, such sentences usually correspond to English passive sentences (*is eaten*). Some sentences are ambiguous, for example the following sentence could be a part of recipe or simply a statement what’s going on in the oven:

**Meso** se peče dva sata. *Meat is roasting for two hours.*

The French ‘reflexive passive’ has the same use:
(French) Ça ne se fait pas. lit. It’s not done.
To ne radi. = People don’t do that.

Sometimes, such sentences don’t have any subject (as some verbs, e.g. go don’t permit an object), so English sentences must use people, they or some other way. Such sentences are *impersonal* in Croatian, so neuter singular forms must be used in the past:

Ovdje se ne puši. *There’s no smoking here.* (lit. ‘It’s not smoked here.’)
Nekad se često islo u kino. *People were going to cinema often.*
Puno se popilo. *They drank a lot.*

(Spanish uses again exactly the same construction, the first sentence corresponds to aquí no se fuma, which has only a slightly different word order.)

For example, this sign on a small diner in Zagreb says lit. ‘at our place it’s eaten the best’ = people eat here the best:

![Sign Saying “Grill Ham-Ham Kod Nas Se Jede Najbolje”](image)

German again has the same feature (but with werden-passive), while Swedish has the -s passive here:

(German) Es wurde die ganze Nacht getanzt. lit. ‘It was danced all night.’
(Swedish) Det dansades hela natten.
Plesalo se cijelu noc.

All three sentences mean, of course, *they/people were dancing all night.* Please remember such sentences are impersonal in Croatian, i.e. *no subject is allowed* in them. (Latin also uses passive impersonally, e.g. in Virgil Sic itur ad astra.)

Often, *content clauses* are subject of such sentences, English again uses the dummy it, and passives with some verbs (content sentences behave as neuter singular subjects, exactly as to):

Čini se da... *It seems that...*
Može se reći da... *It can be said that...*
Vjeruje se da... *It’s believed that...*
Očekuje se da... *It’s expected that...*
Čini se da... *It seemed that...*
Moglo se reći da... *It could be said that...*

The sentences above look impersonal, but the content clauses are actually subjects. Since the clauses are neither nouns nor pronouns, the verb goes to neuter singular in
the past tense, as if it were impersonal, so behavior is actually the same.

To summarize, there are two main uses of this construction:

1. when something happens "on its own";
2. when English uses passive as well (is seen, are expected).

Finally, there’s a rather surprising use of DL in such sentences. With many verbs, it’s possible to say that you feel like doing something, or you have a need to do something (even against your will!).

The following examples will illustrate it – of course, instead of mi² and Ani (DL of Ana) you can use any pronoun or noun standing for a person (or animal) in the DL case. The verbs are almost always imperfective, because such expressions are about activities and states, and not accomplishments. The following common expressions stand for unpleasant feelings:

Povraća* miDL se. I feel like throwing up.
Vrti* miDL se. I’m dizzy.
AniDL se povraćalo. Ana felt like throwing up.

The second sentence uses the verb vrtjeti/vrstiti spin. (Bear in mind that the sentences are again impersonal, as the past tense reminds you.) The following expressions are more pleasant:

Pije* miDL se. I feel like drinking.
Puši* miDL se. I need to smoke.
Ne pleše* miDL se. I don’t feel like dancing.
AniDL se spava°. Ana is sleepy.
Ne ide° miDL se na posao. I don’t feel like going to work.

If you express what you feel like drinking/eating, it becomes the subject, so the verb must be adjusted accordingly:

Pije miDL se čajN. I feel like drinking tea.
Jedu miDL se kolačiN. I feel like eating cakes.

Compare the previous sentences in the past tense:

Pilo miDL se. I felt like drinking.
AniDL se spavalo. Ana was sleepy.
Nije miDL se išlo na posao. I didn’t feel like going to work.
Pio miDL se čajN. I felt like drinking tea.
Jeli su miDL se kolačiN. I felt like eating cakes.

This is yet another use of the DL case to express feelings.

So, you finally know how to sell your house and to express that you don’t feel like dancing!

What about exceptions to use of se²? There are couple of common verbs that
sometimes behave as English open. A common verb with this property is svirati play (music) (the English verb play is used in the same way):

Svirala je neka dosadna pjesma. A boring song was playing.

Another verb is pisati (piše) write. For instance, if you would like to say that something "is written" in a book, you should not use the se²:

Ovdje piše da... It’s written here that...
U knjizi piše istina. The truth is written in the book.

The English verb write has to be used as passive, it’s unlike open. Note that istina truth is the subject of the second sentence, while the first one has a content clause as its subject. Therefore, the first is in neuter in past, and the second one is feminine:

Ovdje je pisalo da... It was written here that...
U knjizi je pisala istina. The truth was written in the book.

Yet another very common verb with this property is trebati need/should; it’s used without se² with infinitives and content sentences (and impersonal meaning):

Trebalo je reći da... It should have been said that...

If you want to express how something is customary done, you have to use se² with these verbs too:

Njegovo ime se ne piše tako. His name is not written like that.

• Examples

This pop song, Tvoje lice se promijenilo Your face has changed, performed by Yammat, contains a mediopassive in its title and refrain:

Ljubav je nestala za dan
Vidjela sam
Ja znam
Tvoje lice
se promijenilo

I čitav svijet za koji znam
Kao san
Je nestao
Tvoje lice
me promijenilo

Love has disappeared in a day
I saw
I know
Your face
has changed

And the whole world I know about
Like a dream
Has disappeared
Your face
has changed me

(I. Babić & N. Borgudan)

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

One verse has mediopassive se², meaning that the face has changed, while another
has A me\(^2\), which is the object – the face changed me. Croatian packs a lot of meaning in such short words.

The verse I čitav svijet za koji znam is, of course, a relative clause, introduced in 62 The Friend I Saw: Relative Clauses.

The verse Ljubav je nestala za dan contains a ‘time frame’ for the perf. verb nestati (nestane) disappear: za dan in a day. This is an example where the time-phrase-rule (check 49 For 7 Hours: Definite Periods) is relaxed if za\(\text{"}\) is used. The full form would of course be za jedan dan.

### • Exercise

Use the particle se\(^2\), where appropriate, and the following verb pairs:

- kvariti \(\sim\) po- («) break (stop working)
- mijenjati \(\sim\) promijeniti («) change
- topiti \(\sim\) o- melt

together with prepositions, when needed, to complete the sentences below:

**Led \____ (a) \______________ (b). The ice has melted.**
**______________ (c) mi \____ (d). I was feeling dizzy.**

**Sve \____ (e) \______________ (f). Everything has changed.**

**Auto \____ (g) \______________ (h). The car broke.**

**Njemački \____ (i) \______________ (j) \____ (k) Austriji. German is spoken in Austria.**

**______________ (l) \____ (m) pojelo. They/People ate a little.**

Check answers here.
65 Carry, Bring, Drive: Transport Verbs

I will now introduce three important verb families that mostly do with transport, that is, carrying, bringing, leading and driving, including some fairly distantly related meanings.

The families are not symmetric: there’s no base pair. The first family is derived from nositi carry. Derived verbs look like this, and perf. verbs are very irregular:

- **nositi** carry
- **donositi** («) ~ **donijeti** (donese, donio, donijela) bring ¹

The basic verb means not just carry, but also wear:

**Goran** ¹ **nosi plavu majicu** ³. *Goran is wearing a blue T-shirt.*

If you now don’t understand how we distinguish carry and wear – we usually don’t have to. With clothes and similar items (shoes, hats) the meaning *wear* is assumed.

The base verb is perfectly regular, so are derived impf. verbs. However, all perf. verbs are irregular, and derived from forms not used on their own. For instance:

**Ana** ³ **je donijela vino** ³. *Ana brought wine.*

This verb, and all derived from it, use destinations and origins:

**Ana** ³ **je donijela sendvič** ³ **Goranu** ⁴. *Ana brought Goran a sandwich.*

Common verbs that follow this pattern are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>used with</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>do-</td>
<td>A (DL)</td>
<td><em>bring</em> (here)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td><em>carry over, transfer</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>od-</td>
<td>A (DL)</td>
<td><em>bring</em>* (perf.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A (od ² G)</td>
<td><em>take away</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td><em>bring in</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pod-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td><em>tolerate, can stand</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>po-</td>
<td></td>
<td>not a pair! (specific meanings)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The optional DL used with these verbs means, as expected, the person who will receive something (in A).

The perf. verb **odnijeti** (etc.) is used as a perf. counterpart of nositi, to express that carrying something to someone is completed, i.e. when something is brought or delivered.
The difference between the od- and do- pairs derived from nositi is exactly the same as with similar verbs derived from ići (i.e. odlaziti vs. dolaziti):

- **do-** come + bring
- **od-** go + take

The verb pair derived with pre- covers also the meaning transfer (interestingly, English transfer is ultimately from the Latin verb trāns-ferō, which is the exact translation of pre-nositi):

**Komarc**<sup>N</sup> **prenose bolesti**<sup>A</sup>. Mosquitoes transfer diseases.

The verb pair derived with pod- has a bit unexpected meaning; it usually corresponds to English tolerate or can + stand (someone/something):

**Ana**<sup>N</sup> **ne podnosi komarce**<sup>A</sup>. Ana can’t stand mosquitoes.

Furthermore, there are a couple of unexpected things: first, the verb odnositi («) when used with se² – only the impf. verb – has the following meanings:

- **odnositi** («) se²
  + na" + A relate, refer to A, be about A
  + prema + DL behave towards DL, treat DL

For example:

**Loše se odnosi prema meni**<sup>DL</sup>. He behaved badly towards me.

This verb, with na" + A, is often used where English uses apply and similar verbs:

**Popust**<sup>N</sup> **se odnosi na sve majice**<sup>A</sup>. The discount ‘relates to’ all T-shirts. (= applies to)

Next, the prefix po- creates two verbs that don’t form a pair:

- **ponositi** («) se² (I) be proud (of I)
- **ponijeti** (ponese, ponio, ponijela) perf. take* (with someone)

The perf. verb **ponijeti** (etc.) is used when someone takes something with him or her:

**Ana**<sup>N</sup> **je ponijela laptop**<sup>A</sup>. Ana took the laptop with her.

Basically the same meaning can be expressed also with the pair uzimati ~ uzeti (uzme), but it has additional meanings (take something from someone), while ponijeti (etc.) does not.

There’s one more verb pair in this family I haven’t listed, derived with do-pri-: it means contribute.

Colloqually, in Zagreb, Rijeka and the surrounding regions – roughly western and northwestern Croatia – you will sometimes hear another (colloquial) form of infinitive for perf. verbs from this family: odnesti and so on.

The perf. verbs in this family have two forms of passive adjectives (I have omitted...
present and past forms):

- donijetì (...) perf. bring → donijet / donesen
- odnijetì (...) perf. carry away → odnijet / odnesen

Beside these two standard forms for each verb, you’ll often see and hear one more form: donešen, odnešen, etc. Each form prevails in speech in various regions.

There are two more verbs families that are quite similar to the previous family. They are derived from the following verbs:

- voditi lead
- voziti drive

The verbs have more regular forms than ones derived from nositi, but the perf. verbs look very similar:

- dovoditi («) ~ dovesti (dovede, doveo) bring (someone)
- dovoziti («) ~ dovesti (doveze, dovezao, dovezla) bring (by driving)

Although voditi on its own means lead in all its meanings – in a game, a race, and someone, showing the way – in the derived verbs it’s always taking, bringing...

another person (including animals, pets especially):

- Ana\textsuperscript{N} je dovela svog brata\textsuperscript{A}. Ivana brought her brother. \hspace{1cm} dovesti past-f
- Ivana\textsuperscript{N} je dovela svog psa\textsuperscript{A}. Ivana brought her dog. \hspace{1cm} dovesti past-f

Compare this with the use of the corresponding verb derived from nositi:

- Ivana\textsuperscript{N} je donijela svoju gitaru\textsuperscript{A}. Ivana brought her guitar. \hspace{1cm} donijeti past-f

Strictly speaking, verbs derived from voditi are used if one lead/brought was moving on their own; verbs derived from nositi imply carrying. If she had brought a hrčak (hrčk-) hamster, verbs derived from nositi would be used, since the hamster likely didn’t walk beside her all the way, but was carried:

- Ivana\textsuperscript{N} je donijela svog hrčka\textsuperscript{A}. Ivana brought her hamster. \hspace{1cm} donijeti past-f

An interesting exception are babies and little children: for them, verbs derived from voditi are always used, even if they are too young to walk!

Like the verb pair derived from nositi, the perf. verb derived with od- is often used in as the perf. counterpart of the base verb:

- Ana\textsuperscript{N} je odvela Gorana\textsuperscript{A} u školu\textsuperscript{A}. Ana took Goran to school. \hspace{1cm} odvesti past-f
- Ana\textsuperscript{N} je odnijela knjige\textsuperscript{A} u školu\textsuperscript{A}. Ana took books to school. \hspace{1cm} odnijeti past-f

As with nositi, with the prefix po-, there are no verb pairs: only perf. verbs are used in the meaning take. Their meaning is subtle: the subject is going somewhere anyway (and it’s often not expressed where), and he or she is taking something or someone (again, who moves on their own) with them:

- Ana\textsuperscript{N} je povela psa\textsuperscript{A}. Ana took the dog with her. \hspace{1cm} povesti past-f
Ana\textsuperscript{N} je ponijela knjigu\textsuperscript{A}. Ana took a book with her.

The verb pair derived from voditi with pre-, besides rare literal meaning, has another, but very common meaning – translate:

Dario\textsuperscript{N} je preveo pismo\textsuperscript{A}. Dario has translated the letter.

The pre- pair uses origins and destinations, including when used as translate, so pay attention that languages use prepositions s’ / sa’ + G and na’ + A:

Ana\textsuperscript{N} je prevela poruku\textsuperscript{A} s njemačkog\textsuperscript{G} na hrvatski\textsuperscript{A}. Ana has translated the message from German to Croatian.

This table summarizes verb common verb pairs in this family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-voditi («) ~ -vesti (-vde, -veo)</th>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>used with</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>do-</td>
<td>A (DL)</td>
<td>bring (here)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iz-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>lead out*, perform</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>bring over*, translate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>od-</td>
<td>A (od’ G)</td>
<td>take away*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>lead in*, introduce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pro-</td>
<td>A (time)</td>
<td>spend (time)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proiz-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>produce, manufacture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meanings indicated by an asterisk (*) have corresponding verbs derived from nositi: the difference is that who or what is brought must be moving on its own, while verbs derived from nositi imply carrying.

The verb pair derived with u- has an unexpected meaning: introduce:

Hrvatska\textsuperscript{N} nije uvela euro\textsuperscript{A}. Croatia haven’t introduced the euro.

Likewise, the verb pair derived with iz- has a quite unexpected meaning: perform. It’s not used without an object, you have to say what is performed:

Oni\textsuperscript{N} će izvesti nekoliko pjesama\textsuperscript{G}. They will perform several songs.

To express perform without an object, use the verb pair:

nastupati («) ~ nastupiti («) perform, take stage

For example:

Goran\textsuperscript{N} nastupa u školi\textsuperscript{PL}. Goran is performing in school.

Finally, two verb pairs, derived with pro- and pro-iz- have quite unexpected meanings. The first pair means spend time (with someone, at some place) – with it, you have to say what time is spent (in A) – two days, a night, a morning, etc.:
Proveli smo dva dana\textsuperscript{24} u Dubrovniku\textsuperscript{DL}. We spent two days in Dubrovnik.

Provest ću jutro\textsuperscript{A} u vlaku\textsuperscript{DL}. I’ll spend the morning in the train.

This pair is not used to spend money (or other material resources, e.g. paper, cloth, salt...); for such kind of spending, another pair is used:

\begin{itemize}
\item trošiti ∼ po- («) spend (money, resources)
\end{itemize}

This is the same difference as French passer vs. dépenser, German verbringen vs. aufwenden or Spanish pasar vs. gastar.

The second pair, with pro-iz-, means produce, mostly in industrial ways (I’ve used here the mediopassive, introduced in 64 The Door Opens: Fun with se\textsuperscript{2}):

\begin{itemize}
\item Ovi laptopi\textsuperscript{N} se proizvode u Kin\textsuperscript{DL}. These laptops are manufactured in China. (lit. ‘are being manufactured’)
\end{itemize}

The derived pass. adj. (of the perf. verb) is used as the translation of made in:

\begin{itemize}
\item proizvedeno + (location). Note the stress of pass. adj. – it applies to all pass. adjectives derived from perf. verbs this family – always on -e-:
\item izvesti (...) perf. perform → izveden
\item uvesti (...) perf. introduce → uveden etc.
\end{itemize}

The verb pairs derived from voziti drive have similar meaning to ones derived from nositi and voditi, but the emphasis is on driving: a vehicle (including ships and airplanes!) must be involved:

\begin{itemize}
\item Ana\textsuperscript{N} je odvezla Gorana\textsuperscript{A} u školu\textsuperscript{A}. Ana drove Goran to school. odvesti past-f
\end{itemize}

The verb voziti can be used with A (drive something or someone, or se\textsuperscript{2}, when the meaning is mediopassive – we don’t know who’s driving really:

\begin{itemize}
\item Ana\textsuperscript{N} vozi auto\textsuperscript{A}. Ana is driving the car. m
\item Ana\textsuperscript{N} se vozi. Ana is driving (in a car). m
\end{itemize}

Most verbs in the family derived from voziti must have a subject in A or a se\textsuperscript{2}:

\begin{itemize}
\item Ana\textsuperscript{N} je odvezla Gorana\textsuperscript{A} u školu\textsuperscript{A}. Ana drove Goran to school. odvesti past-f
\item Ana\textsuperscript{N} se odvezla u školu\textsuperscript{A}. Ana drove to school. odvesti past-f
\end{itemize}

Now, the verb pair derived from voziti with pre- has only the simple meaning – transport:

\begin{itemize}
\item Trajekti\textsuperscript{N} prevoze auto\textsuperscript{A}. Ferries transport cars. m
\end{itemize}

As in two other families, the perf. verb derived with po- means while driving somewhere, take someone/something with, but it’s less often used than other two verbs.

With u- and iz-, besides the expected meanings drive into and drive out, the derived verb pairs have meanings import and export:
Hrvatska\textsuperscript{N} \textit{uvozi banane}. \textit{Croatia imports bananas.}

Njemačka\textsuperscript{N} \textit{izvozi aute}. \textit{Germany exports cars.}

Like perf. verbs in the \textit{voziti} family, all perf. verbs in this family have stress on -e- in pass. adj.:

\textit{Auto}\textsuperscript{N} \textit{je uvezen}\textsuperscript{N} \textit{iz Poljske}. \textit{The car is imported from Poland.}

\textsuperscript{®} In the “Ekavian” pronunciation, which completely dominates in Serbia, verb pairs derived from \textit{nositi carry} have regular past forms, e.g.:

\textit{donositi} («) \textit{~ doneti} (\textit{donese}) \textit{bring}

It seems \textit{voditi} with babies is considered non-standard in Serbia.
66 Smoking is Dangerous: Verbal Nouns

English uses -ing forms for more than one purpose. Compare the sentences:

(1) I am swimming.
(2) I like swimming.
(3) Swimming is healthy.

In sentences #2 and #3, swimming can be replaced with to swim or even apples (I like apples, apples are healthy.). The word swimming behaves similar to a noun in these two sentences. Croatian has a special noun (derived from verbs) that’s used in sentences like #2 and #3: verbal noun or gerund.

It’s basically derived from the pass. adjective. Most of them end in -n; we change it to -nje and that’s the noun we need:

Volim plivanje\(^A\). I like swimming.
Plivanje\(^N\) je zdravo\(^N\). Swimming is healthy.

But there’s really no passive adjective ‘plivan’, right? Right. The passive adjective is just a formal step. You can skip it if you think it’s meaningless, but it’s worth remembering that differences between pass. adjectives and gerunds are small, especially when you recall all consonant alternations in passive adjectives. Formally it goes like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>pass. adj.</th>
<th>gerund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pušiti smoke →</td>
<td>pušen → pušenje</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>čistiti clean →</td>
<td>čišćen → čišćenje</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can summarize rules for pass. adjectives and gerunds in one nice table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>pass. adj.</th>
<th>gerund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ati</td>
<td>-an</td>
<td>-anje</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-nuti</td>
<td>-nut</td>
<td>-nuće</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-eti</td>
<td>-et</td>
<td>-eće</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-en</td>
<td>-enje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-<em>en</em></td>
<td>-<em>enje</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The verbs ending in -jeti (e.g. vidjeti) fall into the ‘other’ row.

The asterisk (*) in the table above signalizes a shift of the preceding consonant(s), e.g. t → č, c → č, etc. Of course, not all words that can be derived according to this scheme are really used.

Gerunds enables us to say:

Pušenje\(^N\) je opasno\(^N\). Smoking is dangerous.
Trčanje\(^N\) je zdravo\(^N\). Running is healthy.
When a verb uses an object in *accusative*, the matching gerund, if it has a noun serving as an object, will use the *genitive case instead*:

**Perem kosu** \(^A\). (A) *I’m washing my hair.*

**Pranje** \(^N\) **kose** \(^G\) **je dosadno** \(^N\). (G) *Washing hair is boring.*

The opposite holds for verbs that cannot have objects at all – the noun in genitive after the gerund stands for a *subject*:

**Lišće** \(^N\) **pada.** (N) *Leaves are falling.*

**Volim padanje** \(^A\) **lišća** \(^G\). (G) *‘I like falling of leaves.’*

Objects in other cases are sometimes changed to *na” + A*:

**Sjećam se** \(^G\) **nje**. (G) *I remember her.*

**Sjećanje na nju** \(^A\) (na” + A) *memory of her*

Some gerunds have specific meanings and are no longer felt connected to verbs.

Common ones, derived from impf. verbs, are:

- **mišljenje** *opinion*
- **pitanje** *question*
- **putovanje** *travel, trip*

There are also verbal nouns with specific meanings derived from perf. verbs:

- **iznenađenje** *surprise*
- **objašnjenje** *explanation*
- **obećanje** *promise*
- **olakšanje** *relief*
- **opravdanje** *excuse*

- **osvježenje** *refreshment*
- **upozorenje** *warning*
- **stanje** *state*
- **uzbuđenje** *excitement*

There are more, this is not an exhaustive list by any means. Some words have a bit different stress when they have a specific meaning. The same thing happened to some English forms, e.g. *painting* is derived from *paint*, but it has a specific meaning as well.

For some reasons I never really understood, some verbs don’t use this pattern at all. For instance, you would expect that from the verb *patiti* *suffer* there’s a gerund ‘*pačenje*’, but there isn’t. There are a couple of other patterns to get *gerund-like nouns*. One is to add *-nja* to the verb, after discarding *-ti* and the vowel before it (some consonants are shifted as well):

**mrziti** *hate* → **mržnja**  
**prijetiti** *threaten* → **prijetnja**

**patiti** *suffer* → **patnja**  
**šetati** *stroll* → **šetnja**

**paziti** *be careful* → **pažnja**  
**voziti** *drive* → **vožnja**

Two more verbs have such *gerund-like nouns*:

- **štđjeti/štđiti** (štđěti) *save (money)* → **štđnja**
- **šutjeti/šutiti** (štutěti) *be silent* → **šutnja**
One common verb uses both the regular way and adding -nja:

\[ \text{graditi} \text{ build} \to \text{građenje, gradnja} \]

Another way is to change verbs ending in -avati (pres-3 -aje) to -aja:

\[ \text{prodavati (prodaje)} \text{ sell} \to \text{prodaja} \]
\[ \text{udavati (udaje)} \text{ se² marry (woman to man)} \to \text{udaja} \]

Impf. verbs derived from ići (...) go and similar motion verbs have usually gerund-like nouns in -ak which turns into just an -k- before any case ending:

\[ \text{dolaziti} \text{ come} \to \text{dolazak (dolask-)} \text{ arrival} \]
\[ \text{odlaziti} \text{ leave} \to \text{odlazak (dolask-)} \text{ departure} \]

There are more common verbs that follow this pattern, some of them perfective:

\[ \text{početi (počne)} \text{ perf. begin} \to \text{početak (poček-)} \text{ beginning} \]
\[ \text{rastati (rastane)} \text{ se² perf. separate} \to \text{rastanak (rastank-)} \text{ parting, farewell} \]
\[ \text{sastati (sastane)} \text{ se² perf. meet} \to \text{sastanak (sastank-)} \text{ meeting} \]

Therefore, \text{sastanak (sastank-)} \text{ meeting} is just a gerund-like noun derived from a verb.

Some verbs (with inf in -iti) derive verbal nouns by adding -ba or -dba; common ones are:

\[ \text{boriti se² fight} \to \text{borba fight} \]
\[ \text{ploviti sail, navigate} \to \text{plovidba navigation} \]
\[ \text{usporediti («) perf. compare} \to \text{usporedba comparison} \]

There is the verbal noun \text{plovljenje}, but it’s very rarely used.

The transport verbs (ones derived from nositi carry, voditi lead and voziti drive) often have root verbal nouns, that is, with forms having just -nos, -vod and -voz, without any additional ending:

\[ \text{odnositi («) se² relate} \to \text{odnos relation} \]
\[ \text{ponositi («) se² be proud} \to \text{ponos pride} \]
\[ \text{izvoziti («) export} \to \text{izvoz export (noun)} \]

If the underlying verbs have the prefix pre-, it’s changed to prije- in the verbal nouns:

\[ \text{prevoditi («) translate} \to \text{prijevod translation} \]
\[ \text{prevoziti («) transport} \to \text{prijevoz transport (noun)} \]

However, the noun \text{prijevod} really means the result, and not the process – there’s the regular verbal noun \text{prevodenje} for the process – therefore, it’s really another type of the verbal noun, associated with the perfective aspect, the outcome.

There are more verb pairs which have two associated verbal nouns – the ‘perfective’
one is usually a root noun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>impf.</th>
<th>perf.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verbs</td>
<td>padati</td>
<td>~ pasti (padne, pao) fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nouns</td>
<td>padanje falling</td>
<td>pad fall (noun)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar ‘perf.’ root verbal nouns are:

- **doprinos** contribution  
  - **potpis** signature  
- **ispit** exam  
  - **razvod** divorce  
- **napad** attack  
  - **uvod** introduction

Objects of **napasti** (...) attack are changed with na” + A when you use the ‘perfective’ verbal noun (this is the same as in English):

- **Napoleon** N je napao Rusiju^A^ (A) Napoleon attacked Russia.  
  - **napasti** perf-m  
- **napad** na Rusiju^A^ (na” + A) attack on Russia

There are some impf. verbs that have root verbal nouns; common ones are:

- **boljeti** (boli,...) ache, cause pain → **bol** f pain  
- **izgledati** («) appear, look, seem → **izgled** look, appearance  
- **raditi** work / do → **rad** work

Some verbs have verbal nouns in -a, or completely irregular verbal nouns; for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>bojati</strong> (boji) se^2^ be afraid of</td>
<td><strong>strah</strong> fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>brinuti</strong> (brine) (se^2^) care, worry</td>
<td><strong>briga</strong> worry, care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>trebati</strong> need / should</td>
<td><strong>potreba</strong> need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>namjeravati</strong> («) intend</td>
<td><strong>namjera</strong> intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>željeti</strong> (želi,...) want, desire</td>
<td><strong>želja</strong> wish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, some verbs have no verbal noun at all:

- **čuti** (čuje) hear  
  - **iči** (ide, išao, išla) go

There are no underlying rules which method should be used for a verb, so it’s better to just remember verbal nouns as words on their own, more or less connected to the base verb.

Sometimes there’s a need to express the *subject* of the action expressed by a noun which matches the verb which uses objects. When the verb permits no objects, it’s easy (see above). But what about most verbs? Then – mostly in writing, legal documents, etc. – the way is to add od” + G (lit. ‘from’) or, controversially, od strane + G (lit. ‘from the side of’):
**Ovo** je prijevod od strane sudskog tumača. *This is a translation by a court interpreter.*

This construction is controversial, especially with strane, but you will find it in writing.

It seems that relational adjectives can usually be derived from root verbal nouns by adding -ni:

- **ispit** exam → **ispitni**
- **izvoz** export (noun) → **izvozn**i
- **rad** work → **radni**
- **uvod** introduction → **uvodn**i

However, relational adjectives cannot be derived from ordinary most other verbal nouns, especially not from regular ones. Nouns that are used-for-something are described with za” + verbal noun:

- **naočale za čitanje** reading glasses
- **daska za peglanje** ironing board (lit. ‘plank’)
- **papir za pečenje** baking paper

The first expression literally means glasses for reading, the second one plank for ironing, and the third one paper for baking.

When you use verbal nouns as a location, that is, you’re ‘in’ or ‘on’ something, some verbal nouns use u”, especially if it’s a solitary, or short activity:

**Ana** i **Goran** su u šetnji. *Ana and Goran went for a walk.* (lit. ‘are in a walk’)

However, most verbal nouns, especially when they involve more people, are organized, scheduled, done in shops or offices, and so on, use the preposition na”:

**Goran** je na šišanju. *Goran is on a haircut.* (at the hairdresser’s)

Verbal nouns or derived relational adjectives are not used for expressions like English *flying saucers* (saucers that fly): for that, so-called present adjectives are used. They will be introduced in 80 Present Adverbs and Adjectives.

________

® In Serbia, the verb **mrziti** hate has the unexpected “Ekavian” form **mrzet** (mrzi), but the gerund-like noun is the same: **mržnja**.

Instead of the verb **šutjeti/šutiti** be silent, the verb **ćutati** (ćuti) is used Serbia and often in Bosnia as well.

The verb **usporediti** («) perf. compare has slightly different forms in Serbia and most of Bosnia, without -s-: **upoređiti** («) and **poređiti** («). From the latter verb, the verbal noun **poređenje** is derived.
Examples

Here’s an example of a makeshift ad for a **servis za čišćenje** _cleaning service_ on a light post in Zagreb:
67 Only, Except, Too: Inclusion and Exclusion

There’s a set of often used words in Croatian that are used for restriction, inclusion and exclusion. Two basic words are:

- samo only
- osim except

The word samo is quite easy to use: just insert it before any part of the sentence to express meaning only:

- Pojest ću samo salatu. I’ll eat only the salad.
- Otisli smo samo u kino. We went only to the cinema.
- Poslao sam razglednicu osim mami. I sent a picture postcard only to my mum.
- Samo Ana je ovdje. Only Ana is here.

As you can see, the word samo doesn’t affect the words following it.

The word osim is similar; it’s mostly used with ‘total pronouns’ (don’t forget that they change through cases!):

- svi... osim... everyone... except...
- sve... osim... everything... except...
- nitko... osim... nobody... except...
- ništa... osim... nothing... except...

There’s one important difference between samo and osim: when osim is used before nouns (or adjectives + nouns), it affects them if they are in A or N and changes them into the genitive case. (That’s why osim is frequently listed as a preposition used with G; actually, it’s a word that doesn’t fit into any category.) To illustrate this:

- Pojest ću sve osim salate. (A → G) I’ll eat (up) everything except the salad.
- Poslao sam razglednicu svima osim mami. I sent a picture postcard to everyone except my mum.

Check how the noun in the sentence about postcards stays in the DL case. The change also happens in the nominative case:

- Svi su ovdje osim Ane. (N → G) Everyone’s here except for Ana.

Of course, osim can be used with ‘total adverbs’ as well:

- svugdje... osim... everywhere... except...
- uvijek... osim... always... except...
- nigdje... osim... nowhere... except...
- nikad(a)... osim... never... except...

etc.

Another word, umjesto, is used in a very similar way to osim. It means instead of:

- Otisli smo u kino umjesto u restauran. We went to the cinema
instead of restaurant.


Ivan[^N] je ovdje umjesto *Ane*. (N → G) Ivan is here instead of Ana.

However, you will sometimes see that A is retained after *umjesto*, and that G is used when the original case could be retained.

Now, there’s a major difference between English and Croatian grammar when *umjesto* instead of is used with verbs. English here has to use a gerund (*ing*-form) after *instead of*, while Croatian uses *da* + clause:


(It seems that the clause after *da* can here be in either present or past tense, but perfective verbs are allowed in the present tense, as in the example above!)

There’s also the version *umjesto što*; there are more conjunctions that can be used with *što* and *da*, with a bit different meanings. Details will be explained in 77 *As If: Advanced Clauses*.

Both *osim* and *umjesto* can be used to refer to things previously said: as you hopefully know, in Croatian the general reference is *to*. We use it after those words (changed to G, of course) to start sentences:

Osim toga[^G], pada kiša[^N]. Besides, it’s raining.

Umjesto toga[^G], idemo u *kino*. Instead, we’re going to the cinema.

While English *instead* is often found at the end of a sentence, Croatian *umjesto toga* is usually at the front.

There’s another conjunction we met before – *i*.” It’s placed *before the word that adds* to what is known or what has been said before.

Volim *kavu*[^A]. I like coffee. ®

Volim i *čaj*. I like tea as well.

I Ivan[^N] voli *kavu*. Ivan likes coffee as well.

It’s similar to English *too* (placed *after* what is added), but it’s more strict than in English: *i* ” *must* be placed before the added thing:

I Ana[^N] voli *čaj*. Ana *too* likes tea.

Ana[^N] voli i *čaj*. Ana likes tea *too*.

While the English *Ana likes tea too* is a bit ambiguous, Croatian *Ana voli i čaj* is precise: she likes other drinks, and additionally *tea*.

What is added *must be emphasized*, that is, pronouns must not be left out, and stressed forms must be used:

I ja[^N] volim *kavu*. I like coffee as well.

I njima[^DL] se sviđa film[^N]. They like the movie as well. (or: They, too, like the movie.)
It’s absolutely impossible to add i¨ before a second-position form, e.g. normal A of pronouns (e.g. “vidim i te”). Regardless of placement, you have to use stressed forms after i¨ (e.g. vidim i tebe).

It’s possible to put i¨ in front of the verb, meaning something will happen (or be done by someone) in addition:

Ana N će posjetiti RimA. Ana will visit Rome.  
Tamo će i prespavati. She will sleep for a night there as well.

If the sentence is negative (that is, the verb is negated) the negative ni¨ must be used:

Ni jaN ne volim kavuA. I don’t like coffee either.  
Ni njimaDL se ne sviđa filmN. They don’t like the movie either.

(You will find this rule a bit relaxed in real life, so you will sometimes hear just i¨ in negated sentences. Standard Croatian actually prescribes using i¨ before negative words like ne¨.)

As with i¨, stressed forms are mandatory after ni¨ when you use pronouns.

The words i¨ and ni¨ are often used in short responses, when you agree what was said (but ni¨ is used when you agree with something that used negation):

Volim čajA. I like tea.  
— I jaN. Me too.  
Ne volim vinoA. I don’t like wine.  
— Ni jaN. Me neither.

Note that Croatian doesn’t change case as English does (i.e. me instead of I)

The conjunction ni¨ before the negated verb (or past form, infinitive) is often used to emphasize negation:

Nije gaN ni vidjela. She didn’t even see him. (or it, depending on the context)  
Neću teA ni pitati. I won’t even ask you.

It can be placed also before an singular object in negated sentences, most often when using imati have – the object then usually goes into the G, to emphasize negation:

Nemam ni kuneG. I don’t have a single kuna. (Croatian money unit)

There’s the word niti which further emphasizes exclusion and negation, and often translates as actually, i.e. contrary to someone’s expectations (such use is a bit colloquial):

Niti ne želim čekati. (colloq.) I don’t want to wait at all. ®

There’s another word with the same "addition" effect, it’s less used in speech, more in writing:
**također** also, as well

This word can be placed like **opet**, basically anywhere in the sentence; it does not refer to a particular word or phrase, so it corresponds to English *also* and *as well*:

**Ivan** također voli kavu. Ivan likes coffee as well.

Colloquially, the word *također* is often used to strengthen *i", so you’ll often hear and sometimes read *također* i”.

Another word is frequently used to emphasize *i", when you want to "add" to something what is already considerably large – **još**:

**Pojeo je još i kolač.** After everything else, he ate a cake as well.

If you want to emphasize that you’re adding so much, no more, use **još samo** (or samo **još**):

**Želim još samo jednu jabuku.** I want only one apple more.

**Želim samo još jednu jabuku.** (the same meaning)

Generic Croatian adjectives can be usually used as pronouns. However, the adjective *sam* alone cannot be used as a pronoun. Instead, another adjective/pronoun must be used: **jedin** only one, single.

We’re also capable to ask about addition. It’s quite simple, just add **još** to questions; the usual position is before the verb:

**Što još želite?** What else (besides previously said) would you like?

This can be added to any *who/what/where/how* question, but it implies something is already known, we want to know the rest:

**Koga si još vidio?** Who else did you saw?

**Što još znaš?** What else do you know? (besides already told)

**Gdje ste još bili?** Where else have you been? (besides places you already told)

Besides that word, words **to** and **sve** can be added to questions in a similar manner, and then they behave like adverbs, i.e. don’t change; as with **još**, they are usually put before the verb:

**Što si to čuo?** What did you hear? (I saw/know you heard something)

**Što si to rekao?** What did you say? (I heard you said something)  
**reći** past-m

**Koga si sve vidio?** Who did you saw? (tell me all)

**Što sve znaš?** What do you know? (tell me all)

The word **to** restricts the question to something specific, known to the person who asks the question, something that’s going on or has just happened. Another example is that somebody has a photo from vacation on their living room wall, and you ask him or her, **Gdje si to bio?** the question being about specifically the picture you’re standing before.
The word **sve** means that we want a complete answer, i.e. all the places someone visited, all the people someone met, everything somebody knows, and so on.

This table summarizes the three context adverbs for **who/what/where/how** questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>who/what/where/how context adverbs</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>to</strong></td>
<td>the current moment, situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>još</strong></td>
<td>in addition to previously said/discussed/known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sve</strong></td>
<td>totality: want to know everything</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word **još** can be placed before an indefinite pronoun, for example:

- **još nešto** *something in addition*
- **još negdje** *somewhere in addition*
- **još netko** *somebody in addition*
- **još nekako** *in an additional way*

For example, a waiter or waitress will usually ask you:

**Želite li još nešto?** *Would you like something 'in addition'?* (i.e. beside things already ordered)

**Još nešto?** (colloquially shortened, the same meaning)

Another example:

**Poznaješ li još nekog?** *Do you know somebody else?* (beside ones you already said you know)

**Treba mi još nešto.** *I need something more.* (beside things I already said/took)

This has more specific meaning than adding the adjective **drugi** *other* after indefinite pronouns (or the appropriate adverb), which can mean either replacement or addition, but the default meaning is replacement:

- **nešto drugo** *something else*
- **negdje drugdje** *somewhere else*
- **netko drugi** *somebody else*
- **nekako drugačije** *in some other way*

For example:

**Treba mi još nešto drugo.** *I need something else.* *(instead)*

* In Serbia, besides **osim**, the word **sem** is also used, with the exactly same meaning and grammatical properties.

Instead of **kino** and **kava**, words **bioskop** and **kafa** prevail in Serbia and most of Bosnia for **cinema** and **coffee**. In Bosnia, especially in parts where Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) live, another word is also used for **coffee**: **kahva**.

The word **niti** is not used in Serbia to emphasize negation, and it’s rare in Bosnia; such use is considered specifically Croatian.
The word **takoder** is almost always in Serbia and usually in Bosnia shortened to **takođe**.

**Something Possibly Interesting**

Why does English switch case in responses like *me too*, while Croatian doesn’t? It seems that the *default case* of pronouns in English is the object case (a.k.a. the accusative case). The subject case is used *only when the pronoun is the single-word subject placed before the verb in the same sentence*; otherwise, object case is used in English. This explains forms like:

*You and me are going to*... (not a single-word subject)
*Who was it? — Me.* (no verb)
*Lucky me is....* (not a single-word subject)

Of course, this is not really the explanation: this is just a rule, we have described what is going on in grammar terms, but we still don’t know why such rule applies at all! (Due credits go to Arnold Zwicky on the Language Log.)

**Examples**

This big electronic billboard on the Zagreb bus station advertises itself:

![Billboard Ad](image)

It says *your ad, too, can be here*, using the 2nd pers. plural of respect (**Vaš**).
68 Three Men: Group Numbers

So far we have learned cardinal numbers (one, two), ordinal numbers (first, second), fractional numbers (half, third), and collective numbers (another set of one, two, used with some nouns).

Croatian has more numbers: this set actually consists of collective nouns which stand for groups of males. They are listed here:

- **both obojica** 5 petorica
- 2 dvojica 6 šestorica
- 3 trojica 7 sedmorica
- 4 četvorica etc.

The pattern for larger numbers is: take an ordinal adjective (e.g. osm-i), remove the final -i and add either -ero or -orica.

You will sometimes hear versions of these numbers with -oro (e.g. četvoro). They are very common in Bosnia and Serbia, and heard in Croatia as well.

The noun dvojica really stands for two men (or two boys — two males of any kind really). The same holds for all other nouns listed above. The nouns are mass nouns, i.e. they are in singular, despite meaning plurality, and change like any other singular nouns on -a:

Razgovarao sam s obojicom. I talked to both men. (or both boys)

Actually, the nouns obojica, dvojica, etc. behave exactly like djeca and braća: they require verbs in plural, despite being in feminine singular. Compare:

Djeca su otišla. Children left.

Obojica su otišla. Both men left.

These numbers give us another possibility: you can express counted pronouns, like us two. As you probably expect, the pronoun will be in the genitive case, and the form of the number will depend on the gender, but there’s one twist you probably didn’t expect: pronouns come before numbers. The forms are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>all-male</th>
<th>mixed</th>
<th>all-female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nas obojica</td>
<td>nas oboje</td>
<td>nas obje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nas dvojica</td>
<td>nas dvoje</td>
<td>nas dvije</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nas trojica</td>
<td>nas troje</td>
<td>nas tri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You get the system: for all-male groups, the specific collective nouns listed above are used; for all-female groups, regular (cardinal) numbers in the feminine gender; for mixed groups, the collective numbers. Colloquially, the mixed sex pattern is very
often used even for all-male and all-female groups.

The constructions above can mean either e.g. *us two* or *two of us*. However, there's a variation, if *two of us* stands for *two out of a larger group of us* (e.g. there are five of us in total, and two of us should do something...). In such a case you can use either:

**dvoje nas** (two of *us*, out of a larger group)
**dvoje od nas** (the same, but a bit more precise)

Of course, instead of *nas*, you can use *vas* or *njih* (stressed forms must be used) to get various expressions:

**njih** (three of *them* (all male))
**vas** (both of *you* (all female))

You can also use other quantity adverbs, and quantity adjectives, to quantify personal pronouns. When you use *neki* and similar words with pronouns, the rules change, you have to use *od* + G:

- **nitko od nas** (none of *us*)
- **nekoliko nas** (several of *us*)
- **jedan od nas** (one of *us*)
- **mnogo nas** (many of *us*)
- **netko od nas** (somebody of *us*)
- **dosta nas** (quite a few of *us*)
- **neki od nas** (some of *us*)
- **puno nas** (a lot of *us*)
- **mnogi od nas** (many of *us*)
- **svatko od nas** (each of *us*)
- **svi mi** (all of *us*)

Of course, you can use the pronoun *oni* and so on. The rule is: pronoun-like words require *od* + G, adverbs just G, while **svi** behaves like an adjective in such expressions, and both words change.
69 Memories, Expectations and Fear

There are three areas in Croatian – memory, expectations and fears – which are a bit different than in English. Each has a twist.

First, these verb pairs are used to express remembering and forgetting:

- *pamtiti ~ za- (+ A/CC)* memorize, remember
- *sjećati se² ~ sjetiti se² (+ G/inf/CC)* remember, recall
- *zaboravljati ~ zaboraviti (+ A/inf/CC)* forget

The twist is that Croatian distinguishes storing into memory (*zapamtit*) and retrieving something from memory (*sjetiti se²*) by means of two perfective verbs (as you can see from the double tildes, they are not ordinary perf. verbs, but it’s not important for the moment). However, the two impf. verbs – *pamtiti* and *sjećati se²* – largely overlap in meaning; the latter verb is much more common in speech. In the meantime, English uses usually just *remember*:

**Zapamtil sam [gdje je auto⁻]**. I remembered [where the car is]. (and now I know it)

**Sjećam se [gdje je auto⁻]**. I recall [where the car is]. (I can get it from my memory)

The perf. verb *sjetiti se²* in past tense is often used to express that you have recalled something just now (and previously you couldn’t):

**Sjetila sam se gdje je auto⁻**. I remember now where the car is. (female speaking)

It’s also very common to use this verb when you remembered (or didn’t) to do something (expressed in inf), so you did it (or didn’t):

**Jesi li se sjetio zatvori prozor⁴?** Did you remember to close the window?

If you didn’t remember at some moment, you can also use the verb *zaboraviti* perf. *forget*, it’s not necessarily permanent loss of memory:

**Nisam se sjetio zatvori prozor⁴.** I didn’t remember to close the window.

**Zaboravio sam zatvori prozor⁴.** I forgot to close the window.

If you forget something, it’s simply an object in A; but you can also forget about some event you were supposed to attend, or any other noun that implies your involvement: then, *na* + A is used as the object:

**Zaboravio sam jaknu⁴!** I forgot my jacket!

**Zaboravio sam na utakmicu⁴!** I forgot about the match!

These differences don’t really correspond to English *forget vs. forget about*. In most cases, English *forget about* corresponds to a simple object in A in Croatian.

However, to *memorize* that you have to do something, you cannot use just *inf* – a
content clause must be used:

**Zapamtio sam [da moram zatvori t pro zor].** I ‘memorized’ I have to close the window. (i.e. I know it, I’ll do it, you don’t have to remind me)

The basic verb to express *fear* in Croatian is:

**bojati (boji)** se\(^2\) (+ G/inf/clause)

For example:

Ana\(^N\) se **boji zmiya**\(^G\). *Ana is afraid of snakes.*

Another way is using the noun *strah* + the verb *biti* (je\(^2\) +) + one who’s afraid in A (+ what is afraid of in G):

Anu\(^A\) je **strah**\(^N\) **zmija**\(^G\). *Ana is afraid of snakes.*

Anu\(^A\) je bio **strah**\(^N\) **zmija**\(^G\). *Ana was afraid of snakes.*

Anu\(^A\) je **bilo strah**\(^N\) **zmija**\(^G\). (the same meaning, more common)

The noun *strah fear* is the subject, as you can see from the past tense, but the sentence is usually treated as impersonal, so using neuter singular in the past is actually more common. As with other expressions where the person who feels something is not in the nominative case, the person is nevertheless usually placed at the first position.

The complex *biti* (je\(^2\) +) *strah* behaves like one *compound verb*. What if you want to convert it to a verbal noun (i.e. gerund)? You would use then just *strah*, but what causes fear is then expressed with od\(^-\) + G:

**strah od zmiya** fear of snakes

**strah od letenja** fear of flying

There’s one more way, less used in speech, more in writing – the verb pair:

**plašiti ~ u-** scary

The verbs can be used in both ways:

Ana\(^N\) se **plaši zmiya**\(^G\). *Ana is scared of snakes.*

Anu\(^A\) **plaše zmije**\(^N\). *Snakes scare Ana.*

You can also be afraid to *do something* – then just use the *inf* of the verb (which can have its objects and so on):

**Goran**\(^N\) se **boji voziti bicikl**\(^A\). *Goran is afraid to drive bicycle.*

**Anu**\(^A\) je **strah**\(^N\) **roniti**. *Ana is afraid to dive.*

On the other hand, there’s just one verb to express *expectation*:

**očekivati (očekuje)** expect (+ A/clause)

It’s simple to use – what is expected is in A:

**Očekivali smo tvog brata**\(^A\). *We expected your brother.*
Now, all the constructions described above can be also used with clauses: you can both be afraid that something might happen or you can expect that something is going to happen.

All such clauses start with da and in principle can use any tense, e.g. future:

Ana\(^N\) se boji da će biti hladno. bojati se

Očekujem da nećemo pobijediti. očekivati

The usual rules of word order in clauses apply:

Ana\(^N\) se boji [da\(^1\) će\(^2\) biti hladno]. Ana is afraid that it will be cold. bojati se

The verb očekivati (očekuje) expect is, of course mostly used to expect future events.

With both expectations and fear, it’s common – but not obligatory! – to express future events with the present tense of perf. verbs. It’s the twist: it’s both OK to say:

Očekujem da će pasti kiša\(^N\). ‘I expect that rain will fall.’ očekivati

Očekujem da padne kiša\(^N\). (more or less the same meaning) očekivati | pasti

We have here used the perf. verb pasti (padne, pao) fall. Maybe there’s small difference in meaning – if you use the present tense of perf. verbs, it’s a bit less certain, and more speculative.

With the impf. verbs, it’s not possible to use present tense to refer to future events in such clauses – if you use the present tense, it refers to ongoing processes:

Očekujem da će padati kiša\(^N\). ‘I expect that rain will be falling.’ (later) očekivati

Očekujem da pada kiša\(^N\). ‘I expect that rain is falling.’ (now) očekivati

(Of course, this applies to the verb (bude) as well, it behaves as any perf. verb here.)

The same holds for expressing fear, with an important detail – the third twist – if you use perf. verbs in present to refer to future, possible events, they must be negated:

Bojim se da će pasti kiša\(^N\). ‘I’m afraid that rain will fall.’ bojati se

Bojim se da ne padne kiša\(^N\). (more or less the same meaning) bojati se | pasti

This negation is ‘empty’, it’s just a grammatical feature. (Recall, ‘empty’ negations also appear with dok + perf. verb; it was introduced back in 54 When, While, Until, Before, After). If we use a negative-demanding word as e.g. nitko, the sentence sounds wrong and ungrammatical:

(wrong!) Bojim se da nitko\(^N\) ne dođe. "I’m afraid nobody will come." bojati se | doći

That’s because the negation has no effect, it’s an ‘empty’ negation, it carries no meaning, other words are not negated. The following sentence, however, is completely acceptable:
Bojim se da netko ne dođe. I’m afraid somebody might come. bojati se | doći

Of course, the same automatic-but-‘empty’ negation applies to (bude):

Bojim se da ne bude prekasno. I’m afraid it might be too late. bojati se

Keep in mind that it’s not mandatory to use (bude), you can use the present or the future tense of biti (je² +) be as well:

Bojim se da je prekasno. I’m afraid that it’s too late. bojati se
Bojim se da će biti prekasno. I’m afraid that it will be too late. bojati se

Consequently, this means if you are afraid that something might not happen, you will have to use the future tense, where negation, if used, really has a meaning:

Bojim se da neće biti mjesta. I’m afraid there will/might be no room. bojati se

For impf. verbs, if there’s a negation, it usually means that you are afraid of something not happening:

Bojim se da nemam vremena. I’m afraid that I have no time. bojati se

However, you will see sometimes ‘empty’ negations even with impf. verbs – you have to apply your common sense then.

Since verbs behave so specially in clauses starting with da after verbs of fear, they are sometimes called fear clauses.

If someone is afraid something could happen to him or her, regardless of him or her being the subject of that ‘event’, you cannot use verbs in inf, you have to use a clause, but of course you can use either the future tense or the present tense (and if you use a perf. verb, you have to apply the ‘empty’ negation):

Bojim se da ću pasti. I’m afraid I’m going to fall. bojati se
Bojim se da ne padnem. (the same meaning) bojati se | pasti

There’s one more common verb that uses fear clauses:

brinuti (brine) (se²) care (o DL); worry (+ clause)

This verb has more uses and meanings, e.g. care and so on, but with clauses, it means worry. (According to the Standard, it should have an obligatory se², but it’s often dropped in a colloquial context.) For example:

Brinem se da ne zakasnim na posao. I worry that I’ll be late to work.
Brinem se da ću zakasniti na posao. (about the same meaning)

The ‘empty’ negation is completely automatic, most speakers are not aware of it at all (check the Examples). Many languages have the same feature; if you know some French, you can see how similar it is (but the negation is not mandatory in French):
(French)  
Je crains qu’il ne se perde.  
Bojim se da se ne izgubi.  
I’m afraid he might get lost.

As you can see, there are more similarities – French here uses the se, like Croatian, since the verb izgubiti («) perf. lose means lose something – but when you add se², it means get, become lost – and the same applies to French perdre. However, there is a major difference: the ‘empty’ negation in Croatian fear clauses is used only with perfective verbs in the present tense.

What about fear clauses and perf-like verbs, i.e. čuti (čuje) hear, razumjeti (razumije,...) understand and vidjeti (vidi,...) see? First, they are not frequently used in fear clauses. When they are used, and the present tense is used to refer to the future, there’s usually an ‘empty’ negation:

Bojim se da ne vidim nešto strašno. I’m afraid I might see something terrible.

However, when they refer to the present, the negation is not ‘empty’; here, the speaker is afraid that there’s a problem with his or her eyes, or something similar:

Bojim se da ne vidim dobro. I’m afraid I don’t see well.

You will have to use your common sense to understand such (rare) sentences. It’s best to use the future tense to refer to the future if you have to use such verbs in fear clauses.

**Something Possibly Interesting**

The ‘empty’ negation with verbs of fear is very common; it appears in Japanese, Korean, Greek, Hindi, etc.

**Examples**

This pop/rock song – Tremolo by Vatra – featuring Damir Urban as a guest vocal – contains several time, content and fear clauses:

Kad rasplače gudalo žice, Tremolo u meni, sve ono najbolje polomi  
When a bow makes strings cry, Tremolo in me shatters all what’s best

These two verses contain a time clause; they have two perfective verbs: polomiti («) shatter as the main verb, and rasplakati (rasplače) make cry in the time clause.

Verbs like rasplakati (rasplače) will be covered in 81 Sneeze Once and Start Blooming.

Dokazat ću da  
I’ll prove to you
This verse has a content clause.

Bojim se [da] I’m afraid  
ne postanemo dio [we’ll become a part]  
stalne postave [of the permanent exhibition]  
Prašnjavi eksponat [A dusty item]  
Muzeja prekinutih veza [Of the Museum of broken relationships]

These verses contain a fear clause, with a perf. verb in the present tense, and you see the negation. By the way, most words after dio are in the genitive case. More fear clauses follow:

Bojim se [da...] I’m afraid [that...]  
[da nas ne razdvoje] [they will separate]  
i rastope [and dissolve us]

Bojim se [da] I’m afraid [that]  
ne ostanemo samo [we’ll remain just]  
ožiljak u vremenu [a scar in time]  
(I. Dečak)

Both verses use perfective verbs in present tense in fear clauses, and you again see the obligatory-but-meaningless negation!

You can listen to it on YouTube™ (Damir Urban is the less conventionally dressed guy).

(As you can hear, they use the Standard stress quite consistently; Vatra comes from Virovitica, in Slavonia, where the Standard stress is used in colloquial speech as well.)

There’s a translation of this song available on the Internet, where fear clauses are translated verbatim, that is, including negation! Look it up: just enter “I’m afraid we don’t become” into Google™, quotation marks and all. You see, there’s a lot of hidden grammar people even native speakers don’t think about.
70 If I Were: Conditional Sentences

There’s usually a whole theory in textbooks about various types of so-called conditional sentences – sentences like if I..., I’d... (add your ideas here).

Actually, it’s quite simple. There are two types of such sentences: the first one is what could be (or could had been) but it’s not (e.g. if I were rich, I’d...). So it’s a kind of missed opportunity, a wish that’s not fulfilled, and you say why.

In such sentences in Croatian, what was not, but could have been, is expressed in conditional, and the reason (or obstacle) is expressed simply in the past tense or the present tense, starting with the magic word da. Such clauses behave like normal clauses, perf. verbs cannot be used in the present tense. They simply refer to imagined actions or conditions that were necessary for the other part (in conditional) to happen. For example:

Da je bilo toplo, otišli bismo na plažu. If it had been warm, we would have gone to the beach. (past)

Da je toplo, otišli bismo na plažu. If it were warm, we would go to the beach. (present)

The Croatian sentences are simpler than English, since there’s no special usage of tenses. If some obstacle holds now, it’s expressed in the present tense. If it happened in the past, the obstacle is in the past tense. The other part is in conditional.

There’s an exception to this pattern: if you express what could have happened with the verb moći (...) can + another verb in infinitive, you should use just the past tense instead of the conditional; it works for the past only:

Da je bilo toplo, mogli smo otići na plažu. If it had been warm, we could have gone to the beach. (past)

English has also mixed conditional sentences, where the condition and unrealized outcome are in different tenses, e.g. if we had won the lottery, we would be rich. Since Croatian unrealized outcomes are in the conditional form, which doesn’t show tense, Croatian sentences really don’t tell when the outcome could have happened. You can express a different moment with adverbs of time, e.g. the present moment with sad(a) now:

Da smo osvojili lutriju, sad bismo bili bogati. If we had won the lottery, we would be rich. (past-present)

Another way to express ‘present’ (rather, present-indefinite future) unrealized outcomes is with kad(a). Now both parts are in conditional:

Kad bih imao puno novaca, kupio bih dobar auto. If I had a lot of money, I’d buy a good car. (present)
Finally, recall that in colloquial speech and writing, conditional is usually expressed with just bi² for all persons: you will mostly hear sad bi bili bogati instead of the formal sentence above, and so on (try Google™).

That much about such sentences.

The second type of conditional sentences is completely different. Now we simply say what is going to happen if something gets fulfilled.

In English, such sentences look like if I get rich, I’ll... (add more ideas). They are similar to the first type since both use the word if. Not so in Croatian: first, another word is used – ako:

Ako je toplo, idemo na plažu. If it’s warm, we go to the beach. (now, near future)

Ako bude toplo, ići ćemo na plažu. If it’s warm, we’ll go to the beach. (future)

As you see, the structure is completely different now: the action is expressed in the present or future tense, and the part after ako uses the same rules as near future or future sentences that use kad: bude instead of usual forms of the verb biti, the potential future tense (again not strictly respected in speech), etc.:

Ako budemo igrali loše, sigurno ćemo izgubiti. If we play poorly, we’ll lose for sure. (future)

Actually, if you search the Internet, ako ćemo... is more common than ako budemo... (or ako budem vs. ako ću, etc.). Try it yourself. Still, use of the common future tense after ako and kad is considered a mistake in formal writing.

In literature, you will sometimes find that in such clauses, instead of ako + forms of (bude), verb fronting + li² is used:

Bude li toplo, ići ćemo na plažu.
Budemo li igrali loše, sigurno ćemo izgubiti.

This is extremely rare in speech. There’s no difference in meaning; it’s mostly used when the verb (bude) is used.

Of course, the conjunction ako holds the first position in the clause, and all second-position words come right after it.

As you can see, ako-clauses are very similar to kad-clauses, but there’s more freedom in ako-clauses: since the condition (if it’s warm) and the action (we’ll go to the beach) are not necessarily close in time, the condition can be expressed in the past tense, and the action in any tense:

Ako se vratila, nazvat će me. If she has come back, she’ll call me. (past, future)

Of course, it’s possible to use imperative or even conditional in the main (action) part – everything, except the past tense:

Ako se vratila, odmah je nazovi. If she has come back, call her
There’s another type of sentences, not frequently discussed, kind of opposite of what I have just described. The reasons in the conditional sentences were important – they are precisely why something was not done or isn’t done. However, it’s easy to turn such sentences upside down: something happened (or didn’t) regardless of a condition. This is what I mean:

**Even if it had been cold, we would have gone to the beach.**

It wasn’t cold, but *even if it were*, the second part would happen, regardless of the condition. In Croatian, surprisingly, you just add an *i*’ before *da* and the whole sentence changes its meaning completely:

*I da je bilo hladno, otišli bismo na plažu*. Even if it had been cold, we would have gone to the beach.

As usual, the word *i*’ is ‘glued’ and it’s not counted: all second-position words come after the *da*.

Adding another word – *čak* – before *i da* further emphasizes irrelevance of the condition. Such expression really translates as *even if*; only *i da* is more *it doesn’t matter*:

**Čak i da je bilo hladno, otišli bismo na plažu.** (emphasis)

Another option is that it *was cold*, but *we still did it*. The grammar is then of the second type (*ako*....). Then you would add *i*’ to *ako*, but then they get fused to a single word *iako*:

*Iako je bilo hladno, otišli smo na plažu*. Although it was cold, we went to the beach.

The combined word *iako* is used like *i da* – only in the past and present tenses. To express that you will do something in the future, regardless of something else, use separate *i ako*:

*I ako bude hladno, otići ćemo na plažu*. Even if it’s cold, we’ll go to the beach.

Finally, it’s possible to ask hypothetical questions, e.g. *what would..., if…. Everything said before about the first type of sentences (using *da*) still applies:

*Gdje bismo išli, da je bilo toplo?* Where would we have gone, if it had been warm? (past)

*Što bi radio, da pada kiša?* What would you do, if it were raining? (present)

Of course, it’s possible to ask about future, using *ako*:

*Hoćeš li je nazvati, ako se vрати?* Will you call her, if she comes back?

This applies to all kinds and ways of making questions.

Clauses can be reordered, you can start questions with *da* or *ako*, but you still need
to separate them by a comma.

• Examples

This rock song, *Samo za taj osjećaj* *Only for that feeling*, performed by *Hladno pivo*, contains unrealized conditional sentences (together with purpose clauses):

- **Da sam prazan list**
  - If I were an empty sheet
- **potpuno čist**
  - completely blank
- **Koristio bih puno**,
  - I’d use a much,
- **puno deblji kist**
  - much thicker brush
- **I samo jarke**
  - And only vivid
- **i šarene boje**
  - and bright colors
- [**Da napišem ime**]
  - To write the name
- **tvoje i moje**
  - yours and mine

(Mile Kekin)

I’ve enclosed the purpose clause in square brackets; it uses the same conjunction (da) as the first part of the conditional clause, but it comes after everything else.

The song contains more similar verses:

- **Da se mogu ko nekad**
  - If I could, like long ago,
- **vratiti na početak**
  - return to the start
- **I biti onaj isti**
  - And be the same
- **bahati dječak**
  - arrogant boy
- **Ne bih forsőro**
  - I wouldn’t insist on
- **neki ležeran stil**
  - a relaxed style

(Mile Kekin)

The form forsőro is the masc. past form of the verb forsřati («) insist, force with the ending -ao colloquially shorted. The word ko is shortened kao.

Pay attention where the particle se^2 – accompanying the verb vratiti return – is placed:

- **Da se mogu ko nekad vratiti na početak**...

With a verb + another verb in infinitive, as here, another option would be right after the infinitive.

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

(Note that Mile Kekin, the singer of Hladno pivo, stresses words mostly on the standard place of stress, e.g. koristio, napišem).
71 Suggestions, Permissions and More Verbs

This explains how to say *let me go there* and similar things.

Common verbs used are:

- **davati** (daje) ~ **dati** *(give)* (+ DL)
- **dopuštat**i («) ~ **dopustit**i *(allow)* (+ DL)
- **predlagat**i *(predlaže)* ~ **predložit**i *(propose, suggest)* (+ DL)
- **savjetovat**i *(savjetuje)* *(advise, suggest)* (+ DL)
- **zabranjivat**i *(zabraniti)* *(forbid)* (+ DL)

These verbs are used with *da*-clauses which contains verbs in the present tense. As in other such atemporal clauses, both impf. and perf. verbs can be used. All of them have a ‘recipient’ in DL – the person who will/should/may do something.

All such verbs are very similar to *give* in Croatian – you suggest/allow/etc. *something* (the whole thing after the *da*) to *someone* (who is in the DL case, as the recipient). English uses another construction here (*that* + subjunctive) – unlike *wait*. Croatian uses the same grammar over and over:

_Savjetovao sam Ana da ode ranije._ I suggested (that) Ana leave earlier.

The next two verbs are about giving orders, not in a restaurant, or ordering stuff over Internet, but as a boss to your subordinates:

- **naređivat**i («) ~ **naredit**i *(order)* (+ DL)
- **zapovjeđivat**i («) ~ **zapovijedit**i *(order)* (+ DL)

They use the same grammar as other verbs.

There’s, however, a group of verbs with similar meanings, but they use A instead of the DL case:

- **nagovarat**i («) ~ **nagovorit**i *(talk into)* (+ A)
- **tjerat**i ~ **na-force** (+ A)

Now, there are several constructions in Croatian – often a bit colloquial – where the verb *dati* perf. *give* has a special role. In these constructions, the verb is used in the present tense as well, meaning *true present* (i.e. *right now, ongoing*) despite being a perf. verb.

First, in speech, but also in writing, it’s very common to express that someone doesn’t allow someone else to do something by the negative present of *dati* perf. *give*:

_Ana ne da Goran da jede sladoled_. Ana doesn’t let Goran eat ice-cream.

(lit. ‘Ana doesn’t give Goran to eat...’)

The first *da* is a form of the verb *dati*; the second one is a conjunction. They are usually not distinguished in writing. However, since the vowel in *da* from *dati* is long,
while the conjunction has a short vowel, the verbal form is occasionally distinguished by writing a circumflex sign over the vowel: dâ (or, even rarer, a macron: dâ).

It’s also quite common to use this construction in imperative:

**Ne daj mu**[^1] **da jede sladoled**[^2]. *Don’t let him eat ice-cream.* (lit. ‘Don’t *give him to eat...’

If you aren’t preventing somebody doing something, but you want to prevent something to happen (where someone can be the subject, but not in control of the action, e.g. falling), you use it without the DL:

**Ne daj da čaša padne.** *Don’t let the glass fall.*

Then, the verb dati[^3] used in some mediopassive constructions. I’ve already explained the most common uses of mediopassive (in 64 *The Door Opens: Fun with se²*[^4]). It’s also common to use more complex sentences in mediopassive. For example, a door or window can (or cannot) be opened (you see, it’s also passive in English). In Croatian it’s quite simple:

**Vrata**[^5] se **ne mogu otvoriti.** *The door cannot be opened.*

**Prozor**[^6] se **može otvoriti.** *The window can be opened.*

As you can see, and I hope expect, nouns **vrata** n pl. *door* and **prozor** *window* are subjects here. The particle se² makes the while sentence passive, i.e. it’s about *what can be done to the door or window.*

These sentences have something in common with the permissions above. If something cannot be done, colloquially, the verb dati perf. *give* can be used instead of **moći** (...) *can*:

**Vrata**[^7] se **ne daju otvoriti.** (colloq.) *The door cannot be opened.*

**Prozor**[^8] se **ne da otvoriti.** (colloq.) *The window cannot be opened.*

The last sentence literally says *‘the door isn’t being given to open’,* but the real meaning is *cannot + passive.* Again you see that **vrata** and **prozor** are subjects: the verb dati[^3] is in *pres-3pl* in the first sentence, and in singular *pres-3* in the second one. You will sometimes hear such sentences without negation, i.e. with meaning *can,* that’ even more colloquial (any maybe restricted to some areas?):

**Vrata**[^9] se **daju otvoriti.** (colloq.) *The door can be opened.*

There’s yet another unexpected phrase using the verb dati perf. *give,* and it’s superficially similar to **ne da... da:**

negation + dati° se² + DL + inf = DL can’t be bothered to inf

The meaning of this construction – we could call it *‘the lazy construction’* – is very similar to mediopassive + DL, i.e. **ne jede mi se**[^10] **pizza I don’t feel like eating pizza,** but the phrase with dati[^3] is normally used when someone avoids duties, chores, any

[^1]: 3m/n | jesti
[^2]: pasti
[^3]: 3m/n | jesti
[^4]: 3m/n | jesti
[^5]: 3m/n | jesti
[^6]: 3m/n | jesti
[^7]: 3m/n | jesti
[^8]: 3m/n | jesti
[^9]: 3m/n | jesti
[^10]: 3m/n | jesti
activity found hard or boring. For example:

Ani\textsuperscript{dl} se ne da prati suđe\textsuperscript{A} navečer. Ana can’t be bothered to wash dishes in the evening.

The translation uses a phrase more common in British English, but I hope everyone gets the meaning: she cannot force/make/allow herself to do it. This is mostly used in the spoken language, the construction is a bit colloquial.

This construction is never used with activities generally considered pleasing (eating chocolate, drinking fine drinks, sleeping) – it’s rather used for waiting in lines, spending time in waiting rooms, cleaning, studying and so on. The verb used is imperfective, as we’re focusing on the activity, and not an outcome.

The verb dati perf. give is impersonal here, so it’s neuter singular in the past (the infinitive + an object, prati suđe, can be considered the subject):

Ani\textsuperscript{dl} se nije dalo prati suđe\textsuperscript{A}. Ana couldn’t be bothered to wash dishes.

As you can see, the usual rules about placement of DL experiencers hold – the person in DL is at the front. Of course, personal pronouns are frequently used:

Ne da mi\textsuperscript{dl} se čekati satima\textsuperscript{1}. I can’t be bothered to wait for hours.

This construction is sometimes used without negation; it then roughly corresponds to make oneself (but it implies a bit less pressure):

Jel ti\textsuperscript{dl} se da čekati u redu\textsuperscript{2} (colloq.) Can you make yourself wait in line?

Finally, let’s introduce another important verb family, derived from the pair:

puštati ~ pustiti release, let go

All derived pairs look the one we have already seen above:

dopuštati («) ~ dopustiti («) allow

All derived pairs have meanings related to releasing (except for one). The common ones are:
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<th>prefix</th>
<th>used with</th>
<th>meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>(none)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>release, let go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DL + clause</td>
<td>allow (colloq.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do-</td>
<td>DL + clause</td>
<td>allow</td>
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<td>po-</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>give in</td>
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<td>pre-</td>
<td>A DL</td>
<td>relinquish, give over</td>
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<tr>
<td>is-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>drop, let drop, emit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>na-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>abandon, leave behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>relax (body)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pro-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>miss, skip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>lower, descend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most straightforward verb pair is derived with o-. It means relax, but only body, someone’s behavior or a body part; an object in A is mandatory, so you’ll often need a se²:

**Ana** N se opušta. *Ana is relaxing.*

If you are relaxing something else (*grip on something, belt, laws*...) you have to use another verb.

The na- pair means abandon, and is simply used with objects in A:

**Vlasnici** N su napustili kuću. *The owners abandoned the house.*

The pro- pair basically means ‘fail to catch something’ - either what was said, or a bus, or any opportunity:

**Propustio si dobar film** A jučer. *You missed a good movie yesterday.*

The is- pair is mostly used when something is dropped in a sequence, i.e. you dropped a letter when typing or writing. However, it’s also used to describe emitting sounds and smells.

The pair derived with s- has a completely unrelated meaning: it means lower:

**Spustio sam roletu** A. *I lowered the blinds.*

The noun **roleta** A (window) blind often used in plural, even when it refers to a single thing, but it can be used in singular too.

---

* The construction **ne dati** se² + DL seems to be almost completely unknown in Serbia. Instead, another verb is used, also impersonally, but not negated: **mrziti** hate. In the “Ekavian” pronunciation, standard in Serbia, the verb has the form
mrzeti (mrzi). Besides, the person involved is not in DL, but in A:

Anu\textsuperscript{A} mrzi da naveče pere sudove\textsuperscript{A}. Ana can’t be bothered to wash dishes in the evening.

As usual, instead of the infinitive clause, in Serbia da + present is used.

Conversely, the construction mrzeti (mrzi)° + A + da is unknown in Croatia, and even misunderstood sometimes.

The word roleta\textsuperscript{A} (window) blind is used in a slightly different form roletna\textsuperscript{A} in Serbia.

• Examples

The song Ne daj Don’t let, performed by Natali Dizdar, a Croatian pop-singer, frequently uses the perf. verb dati give; it also uses the pair propuštati («) ~ propustiti («) miss, introduced above. I have put all clauses into square brackets [...]:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Ne daj [da nestanem] Don’t let [me disappear]
  \item Ne daj [da propustim] Don’t let [me miss]
  \item [Dok se gase svjetla\textsuperscript{N}] [While the lights go off]
  \item Jedno\textsuperscript{N} za drugim\textsuperscript{1} One after another
\end{itemize}

The first two lines use dati perf. give + da-clause. The third line uses a mediopassive se\textsuperscript{2}. The last line above uses za\textsuperscript{2} + I in the meaning following.

The next verses use again this construction twice; the verb potrajati (potraje) is basically just the perfective version of trajati (traje) last:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Ne daj [da ovaj dan\textsuperscript{N}] Don’t let [this day]
  \item Potraj predugo Last too long]
  \item I ne daj [da se And don’t let [us]
  \item Sutra ne vidimo] Don’t see each other tomorrow]
\end{itemize}

The last two lines above uses se\textsuperscript{2} in reciprocal meaning, i.e. each other (this was introduced back in 25 Plural).

The following verses start with an imperative and a purpose clause, and the last two verses repeat the same structure:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Reci mi\textsuperscript{DPl} tiho nešto\textsuperscript{A} Tell me quietly something 1
  \item [Da se nasmješim] [So that I smile]
  \item Drži mi\textsuperscript{DPl} ruku\textsuperscript{A} Hold my hand 1
  \item [Da ne zaboravim] [So that I don’t forget]
\end{itemize}

(Marin Ostojić & Marta Muždalo)

The possession of ruka hand, arm is expressed with a pronoun DL, as usual.

You can listen to it on YouTube™.
• Exercise

Complete the following sentences:

________(a) ______(b) ______(c) ______(d) prati prozore. I couldn’t be bothered to wash windows.

________________________(e) ruku. Relax your arm. (doctor to a patient)

________________________(f) _____(g) _____(h) da ______________(i) taj film. She talked us into watching that movie.

________________________(j) smo utakmicu. We missed (skipped) the game.

Check answers here.
Finally, now it’s the time to introduce the last case: the **vocative** case (just V for short). This is the last case to be introduced, since it’s the least used case.

It’s mostly used when you’re calling or addressing someone. There are no specific forms in the plural – vocative is equal to the nominative case in plural. The endings in singular are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type (N)</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| nouns in -a (≈ fem.) | -a → -o  
(ica → -ice) |
| neuter nouns (≈ in -o, -e) | = N        |
| masc. nouns not in -a | add -e (some -u) |
| fem. not in -a (e.g. noć) | add -i      |

For people, this case is usually used when you are addressing someone using his or her name or title, often with imperatives or polite expressions, such as:

**Hvala Vam, profesore.** *Thank you, professor.*

**Molim Vas, dodite, doktore.** *Please, come here, doctor.*

**Izvolite, gospodine.** *Here you are, mister.*

**Dobar dan, gospodo.** *Good afternoon, madam.*

With personal names, it’s increasingly common to use just nominative instead of vocative. This holds especially for names ending in -a:

**Hvala ti, Ana.** *Thank you, Ana.*

**Izvoli, Luka.** *Here you are, Luka.*

The vocative for female names is conserved only in set expressions, e.g. in a Catholic prayer:

**Zdravo, Marijo... Hail Mary,**...

There’s no change for masculine names not ending in -a (regardless whether they behave as if ending in -a or not):

**Dodi, Kruno.** *Come here, Kruno.*

**Dodi, Marko.** *Come here, Marko.*

The ending -e for masculine nouns ending in consonant causes consonant shift k → č, g → ž, h → š:

- čovjek *man, human* → čovječe
- bog *god* → bože
- vrag *devil* → vraže
If a masc. noun ends in a Croatian-specific consonant, it gets -u in vocative:

- kralj king → kralju
- muž husband → mužu
- prijatelj friend (m) → prijatelju

However, if a masc. noun ends in c, it gets -e, and c changes to č:

- princ prince → prinče

For nouns ending in -ica, the vocative case is -ice:

- kraljica queen → kraljice
- prijateljica friend (f) → prijateljice

This usually applies to few female and male names that end in -ica, like Anica (f) and Ivica (m):

Hvala ti, Anice. Thank you, Anica.
Izvoli, Ivice. Here you are, Ivica.

There are no special vocative forms for adjectives, except that masculine singular gets an -i (except, of course, for possessives like moj and so on, which never have an -i).

In Croatian, adjectives normally precede nouns (moj prijatelj) but it’s common in vocatives to invert the order (prijatelju moj), and it’s especially common in songs and poetry in general; you will very often hear:

- ljubavi moja o, my love

The vocative case is always used in addressing in letters and mail messages. They usually have the following formula:

- dragi poštovani + gospodine (+ last name)
- gospodina (+ last name)
- name in V

Words gospodin mister and gospoda madam are often shortened:

- gospodin mister = g. / gosp.
- gospoda madam = gđa

There’s one more word: gospodica miss, sometimes shortened to gdica. Abbreviations gđa and gdica are declined as nouns, that is V = gđo, A = gđu, etc. There’s no period (.) after gđa and gdica.

For example, a letter could start with one of the following:

- dragi Ivane,...
- Poštovana gospođo Jurić,...
- Poštovani g. Horvat,...
- Poštovana gđo Jurić,...
These three words are formal. They are basically used only when you directly address someone, either in writing, or in a formal situation; therefore, they are much less often used than English counterparts. For instance, you will often read in English language newspapers and books sentences like *we talked to Mr. Smith...* and so on. You will never see such use of such formal words in Croatian; people will be referred to using only their last name or full name; however, if someone holds an office or position (*president, minister...*) it will be used.

Since words like *gospodin* are formal, children never use them. While English language picture books can be about *Mr. Bear, Mr. Tiger* and so on, you will never see it in Croatian: such books will be adapted as *Big Bear, My Dear Tiger*, etc. Even when adults talk to children about other adults, they won't usually use words like *gospodin*.

Children do use specific words addressing grown-ups outside of their family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titles used by children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>teta</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'madam'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>striček</em> (NW, including Zagreb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>barba</em> (coast, except Dubrovnik)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dundo</em> (Dubrovnik)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'mister'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>čiko</em> (A -u) (elsewhere)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>striko</em> (A -u) (elsewhere)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The words are the same as words for relatives in family, and words vary by region.

Children will usually use the title + first name, e.g. they will call their kindergarten teacher *teta Ana*; adults will refer to her in the same way, when talking to their children.

Most familiar terms of relatives nowadays don’t have special vocative forms and use nominatives:

- *mama* *Mom*      *teta* *aunt*
- *tata* *Dad*      *baka* *grandmother*

The following terms have vocative forms:

- *otac (oc-)* *father* → *oče*   *majka* *mother* → *majko*

Finally, it's custom to end a letter or mail message with one of:

- *S poštovanjem*,
- *Pozdrav*,
- *Lijep pozdrav*,

Followed by the full name (and function) of the sender. The line *Lijep pozdrav* is getting increasingly common, and colloquially abbreviated as *lp* or *LP*.
73 Learning and Renting: Verbs Shifting

There are couple of verbs in Croatian that show a bit bizarre behavior (such behavior is not limited to Croatian and even to related Slavic languages, though).

First, there are verbs that can have two distinct objects in A at the same time. Common verbs and verb pairs with that feature are:

- **pitati** ~ **u-** («) *ask*
- **učiti** ~ **na-** («) *learn, teach*

In all such verbs, two objects are clearly distinguished: one object is a person (or animal) and another is not. For example:

**Goran** je **pitao** nešto** Anu**. *Goran asked Ana something.*

In this sentence, both Ana and nešto *something* are in A, but one object is "who", and another "what", so there’s no ambiguity.

Another example:

**Ana** je **učila** Gorana** plivati. *Ana taught Goran to swim.*

Here, instead of the second object ("what"), we have a verb in inf, so it’s clear what is taught.

Now, you’re probably scratching your head: doesn’t **učiti** mean *learn, study*? Yes, it does. It has both meanings.

When the verb pair **učiti** ~ **na-** («) is used with a single object in A, which is a thing ("what"), it means *learn, study*. However, when its object is a person (or animal), then it means *teach*, and then another object in A ("what") can be used to express *what* is taught. (The second object is not mandatory). The "what" object in both "configurations" can be a verb in inf. Compare:

**Ana** uči Gorana** plivati. *Ana is teaching Goran to swim.*

**Goran** uči plivati. *Goran is learning to swim.*

Therefore, whenever this verb pair gets an object that’s a person (or animal), its meaning shifts!

But what if someone is a teacher, and we want to say e.g. *Ivan teaches math*? One solution is to express a person-object with some generic word, to shift the verb meaning. For instance, you can hear:

**Ivan** uči djecu** matematiku**. *Ivan teaches math to children.*

(Beware, here the Croatian noun **djecu** is in A, while English has **to**, often corresponding to the Croatian DL case.)

We cannot say just **Ivan uči matematiku**, since it has exactly the opposite meaning, however, we can in principle say (but this sounds quite incomplete to me):
**Ivan** N uči djecu A. *Ivan teaches children.*

Another way is to use a more formal verb pair:

prečavati (predaje) ~ predati *teach, give lecture*

So we can say:

**Ivan** N predaje matematiku A. *Ivan teaches math.*

There are more verbs that have two opposite meanings, depending on other words around them. Common ones are:

iznajmljivati (-uje) ~ iznajmiti («) *rent*

posuđivati (-uje) ~ posuditi («) *borrow/lend*

Both verb pairs have two meanings, depending on the cases used. What is rented/borrowed/lent is always in A. If you add a person (or animal, but also an institution, and so on) in DL, it denotes someone receiving:

Posudio sam kišobran A *Ani* Dl. *I’ve lent the umbrella to Ana.*

Iznajmljili smo im Dl kuću A. *We’ve rented (out) the house to them.*

However, if you instead of DL use od G + G, the meaning shifts, and G represents the source (i.e. the owner):

Ana N je posudila kišobran A *od mene* G. *Ana borrowed the umbrella from me.*

Iznajmljili su kuću A *od nas* G. *They’ve rented the house from us.*

It’s interesting that English *rent* shows the same double meaning. If you use the verbs without DL or od G + G, the meaning is ambiguous, and depends on the context.

(There's a suggestion to use another verb pair in the formal Croatian – *unajmljivati* (-uje) ~ *unajmiti* («) – for the meaning *rent something from someone*, but virtually nobody uses it.)

The Croatian verb pairs for *rent* and *borrow/lend* are ‘round-trip’ verbs, that is, they imply that the state of things will be restored after some time. Therefore, they are used with ‘round-trip periods’, that is, preposition na G + A:

Iznajmljili smo im Dl kuću A na dva tjedna 24. *We’ve rented (out) the house to them for two weeks.*

Unlike the verbs above, which shift their meaning according to cases used, there are some verbs that use cases in two distinct ways – but there’s not much difference in meaning. Common ones are:

čuditi *wonder, be surprised, marvel*

radovati (raduje) *look forward to*

veseliti (very similar meaning)

They are usually used in a way that what causes emotions is in DL, the person affected is the subject (in N), and a se G must be used:
Radujem se odmoru\textsuperscript{DL}. I’m looking forward to the vacation.

But these verbs can be used in the 'inverse' as well, where the person affected is in A, and what causes emotion is the subject (there’s no se\textsuperscript{2} now):

Raduje \textit{me\textsuperscript{A} odmor\textsuperscript{N}}. (the same meaning, less frequent)

This way of using the verb čuditi is often considered non-standard in Croatian; however, it’s very common, especially when the subject – what makes you wonder – is a content clause:

Čudi \textit{me\textsuperscript{A} [da je\textsuperscript{A} nema]. I am surprised [she’s not here].}

Check the Google™ results on the .hr domain:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l|l}
form & hits \\
\hline
"čudi me da" & 46800 \\
"čudim se da" & 28900 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

When translated to English, čuditi corresponds to several English verbs:

čuditi se\textsuperscript{2} (+ DL) wonder, marvel (at DL)
čuditi (+ A) amaze, surprise

Finally, there are two common verbs where the affected person is in either DL or (non-standard) in A. They are:

lagati (laže) lie (tell lies)
smetati be nuisance, disturb, annoy

For example, this is both common and standard in Croatian:

Kamenčić\textsuperscript{N} smeta Ani\textsuperscript{DL}. A pebble annoys Ana.

But you will occasionally see A used instead of DL with these two verbs.

\textsuperscript{®} In Serbia, and often in Bosnia, pozajmljivati (-uje «) ~ pozajmiti («) is used in meaning borrow/lend.
Croatian has an interesting way of expressing that something happened, you were involved, but you weren’t in control, it just happened – to you.

As you can probably guess, it involves the DL case, which usually corresponds to English to + person / personal pronoun:

\textbf{To}^N \underline{\text{mi}}^{DL} \text{ se dogdilo. It happened to me.}

It’s kind of similar to expressions like \textbf{hladno mi je}, but now subjective feelings are not important. Consider the following sentence:

\textbf{Čaša}^N \underline{\text{je}} \text{ pala. The glass fell.}

We don’t know why it happened. Just adding a person in DL changes its meaning subtly:

\textbf{Čaša}^N \underline{\text{mi}}^{DL} \text{ je pala. I dropped the glass (accidentally).}

If you know some Spanish, you can notice that’s exactly the same as adding an "indirect object pronoun" (which, of course, corresponds to the Croatian DL case) to sentences like these:

(Spanish) \textbf{Se cayó. It fell.}
(Spanish) \textbf{Se me} cayó. \textit{I dropped it.}

If you look into an English-Croatian dictionary, you will probably find that there’s the verb pair \textbf{ispustati} («) ~ \textbf{ispustiti} («) listed having one meaning \textit{drop}, but that verbs are not the first choice, especially in speech, when you accidentally drop something!

If you want to stress that somebody dropped something \textit{intentionally}, another verb pair is used:

\textbf{bacati} ~ \textbf{baciti} (A) \textit{throw, intentionally drop}

A similar difference is expressed with two a bit similar verb pairs that both translate to English as \textit{leave}:

\textbf{ostavljati} ~ \textbf{ostaviti} \quad + A
\textbf{ostajati} ~ \textbf{ostati (ostane)} \quad + DL (accidentally!)

The case roles in the second pair are "rotated": what is left is in N, while one who was affected (that is, the person who left something by accident) is in DL:

\textbf{Jakna}^N \underline{\text{mi}}^{DL} \text{ je ostala u autu}^{DL}. I left the jacket in the car (accidentally).

If we would use the first verb pair, it’s not said whether is was intentional or not, could be either way. Notice how the person affected is now the subject, and what is left is object:

\textbf{Ostavio sam jaknu}^{A} \underline{\text{u autu}}^{DL}. I left the jacket in the car.
With many verbs, the same verb is used for both meanings: unintentional events are expressed using the mediopassive (introduced in 64 The Door Opens: Fun with se²) and the DL case. Nobody caused the event (at least that’s what we want to say), but the one in DL is somehow involved, or affected. This is a common example:

\textbf{razbijati (razbijia) \sim razbitori (razbijje) break}

+ \textit{A = intentionally}
+ \textit{se² + DL = accidentally}

For example:

\textbf{Razbio sam čašu}^A. \textit{I broke the glass.}
\textbf{Čaša}^N \textit{mi se razbila. The glass broke (‘on me’).} \hspace{1cm} 1

The English has a similar thing, but only colloquially: ‘on me’.

Again, in the accidental construction, what is broken is the subject (observe how the past form is in feminine).

The DL case is a common way to add \textit{who’s affected} – always a person/animal or a group – to anything. Consider:

\textbf{Grijanje}^N \textit{ne radi. The heating doesn’t work.}

The sentence above lacks context: \textit{what heating}. If it’s not working in your house, you would add a possessive in English: \textit{our heating}. It can be also done in Croatian, but the preferred way in speech is to add DL:

\textbf{Grijanje}^N \textit{nam DL ne radi. Our heating doesn’t work. (lit. ‘doesn’t work to us’) } \hspace{1cm} 1pl

Again, if you know some Spanish, this will all be very familiar to you. This usage is so common that some people call it \textit{possessive dative}.

The accidental construction is really just the ‘mediopassive’ – that is, using \textit{se²} to express that we don’t know or don’t want to say who caused it – with a person in DL who was somehow "affected" or "involved". This is an elegant way to say that what has happened was not intention of that person.

As you hopefully remember, there’s another construction that uses the ‘mediopassive’ and the DL case: the "feel-like". However, it’s easy to distinguish them, since the "feel-like" uses impf. verbs (usually, but not always, related to fulfilling needs, like \textit{drink, eat, sleep, smoke}). Taking the "feel-like" to the extreme, we could say that somebody felt like breaking glasses, but there would be still a difference:

(1) \textbf{Razbile su mi DL se čaše}^N. \textit{The glasses have broken. (‘on me’) } \hspace{1cm} 1
(2) \textbf{Razbijale su mi DL se čaše}^N. \textit{also: I felt like breaking glasses.} \hspace{1cm} 1

You can see clearly how the sentence #1 uses an perf. verb, while the sentence #2 uses and impf. counterpart. However, the sentence #2 is ambiguous: it could also mean, depending on the context, that glasses were breaking (e.g. you worked in a
bar, and glasses were constantly breaking, but it was not your fault, the dishwasher did it, etc.) This is really an extreme, stretched example, which would be very rare in real life.

Since persons/animals or groups added in DL are just affected by the event, this use of DL is also called dative of interest. Its use extends – mostly colloquially – to sentences where we want somebody to get interested, or when we just emphasize who is/should be interested. So, in colloquial communication, among friends, it’s common to add the DL ti² to many sentences when you say something about yourself or someone else, similar to colloquial English you know:

\[ \text{Ja }^{N} \text{ ti}^{DL} \text{ sutra ne radim. I don’t work tomorrow. (you know)} \]

Of course, if you’re talking to a group, you would use another pronoun:

\[ \text{Ja }^{N} \text{ vam}^{DL} \text{ sutra ne radim.} \]

On the other side, when you ask a question, the DL mi² is sometimes added to emphasize that you’re interested:

\[ \text{Kako si mi}^{DL}? \text{ How are you doing? (I’d like to know)} \]

All these DL’s to express interest are used only colloquially, among close friends and family.

Another way used in colloquial communication is literally the same as in English, adding znaš you know to the beginning:

\[ \text{Znaš, sutra ne radim. You know, I don’t work tomorrow.} \]

(the rest is coming soon...)
75 Friends and Family

The following nouns for people are frequently used with possessive adjectives. For each term, there’s a male and a female version:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>neighbor</td>
<td>susjed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>godfather</td>
<td>kum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>godmother</td>
<td>kum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acquaintance</td>
<td>poznanik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boss</td>
<td>šef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coworker</td>
<td>kolega</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word kolega is similar to tata: the word ends on -a, changes like any other word on -a, but has masculine gender!

For women, you must use female versions of such nouns. For example:

Ivan is your neighbor.
Ana is my neighbor.

Terms kum and kuma stand for family friends who are traditionally witnesses at marriage, child baptism, etc.

Croatian has many words for family members. For instance, where English has only uncle, Croatian has three words: stric, tetak (tetk-) and ujak! I will introduce only main family terms, not used among family members and relatives here. Terms in square brackets [] are formal terms, not used among family members, only when you are talking to someone outside family, in writing, etc. Basic terms for parents and grandparents are:

mama [majka] Mom/mother

tata [otac (oc-)] Dad/father

baka Grandma/grandmother
deda [djed] Grandpa/grandfather

In some regions, there are other words for relatives (see below).

Here are terms for father’s and mother’s sisters and brothers (various kinds of aunts and uncles) and their spouses:

teta mother’s or father’s sister

tetak (tetk-) husband of teta

stric father’s brother

strina wife of stric

ujak mother’s brother

ujna wife of ujak

Colloquially, teta has more meanings: children will call any older, non-related
woman *teta*, e.g. their kindergarten teacher.

If you have children (and possibly grandchildren), they are called:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>sin</em></td>
<td><em>son</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kći</em></td>
<td><em>daughter</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>kćerka</em></td>
<td><em>unuk</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>grandson</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>unuka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>granddaughter</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example (the second sentence is less precise in English!):

Ana\(^N\) je Goranova mama\(^N\). Ana is Goran’s Mom.

Čekamo\(^N\) Ivanovog strica\(^A\). We’re waiting for Ivan’s uncle.

The noun *kći* *daughter* is a special noun, having the following weird forms:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>kći</em></td>
<td><em>kćer</em></td>
<td><em>kćeri</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The form *kćer* in N is not Standard, but is frequently used in colloquial communication\(^®\). All other forms are derived from *kćer-* and follow the pattern for feminine nouns not ending in *a*.

In colloquial communication, you will hear *ćer, či* and in some regions the alternative, word *kćerka* (non-standard, but completely regular) prevails.\(^®\)

If you want to talk about great-grandfather or great-granddaughter, and so on, add *pra-* to the front of words above (e.g. *pradjed* *grandfather*, *praunika* *granddaughter*, etc.).

If you are married, there are names for your husband or wife and her or his parents:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>žena</em></td>
<td><em>wife</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>punica</em></td>
<td><em>her mother</em> (^®) — <em>tast</em> / <em>punac</em> (punc-) <em>her father</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>muž</em></td>
<td><em>husband</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>svekrva</em></td>
<td><em>his mother</em> — <em>svekar</em> (svekr-) <em>his father</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Terms *suprug* and *supruga* are very formal, mostly used in official documents. Croatian uses the same word (*žena*) for both *woman* and *wife* in virtually all circumstances.

If your children are married, their spouses are as follows:

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>zet</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>snaha</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(There are no established terms for same-sex couples yet.)

There are couple of often used additional terms for various relatives:

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>nećak</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>nećakinja</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bratić</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Besides these terms, there are other, archaic terms used in some regions, which are much more precise. They are seldom used nowadays in Croatia.

Additionally, there are two group and two generic terms:

- **obitelj** f (close) family
- **rodbina** wider family, all relatives
- **rođak** male relative of any kind
- **rođakinja** female relative of any kind

Take care that **obitelj** is a feminine noun ending in a consonant. For instance:

**Antina obitelj**[N] živi u Splitu[DL]. Ante’s family lives in Split.

There’s a lot of regional variations in terms for family members, especially males. These are just some alternative terms (with region in brackets):

- **ćaća** m Dad (coast, except Dubrovnik)
- **barba** m any uncle (coast, except Dubrovnik)
- **dundo** (dund-) m any uncle (Dubrovnik)
- **čiko** (A-u) m any uncle (Slavonia)
- **nono** (non-) m Grandpa (coast)
- **nona** Grandma (coast)
- **familija** family (many regions)

In many regions – including Zagreb – there’s no distinction between three uncles – stric, tetak (tetk-) and ujak – and the local term for uncle is frequently used by children to address any non-related adult male.

---

® Instead of **susjed** and **susjeda**, words **komšija** m and **komšinica** prevail in Serbia and Bosnia, both are also heard in Slavonia, a region of Croatia.

Instead of **kolegica**, **koleginica** is used in Serbia and parts of Bosnia.

Instead of **tetak** (tetk-), the word **teča** m is used in Serbia (but not in Bosnia).

In Bosnia, the word **daidža** m is frequently used for mother’s brother, while **amidža** m is father’s brother.

Instead of **punica**, the word **tašta** is used in Serbia and most of Bosnia.

Forms **kćer** and **kćerka** are accepted as standard in Bosnia and Serbia. In addition to **snaha**, forms **snaja** and **snajka** are frequent in Serbia, Bosnia, and some parts of Croatia.
• **Something Possibly Interesting**

If you’re interested in precise terms for *brothers- and sisters-in-law*, here they are. Assuming you’re a married woman, you call your husband’s relatives:

- **djever** *his brother*
- **jetrva** *his brother’s wife*
- **zaova** *his sister*
- **zaovac** *his sister’s husband*

If you’re a married man, you call your wife’s relatives:

- **šurjak** *her brother*
- **šurjakinja** *her brother’s wife*
- **svastika** *her sister*
- **svak / pašanac / pašenog / badžo** *her sister’s husband*

These a bit weird terms are so rare in Croatia today that I had to look up their definitions on the internet. They are still widely used in Bosnia and Serbia, though. Some of them, like **djever**, have barely changed for **thousands of years**.

The system of naming relatives described above is a variant of the so-called **Sudanese kinship**.
Here are two spatial adverbs that distinguish *locations* from *directions*, with associated prepositions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>dir.</th>
<th>loc.</th>
<th>preposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>outside</em></td>
<td><em>van</em></td>
<td><em>vani</em></td>
<td><em>izvan</em> outside of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>inside</em></td>
<td><em>unutra</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>unutar</em> within</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All prepositions are, as expected, used with G. For example:

**Hotel**

**ne radi izvan sezone**°. *The hotel doesn’t ‘work’ outside of the (tourist) season.* (= isn’t open)

Sometimes the adverb *van* can be used with nouns, as a kind of preposition, so you’ll hear and read both *van sezone* and *izvan sezone*.

The following adverbs stand both for *origins* and *locations*, in the following way: the same adverb means *from outside* and *on the outer surface*. We can call them *origin/surface adverbs*:

- *izvana* from outside, on the outside
- *iznutra* from within, on the inside
- *odozgo* from above, on the top side
- *odozdo* from below, on the bottom side

For example:

**Hladan zrak**

**dolazi izvana.** *The cold air is coming from the outside.* °

It’s possible to derive relational adjectives from the adverbs above. Such adjectives are derived by adding -ski, -nji or -šnji. However, since they are far from regular, they have to be remembered as separate adjectives:

- *vani* out → *vanjski* outer °
- *gore* up → *gornji* upper
- *unutra* inside → *unutrašnji* inner
- *dolje* down → *donji* lower

It’s also possible to derive relational adjectives from many *specific time adverbs* (e.g. *today*), as well and you have to use them – there’s no other way say *today’s newspaper* in Croatian; they are always derived with -šnji; if the original adverb ends in -s, it’s lost:

- *danas* today → *današnji*
- *noćas* tonight → *noćašnji*
- *jučer* yesterday → *jučerašnji*
- *jutros* this morning → *jutrošnji*
- *večeras* this evening → *večerašnji*
- *sutra* tomorrow → *utrašnji*

(The difference *večerašnji* vs. *večernji* is the same as *večeras* vs. *večer*.)

They are also derived from non-specific time adverbs in the same way:
English has few adjectives that correspond to Croatian ones: *sadašnji* translates as current, present, and *nekadašnji* as former. For example:

To su jučerašnje novine. *This is yesterday’s newspaper.*

The adjectives derived from adverbs for *last evening* and *last year* do not follow this scheme:

- *sinoč last evening* → *sinočni* (also *sinočnji*)
- *lani last year* → *lanjski*

One preposition introduced long ago, normally meaning *from* with G, has a special meaning with a specific noun *strana* side:

- *s“/sa“ ... strane on... the side*

For example:

Kuće su s lijeve strane ulice. *Houses are on the left side of the street.*

The same can be expressed with *na“ ... strani*, i.e. using a DL expression (which I personally prefer).

On its own, without any additional words, *sa strane* usually means aside, apart; in the same meaning, you can sometimes hear *na strani* and *po strani*:

Stajao je sa strane. *He was standing aside.*

Then, there are couple of interesting prepositions yet unexplained. These two are quite simple:

- *niz“ + A down, along*
- *uz“ + A up, close to*

The basic meaning of them is direction of movement. The preposition *niz“* means the ‘normal’ direction, i.e. the same direction as the river flows, as hair grows etc.:

Bacila je sve niz rijeku. *She threw everything down the river.*

With steps, ramps, etc. it implies the downward direction:

Trčao sam niz stepenice. *I ran down the stairs.*

The preposition *niz“* is used also with paths that have no obvious direction, like avenues, river banks, roads, trails, simply to indicate movement along something which is path-like:

Trčao sam niz ulicu. *I ran down the street.*

The preposition *uz“* means the opposite direction from *niz“*, but also a location close to, this has been covered in 55 *More Prepositions.*
Finally, there’s a quite complex preposition which is often hard to translate to English:

`po” + A by, here and there` (‘sequence’)

This preposition is best explained by examples. First, it’s used in expressions like English `step by step, day by day`:

*Kretao sam se korak^A po korak^A*. *I was moving step by step.*

*Očistio sam sve^A, sobu^A po sobu^A*. *I’ve cleaned everything, room by room.*

Both the word before and the word after `po”` must be in A, so this is definitely not an usual preposition!

The next use emphasizes there’s more than one instance of something, which resolves ambiguity in some cases. This example will make it clear:

*Dao sam Goranu^DL i Marku^DL pedeset kuna^G*. *I gave Goran and Marko 50 kuna.*

It’s not clear whether each got 50 kn, or the speaker has given just 50 kn for both of them. Adding `po”` makes it clear there was more than one 50 kn bill:

*Dao sam Goranu^DL i Marku^DL po pedeset kuna^G*. *I gave Goran and Marko 50 kuna each.*

Finally, there are adverbs that are historically derived as `po” + an adverb`, but they are considered single words today. We have already encountered some of them. Common ones are:

*ponegdje* *here and there*

*ponekad* *now and then = sometimes*

*ponešto* *this and that thing = a bit, to a degree*

The last word is used as a quantity adverb. There are also generic pronouns and adjectives derived in this way:

*poneki* (+) *occasional, few and far between*

*poneftko* (*ponek-* *this and that person = a few people*

The adjective *poneki* changes as *neki*, of course.

® Instead of *van* and the related words, the following words are common in Serbia, parts of Bosnia and even in some parts of Croatia:

*van* → *napolje*  *izvana* → *spolja*

*vani* → *napolju*  *vanjski* → *spoljašnji*

Instead of *zrak*, the word for *air* in Serbia and most of Bosnia is *vazduh*.

The adverb *lani* has an unexpected “Ekavian” form *lane* in Serbia, but the relational adjective is the same.
77 As If: Advanced Clauses

This chapter will wrap up the remaining clauses and clause-like constructions, so it could be also called *various stuff that can be done with da* (and sometimes *što*).

The first thing we’re going to deal with are so-called *complex conjunctions*. Some clauses in Croatian can have two forms — one with *što*, and another with *da*. For example:

- kao što (+ clause) as if
- kao da (+ clause) as if

The main difference is that forms with *što* refer to something that has happened, or will happen for sure (at least, what is expected to happen), and ones with *da* to something that did not happen, or is not expected to happen.

For example:

- Vruće je kao što bilo prošli tjedan. *It’s hot as it was the last week.*
- Vruće je kao da smo u Africi. *It’s hot as if we were in Africa.*

The first sentence compares the heat to something that really happened, and the second one to something obviously not true. You can say the second sentence while in Africa only if you’re joking.

Another situation where we have *što* vs. *da* is with comparison conjunction *nego*, when used with a clause:

- nego što (+ clause) than
- nego da (+ clause) than (something imagined)

The combination *nego da* is only used to compare to something unreal, imagined, while *nego što* compares to another, existing action or state:

- Hotel je bolji nego što sam očekivao. *The hotel is better than I’ve expected.*

Another complex conjunction which shows such duality is *umjesto*:

- (desired event) umjesto što (real event)
- (real event) umjesto da (imagined event)

English here uses only *instead*.

When you look more carefully, the reason and purpose clauses follow a similar pattern:

- zato što (+ clause) because
- (zato) da (+ clause) so that

The correspondence is not perfect, for two reasons: *first*, *zato* is used in purpose clauses only for emphasis: only *da* is normally used. *Second*, purpose clauses are restricted to the present tense only.
Then, we have the word *osim* except®, used in various complex conjunctions and similar stuff. They are:

- *osim ako* unless
- *osim da/što* except (see below)
- *osim...i...* besides... also...

These constructions will be explained one by one. We will first tackle *osim da* and *osim što*. They are best understood as *osim* + clause. Which clause you’re going to use depends on the main verb.

For example, the expressions *moguće je da...* it’s possible that..., content clauses are used (the word *moguć* possible will be explained in 80 Present Adverbs and Adjectives). So, for example, you want to say that *everything is possible, except that X*. You would then use *da*, like in a content clause, and just add *osim* before it:

*Sve je moguće*, *osim da*[^1] *igram protiv Barcelone*. Everything is possible, except *me playing against Barcelona*.

This is an actual translation of a statement by Andrés Iniesta I found on the Internet. Pay attention there’s no transformation in the Croatian sentence (from *I play to me playing*).

Recall that it’s common to use *što* to start a content clause when commenting on a fact:

*Dobro je*[^2] *što pada kiša*. It’s good [it’s raining].

Next, we want to say *it’s nice, except it’s raining*:

*Lijepo je ovdje, osim*[^3] *što pada kiša*. It’s nice here, except [it’s raining].

In such cases, you have to use *što*.

The complex conjunction *osim ako* is quite different: it specifies a possible situation which will prevent the main clause (which is normally in the present tense or the future, but the meaning is future):

*Ići ćemo na plažu*, *osim ako će padati kiša*. We’ll go to the beach ‘except’ [‘if’ it rains]. = unless [it rains]

Like in other conditional sentences, use of tenses in much freer in Croatian. However, there’s often ‘empty’ negation in such clauses, so this is actually more common:

*Ići ćemo na plažu*, *osim ako neće padati kiša*. (the same meaning!)

Strictly speaking, these are conditional clauses, so the ‘potential’ future should be used with imperfective verbs, according to standard Croatian:

*Ići ćemo na plažu*, *osim ako bude padala kiša*.
*Ići ćemo na plažu*, *osim ako ne bude padala kiša*.
Such standard sentences have the same meaning as a bit colloquial ones with the common future tense, but they are significantly less common in real life (some 10 times less common on the Internet).

Then, osim... i... is used similar to English *besides*:

**Osim sladoleda**, nudimo i *kolače*. *Besides ice-cream, we offer cakes as well.*

Here the normal rules of *osim* + noun are observed (i.e. N, A → G). In writing, it’s common to use *pored*... i in this meaning as well.

The next thing is using *da*-clauses to express *how* something is done. Such clauses are then appended to *tako so, in such way*, so effectively we have *tako da*:

**Odgovorite na pitanja** tako da *zaokružite broj* ispred odgovora. *Answer the questions ‘in such a way that’ you circle the number before the answer. (i.e. by circling a number)*

There are two more constructions that use *da*-clauses. The first one corresponds to English construction *too... to...*, for example:

**Goran je premlad** [da vozi auto]. *Goran is too young [to drive a car].*

While English has *too* as a separate word, Croatian *pre-* is glued to the adjective (you will see it spelled separately from time to time, but it’s non-standard spelling).

While English uses a *to*-construction, Croatian sentences are of the *desire* type, i.e. only present tense (or conditional) but perfective verbs are allowed (one is used in the example below). Note that the Croatian construction is much more flexible, since anything can be a subject in the clause, while English is stuck with the infinitive, which cannot have a subject; therefore, English must use *for* when the subjects differ:

**Sendvič je prevelik** [da ga pojem]. *The sandwich is too big [for me] [to eat (it completely)].*

Literally, the Croatian sentence says:

*The sandwich is too big da I completely-eat it.*

It’t interesting that in such sentences, conditional is used more often than the present tense; sometimes you’ll see the verb *moći* (*može* +, *mogao*, *mogla*) *can* also added to the clause, with not much difference in meaning:

**Sendvič je prevelik** [da bih ga pojelo].

**Sendvič je prevelik** [da bih ga mogao pojesti].

As with other atemporal clauses, instead of *biti* (*je² +) *be*, the verb *bude* should be used, but conditional prevails with that verb almost completely in this construction. This construction easily translates English phrases like *too good to be true* i.e. **predobro da bi bilo istina** – and similar – but they are not that common in Croatian and somehow always feel like translation of English phrases.
Another construction corresponds to English so... that... While the English construction looks quite different from the previous one, Croatian simply uses tako... da..., but the da-clause is of indicative-type (i.e. any tense, but no perfective verbs in present):

Knjiga N je tako debela N [da ću je^ čitati danima]. The book is so thick [that I’ll be reading it for days].

Besides tako so, you can use toliko so many (don’t forget it’s a quantity adverb, therefore, uncountable nouns have to be in G after it, and countable ones in G-pl):

Vidim toliko vrabaca G [da ih^ ne mogu izbrojati]. I see so many sparrows [that I can’t count them].

Sometimes toliko is used with adjectives, so you’ll encounter toliko skupa... da... and similar expressions:

Pizza N je bila toliko ljuta N [da sam popio litru G vode]. The pizza was so hot [that I drank a liter of water].

(Croatian has one word for both angry and hot because of spices.) Besides these words, you can see takav (takv-) such, usually before nouns (but it can be used on its own, since it’s an adjective):

Magla N je takva [da svi G voze polako]. The fog is ‘such’ [that everyone is driving slowly].

(The last type, without a noun, must be slightly rephrased in English.) This type of clause is sometimes called result clause; bear in mind that they require two things: a word like tako, toliko or takav (takv-) and an indicative da-clause.

In both English and Croatian, there’s also a third type, where the main verb is negated; in English not... such... to...:

Nisam takav idiot N [da platim 1000 eura za to^]. I’m not such an idiot [to pay 1000 euros for that].

Now the part after da is not going to happen, so both English and Croatian switch to an atemporal construction. We again see that Croatian clauses restricted to the present tense often correspond to English to-constructions. However, the clause in this construction can be also in the future tense:

Nisam tako glup N [da ću to^ kupiti]. I’m not so stupid [that I’m going to buy it].

The last thing could be called the ‘weirdest construction’. It’s a kind of extension of the negative + nego construction, introduced in 43 And, Or, But: Basic Conjunctions. Recall:

To N nije mačka N, nego pas N. It’s not a cat, it’s a dog. (or: instead, it’s a dog)

You can also say it for verbs:
On¹ ne spava, nego gleda televiziju². He’s not sleeping, he’s watching TV instead.

The ‘weirdest construction’ is similar, but it says that the first (negated part) is an understatement. An example in English would be:

I’m not (just) cold, I’m (actually) freezing!

And in Croatian, it looks like this:

Ne da mi³ je hladno, nego se smrzavam.

What is ‘weird’ in this construction? First, ne⁴ and da are glued into a complex conjunction (still spelled as two words, of course, but usually pronounced as one word). You can’t place anything in between. The conjunction (or whatever it is) nego is optional:

Ne da mi³ je hladno, smrzavam se.

The second weird thing is that you can pull things (I mean, words) out from the da clause:

Meni³ ne da je hladno, nego se smrzavam. (the same meaning, emphasis on the person who feels it)

Pulling subjects out is quite common (but optional):

Voda⁴ ne da curi, nego teče. Water is not just leaking, it’s flowing.

The understatement in the first part can be also negative:

Ne da nije pročitao knjigu³, nije ju³ ni otvorio. It’s not just that he didn’t read the book completely, he didn’t even open it.

The English translation is not so elegant, but it’s a very compact expression in Croatian.

________

® In most of Bosnia, instead of prošli tjedan last week, prošle nedjelje is used; in Serbia it’s in the “Ekavian” form prošle nedelje.

In Serbia, besides osim, the word sem is also used, with the exactly same meaning and grammatical properties.

• Examples

Kao da me nema tu As if I weren’t here is one of pop hits performed by Ivana Vrdoljak, who performs under the name Vanna (the double n likely just makes it a bit more foreign and therefore cool).

The title also features a negative existential nema⁵ + me², but also tu in meaning here, which is very common, but not strictly standard in Croatian. The chorus contains a number of as if constructions. Note that the Croatian lyrics have
everything in the present tense, but English have the subjunctive shift to the past:

I kao [da me\(^G\) nema tu] And as [if I weren’t here]  
ja\(^N\) tonem sve do dna\(^G\) I’m sinking all the way to the bottom
I kao [da mi\(^{DL}\) nestaje] And as [if]  
tlo\(^N\) pod nogama’ the ground under my feet were disappearing

The second verse has sve do”, where sve doesn’t mean all, but all the way, i.e. it strengthens the preposition do”. The third and fourth verse are one sentence, the verb is in the third verse, and the pronoun mi\(^2\) refers to noge feet/legs which is the subject; the fourth verse also illustrates pod” + I. I guess the pronoun ja in the second verse is there just to add one syllable.

The rest of the chorus has a similar structure, again the DL mi\(^2\) marks the possession of tijelo body. (You see again and again how DL is common with body parts.)

I kao [da mi\(^{DL}\) tijelo\(^N\) gori] And as [if my body were burning]  
ja\(^N\) zovem upomoć I’m calling for help
A ponovo bi dala sve\(^A\) And I’d give everything again
za jednu jedinu noć\(^A\) for a single night
(Ante Pecotić)

The word bi is, of course, just the colloquial form of bih, the 1st person of the conditional verb. The phrase jedan jedini means a single; of course, both words are adjectives, and change when needed.

You can find performances on YouTube™, including a cover on A strana A Side.
78 Dijete vs. Dite

You have now some basic knowledge of Croatian, and you are going to enjoy some popular Croatian tune you discovered on YouTube™. To your surprise, it contains some strange words and forms.

You look up the lyrics and find words that are not in your pocket dictionary. Then you look them up in an online dictionary, but it does not help either! What is going on?

Chances are, you picked up a song that's not in Standard Croatian, but in a dialect – language particular to some region (this is a bit confusing, since any language is particular to a region; what is called a ‘language’, and what ‘dialect’ is simply a matter of convenience; also, dialects are usually not used by governments). There are many dialects, but there’s a big group of them, that have a characteristic i sound, and are therefore called Ikavian.

Ikavian dialects are usually found on islands and coast, cities Split and Zadar, but also inland, and in parts of Istria.

Simply said, where Standard Croatian has ije or je, they have i. For example (I've listed only nominatives and infinitives):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard word</th>
<th>Ikavian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dijete child</td>
<td>dite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dvije two (f)</td>
<td>dvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gdje where</td>
<td>di / gdi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lijep adj. nice, beautiful</td>
<td>lip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mljeko milk</td>
<td>mliko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nedjelja Sunday</td>
<td>nedilja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vrijeme time/weather</td>
<td>vrime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There's no change for verbs that have -ije in their pers-3 and the -i- comes from the infinitive, such as:

- piti (pije) drink
- brijati (brije) shave

Verbs having infinitives in -jeti in Standard Croatian have -i- in all forms and appear regular in Ikavian; this includes the Ikavian version of razumjeti understand:

- razumiti understand
- viditi see
- živiti live

etc.

regular verbs
in Ikavian
There are a couple of words where just the Standard *re* is changed to *ri*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard word</th>
<th>Ikavian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mreža net</td>
<td>mriža</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prestati (prestane) perf. <em>stop</em></td>
<td>pristati (pristane)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rezati (reže) impf. <em>cut</em></td>
<td>rizati (riže)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sreća <em>happiness, luck</em></td>
<td>srića</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trebati impf. <em>need/should</em></td>
<td>tribati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usred <em>in the middle of</em></td>
<td>usrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jesti <em>eat</em></td>
<td>jisti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orah <em>walnut</em></td>
<td>orih</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ikavian *pristati stop* looks like another verb from the same family, meaning *consent, agree* – prefixes *pre-* and *pri-* have merged in Ikavian! Of course, this doesn't apply to every *re* in every word – these words have to be learned.

There are some words where it isn't *re* vs *ri*, as in the two rows in the table above. Perhaps confusingly, this applies also to the negative present tense of the verb *imati have* and to indefinite pronouns/adjectives like *neki* and *nešto*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard word</th>
<th>Ikavian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nemaš pres-2 <em>you don't have</em></td>
<td>nimaš</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neki adj. <em>some</em></td>
<td>niki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nešto <em>something</em></td>
<td>nişto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many Ikavian dialects also have specific *past-m* forms: instead of -o, they have -a and -ja:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Std. <em>past-m</em></th>
<th>Ikavian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biti (je² +) <em>be</em></td>
<td>bio</td>
<td>bija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imati <em>have</em></td>
<td>imao</td>
<td>ima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vidjeti <em>see</em></td>
<td>vidio</td>
<td>vidija</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the *past-m* in Standard Croatian ends in -ao, in such dialects it ends in only -a. When other vowels are found before the final -a, some people write just -a, other -ja, so you will see both bia and bija.

Many such dialects are spoken on the Adriatic coast or near it, but not all dialects on the coast are Ikavian.

Furthermore, most coastal dialects, be Ikavian or not, have another interesting feature: in verb and case endings, where Standard Croatian has -m, they have -n.
instead:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>pres-1</th>
<th>coast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biti (je² +) be</td>
<td>sam</td>
<td>san</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imati have</td>
<td>imam</td>
<td>iman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For nouns and adjectives (example for the instrumental case):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>Std. I</th>
<th>coast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>žena woman/wife</td>
<td>ženom</td>
<td>ženon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moj my</td>
<td>m, n</td>
<td>mojin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>mojon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This change affects only word-final m's: endings -mo (pres-1pl) or -ma (DLI-pl) aren't affected.

There's another feature that doesn't completely overlap with the change from -m to -n: loss of lj. Instead, such dialects have usually just j:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard word</th>
<th>coast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>people ljudi</td>
<td>pl. judi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love ljubav</td>
<td>f jubav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trouble nevolja</td>
<td>nevoja</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are some specific constructions used today in Split and the surrounding area.

The most common is:

u¨ + G (Split area) = std. kod¨ + G

Therefore, you often hear and read u nas instead of kod nas for at our place, here (i.e. German bei uns).

Furthermore, there are a lot of specific words in Dalmatia (this list is by no means exhaustive, there are many hundreds specific words):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard word</th>
<th>Dalmatia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pillow jastuk</td>
<td>kušin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>towel ručnik</td>
<td>šugaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clock, hour sat</td>
<td>ura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plate (to eat from) tanjur</td>
<td>pjat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fork vilica</td>
<td>pijn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these words also appear in the Northern Adriatic, i.e. in the Rijeka area and
Istria. One of the main differences is that Split area consistently uses the Standard stress system, with all shifts, etc. while in Rijeka, the 'western' stress prevails.

Use of Ikavian is very widespread in Split and surrounding areas in everyday communication. A lot of local musicians produce music with Ikavian words. There are even novels and newspaper columns written in Ikavian. There are movies and 'telenovelas' with a lot of Ikavian forms. Since such songs and 'telenovelas' are quite popular in countries of former Yugoslavia, everyone understands a bit of Ikavian, despite it having no official status anywhere. (There's a small population in Northern Serbia, called Bunjevci, which is – controversially – sometimes considered a separate ethnic group in Serbia, and their language is Ikavian. They have primary schools in Ikavian.)

The difference Ikavian vs. Standard Croatian is similar to e.g. difference between Standard Serbian and Standard Croatian. However, bear in mind that there are dialects in Croatia that much more divergent, to the point of being barely understandable, having specific sounds, case forms, and so on! They will be described in A8 Dialects.

Finally, Ikavian is far from homogeneous. What is spoken on islands would be very different than what is spoken inland. Generally, on islands and smaller towns, you'll see larger difference from the Standard and more specific forms.

There's one more difference that is completely independent of Ikavian, but some Ikavian dialects, including Dalmatian hinterland, have it: loss of h. It was replaced by either v or j, depending on the surrounding sounds, or simply lost, e.g. in the beginning of the word (I have listed only nominatives):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard word</th>
<th>h-less</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kruh bread</td>
<td>kruv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hladan adj. cold</td>
<td>ladan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snaha son's wife</td>
<td>snaja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suh adj. dry</td>
<td>suv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today, most people in Split – especially when they speak privately – don't have h in most words. This produces, with other differences described above, e.g. past forms tija and tila, corresponding to Standard htio and htjela.

This loss also happened in large parts of Bosnia and whole Serbia (however, Standard Serbian has restored h at the beginning of words, so it's hladan and suv in Standard Serbian.)

There are also Ekavian dialects, where all changes are similar to ones described above, but have e instead of i (lep, etc.). They prevail in Serbia, and the Standard Serbian in Serbia is Ekavian. You can find more about Ekavian in A9 Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin.
This overview of Ikavian was intentionally brief and light; there are whole books written about various dialects, mostly dictionaries of local speech for some town or region. Unfortunately, little is available online.

Please don't think ‘Ikavian’ equals ‘Dalmatian’. For example, Dubrovnik is a city in Dalmatia, but the dialect spoken there is very different from one spoken in Split, and by no means Ikavian.

• Examples

There are so many popular Croatian songs in Ikavian, that it's hard to give just a few examples!

This hit performed by Goran Karan – Lipa si, lipa – is not about a tree (Std. lipa lime tree, tilia), but about a woman (beautiful, of course).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Za tobom¹ noćas</td>
<td>For you tonight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plaču mandoline²</td>
<td>mandolins cry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Najlipša ružo³</td>
<td>Most beautiful rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ikad procvitala</td>
<td>ever blossomed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipa⁴ si, lipa⁴</td>
<td>You're beautiful, beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anđeli ti sliče</td>
<td>angels look like you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipa⁴ si, lipa⁴</td>
<td>You're beautiful, beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>usne, tvoje lice⁴</td>
<td>the lips, your face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jubi me⁵, jubi</td>
<td>Kiss me, kiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i kad zora⁶ sviće</td>
<td>even when a dawn breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa neba⁷ pada</td>
<td>From skies fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>po nama⁸ dl cviče⁹</td>
<td>flowers onto us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dođi u ponoce¹⁰</td>
<td>Come at midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prođi kraj fountane¹⁰</td>
<td>pass by the fountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da misec¹¹ vidi</td>
<td>So the Moon can see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tvoje lipe oči¹¹</td>
<td>your beautiful eyes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

Another example is U prolazu In passing. It's again a purely Ikavian song:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pusti, neka vitar¹ nosi</td>
<td>Let the wind carry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ove naše zadnje riči¹</td>
<td>These last words of ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svitlo⁴ sja u tvojoj kosi¹⁰</td>
<td>Light shines in your hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tvoj⁴ me¹ pogled¹ i sad liči</td>
<td>Your look still heals me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U prolazu¹, u prolazu¹⁰</td>
<td>In passing, in passing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jubi me⁵, jubi
(Nenad Ninčević)

A bit later, there are verses:
I dok čekan, teku ure^N And while I'm waiting, hours 'flow'
Ko^N zna ča^A i komuDL broje Who knows what and whom they count

This seems obscure, but 'flowing of hours' is a bell on a clock-tower, 'counting'. The word ura is a bit archaic version of sat.

However, the word ča what is specific for a group of dialects that are named after it (called Čakavian or Chakavian in English). They have a number of interesting features, which are almost completely absent in this song. These dialects were much used in Croatian Renaissance literature. (You maybe recall that ča is an extremely archaic form of Što, from 28 Asking Who and What).

You can listen to it on YouTube™ – check the performance by Tamara Obrovac, generally considered outstanding.

A venerated tradition in Dalmatia is klapa – groups singing a capella. They are mostly men, but they are women groups too.

This song, A vitar puše (the form vitar is obviously Ikavian), contains some interesting features:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Su pjam</th>
<th>juveG</th>
<th>With a plate of soup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kad projdu dani^N</td>
<td>When days pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stvar luše^N</td>
<td>And fancy things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ova nas^A jubav^N</td>
<td>This love</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jača i rani</td>
<td>Strengthens and feeds us</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A vitar^N puše!</td>
<td>And the wind is blowing!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Jakša Flamengo)

You can see here loss of h, e.g. rani instead of hrani.

There's another interesting form: projdu instead of produ. This is an older form which is retained in many dialects – in many places – but is today absent from Dalmatia, except maybe on the islands. In that verse, verb is placed before the subject, which continues into the next verse, so these verses mean when days and fancy things pass i.e. when we get old and poor.

This is actually a pop song, performed by Oliver Dragojević, but check the version by women from Klapa Neverin on YouTube™.

All songs above were modern, late 20th century works, both lyrics and melody. The next song, Ju te san se zajubija I fell in love with you is a traditional song:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ju te^A san se zajubija</th>
<th>With you I've fallen in love</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Druge^G ne bi poželija</td>
<td>Another one I wouldn't wish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cesarica^N da bi bila</td>
<td>Even if she were an empress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There's an interesting (and archaic) feature: the verb poželiti perf. wish (Ikavian...
form) uses G (druge) instead of A (drugu) for its object, \textit{when negated}. (This is not a classic perf. verb, as you cannot "complete" wish: such verbs will be explained in 81 \textit{Sneeze Once and Start Blooming}.)

You can check a performance by a big choir, made of merged \textit{klapa}'s on YouTube™.

There's more. In early 21st century, the most influential group from Split – in a category of its own, kind of mixture of pop, hip-hop and traditional sounds – is \textbf{The Beat Fleet}, usually shortened to \textbf{TBF}. Any song performed by them is worth listening; their works touch a wide range of themes, including love, everyday life, drugs, urban decay, politics.

This is a kind of love song, \textit{Fantastična\textit{ Fantastic}} (f) – about a friend who becomes a drug addict and hallucinates having a girlfriend, literally a \textit{fantasy}:

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{Mara}^N \textit{nije} & \textbf{Mara} \textit{had no cellphone} \\
\textit{nikad} \textit{nije} & \textit{he was never at home} \\
\textit{doma} & \\
\textbf{I} \textit{onda} \textit{jednog} & \textit{And then one morning} \\
\textit{jutra}^A & \\
\textit{sam} \textit{ga}^G & \textit{I met him in front of the elevator} \\
\textit{srea} & \\
\textit{ispriad} & \\
\textit{lifta} & \\
\textbf{a Mara}^N \textit{je} & \textit{and Mara was happy} \\
\textit{bia} & \textit{like never (before)} \\
\textit{sriran}^N & \\
\textit{ka} & \\
\textit{nikad} & \\
\textbf{I sta} & \textit{And he started to talk:} \\
\textit{sta} & \textit{I've met} \\
\textit{je} & \\
\textit{pričat:} & \\
\textit{upozna} & \textit{the love of my life} \\
\textit{sam} & \textit{a month ago} \\
\textit{ljubav}^A & \\
\textit{svog} & \\
\textit{života}^G & \\
\textit{prije} & \\
\textit{miser}^A & \\
\textit{dana}^G & \\
\textit{Kad} & \textit{When I went down} \\
\textit{sam se} & \textit{to the store} \\
\textit{spustia} & \\
\textit{do} & \\
\textit{dućana}^G & \\
\textit{Po} & \textit{To get bread and milk} \\
\textit{kruv}^A & \textit{in that plastic bottle} \\
\textit{i mliko}^A & \\
\textit{u onoj} & \\
\textit{plastičnoj} & \\
\textit{boci}^{DL} & \\
\textit{Na} & \textit{I saw those eyes at the checkout} \\
\textit{blagajni}^{DL} & \textit{f} \\
\textit{ugleda} & \\
\textit{a te} & \\
\textit{oči}^{A} & \textit{f} \\
\textit{(Aleksandar Antić)} & \\
\end{tabular}

One form is worth explaining: in parts of Dalmatia, the verb \textit{stati} (\textit{stane}) perf. \textit{come to stand} also means \textit{start, begin}.

The language in their songs is how younger people in Split actually speak, there is a lot of influence from Standard Croatian (here \textit{srea} instead of Ikavian \textit{sria}, \textit{prije} instead of Ikavian \textit{pri}, later you can hear \textit{tjedian week}, a word which is traditionally not used in Dalmatia, etc.), a lot of local slang, words offensive to some (older people) etc. Check the live performance on YouTube™.
79 You’re Wrong and Other Phrases

I will explain various phrases with non-obvious meanings.

The first group is about being right or wrong. There are two ways to express it:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>right</th>
<th>wrong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biti (je² +) be +</td>
<td>u pravu u krivu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imati have +</td>
<td>pravo krivo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These two sentences have the same meaning:

**U pravu** si. You’re right.
**Imaš pravo.** (the same meaning, less common)

Expressing right or wrong with **biti (je² +) be** is more common.

The word **krivo** is also used as an adverb, to indicate that some action is not done in the ‘proper’ way. For example:

**Krivo** si me⁴ shvatila. You misunderstood me.

However, to express that something is done right, this word is usually used:

**ispravno** correctly

For example:

**Ispravno** si me⁴ shvatila. You understood me correctly.

The word **pravo** can be also a noun, meaning right. It can be used with the verb **imati** have and either na” + A or another verb in inf, meaning be entitled to, have right to:

**Imaš pravo⁴ na svoje mišljenje⁴.** You’re entitled to your opinion.

There are adjectives with opposite meanings:

- **pravi** true, right
- **kriv** false, wrong, guilty
- **lažan** (lažn-) false, fake
- **pogrešan** (pogrešn-) wrong

The adjective with the positive meaning covers both something that really is so, and the right choice:

**On⁴ je pravi prijatel⁴.** He’s a true friend.
**Ovo⁴ je pravo mjesto⁴.** This is the right spot. (lit. ‘true/right place’)

With three adjectives with negative meanings, **kriv** covers both meanings wrong choice and guilty, while **lažan** (lažn-) is something that looks right, but it isn’t. Finally, **pogrešan** (pogrešn-) is again only wrong choice.
With the adjective **kriv**, there is a common phrase expressing *fault and blame*. It’s best explained by examples:

**On** je **kriv** za **to**. *That’s his fault.*

**Za sve** sam ja **kriva**. *It’s all my fault.* (I = female)

It literally means ‘*he is guilty for that*’. This phrase is often used in negative, clearing someone of responsibility, often additionally expressing someone’s claim is wrong, that it’s actually the responsibility of the one who claims! This is expressed simply by adding the ‘accuser’ in DL:

**Mi** ti nismo **krivi**. *It’s not our fault (it’s yours).*

**Nitko** ti nije **kriv**. *It’s all your fault.* (lit. ‘nobody is guilty to you.’)

The last example is a very often used phrase, which also corresponds to English *you’ve got only yourself to blame*.

Then, there’s a verb family derived from the same root as the adjective **pravi** *true, right*, and it has very common meanings. It follows an asymmetric pattern:

**praviti** ~ **na**- make

**po-pravljati** ~ **po-praviti** (a derived pair)

Common derived pairs in this family are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-pravljati ~ -praviti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>prefix</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>is-</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>po-</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pre-</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ras-</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first pair, derived by **is-**, is straightforward – you just *correct* an object in A (which can also be se² or sebe):

**Ana** je **ispravila greške**. *Ana corrected errors.*

The pair derived by **po-** is also straightforward – something is broken or wrong, and you fix it:

**Ivan** je **popravio bicikl**. *Ivan fixed the bicycle.*

You can also *fix yourself*, i.e. *improve*. The meaning is actually mediopassive – from *improving on its own to getting improved*:

**Vrijeme** se **popravlja**. *The weather is improving.*

The pair derived by **pre-** is a bit less common. It’s used when you change or
reconfigure something, but it’s not necessary a correction or improvement.

The pair derived by ras- has a completely unexpected meaning: discuss. It’s used in the same way as razgovarati («) converse:

Raspravljali smo o planovima za ljeto. We have discussed plans for the summer. Raspravljao sam s Anom. I discussed with Ana.

Note that this pair does not use a simple object in A, unlike English!

The perfective verbs have mostly derived verbal nouns of the -ak type:

- ispravak (ispakov-) correction but:
- popravak (poprakov-) repair rasprava discussion

Then, there’s the verb ticati (tiče) touch which is mostly used in this phrase:

ticati (tiče) se² + G concern, involve

For example, this is a very frequent sentence:

Ne tiče me se. It doesn’t concern me. = It’s none of my business.

Let me explain you more phrases. However, to explain them, I need to explain a few grammar details first.

There are two impersonal constructions we haven’t covered yet: both don’t allow a subject, but normally have objects. The first one looks like the mediopassive, but uses A instead of N, so there’s no subject:

Kava se vrlo brzo skuha. Coffee is (can be) prepared very quickly. (mediopassive)

Kavu se vrlo brzo skuha°. One prepares coffee very quickly. (impersonal)

What’s the difference? Only cases used, and not much difference in meaning. They mean basically the same. Of course, they aren’t grammatically the same, the second one has no subject (no words in N), so the verb must be neuter singular in the past:

Kava se vrlo brzo skuhala. Coffee was prepared very quickly. (mediopassive)

Kavu se vrlo brzo skuhalo. One prepared coffee very quickly. (impersonal)

While the (se² + A) construction is usually called ‘impersonal’, its meaning is really mediopassive. We can call it se²+ A-passive. This construction is actually more precise, since the first construction can be also sometimes understood as a reflexive, as in the following example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pitam se</td>
<td>I ask myself or: I am asked. ??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pita° meavenport</td>
<td>One asks me. = I am asked. no confusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, the first construction would rather be understood as a simple reflexive. So people use the second construction to specify that they are being
asked. This phrase is especially frequent (where the stressed form mene is often used instead of me², to further emphasize the point):

**Ako se mene^
\[\text{past-n}\] pita^°... If I’m asked... (i.e. if you want to know what I think)**

This expression is also common:

**Da se mene^
\[\text{past-n}\] pita^°, a ne pita^° me^\[\text{past-n}\] se,...**

This is rather rhetorical: if anyone asked me – but nobody does... I’d say....

Besides pitati ask, verb pairs commonly using such passive are not really common. Some of them are:

- **nazivati** («) ~ **nazvati** (nazove) call, name
- **prozivati** («) ~ **prozvati** (prozove) call the roll, single out
- **spominjati** ~ **spomenuti** («) mention

The first pair is used with meaning e.g. *she named him Jack*.

Three more phrases are simple impersonal phrases with non-trivial meanings. The first one is:

**radi^\[\text{past-n}\] se o + DL it’s about / it’s**

Some people consider this phrase colloquial. The phrase is used usually when we want to explain what something previously discussed, but not really known, really is. For example:

**To^N nije bio kit^N. Radilo se o morskom psu^DL. It wasn’t a whale. It was a shark.**

(Yes, we use the phrase morski pas – literally sea dog – for the *shark.*)

As expected, the verb **raditi** work/do is here in neuter singular in the past. This is yet another ‘generic’ use of this verb. A very similar expression is:

**riječ je o + DL it’s about / it’s**

The verb here is usually understood as having **riječ** f word as its subject, so in the past it’s **bila je ričę**.... However, you will sometimes see it impersonal in this expression as well (there’s a number of expressions in Croatian that have the same property; they always have some fixed noun as the subject – recall strah me je from 69 Memories, Expectations and Fear).

Another impersonal phrase involves a common verb pair:

**dolaziti ~ doći (dože, došao, došla) + do + G come up, arise, occur**

For example:

**Došlo je do nesporazuma^G. A misunderstanding has arisen.**

This sounds quite formal in English, but this is an everyday expression in Croatian. It also corresponds to *come about*. Instead of a noun in G, a whole content clause can be inserted, attached to a to (in G):
**Doći** do toga\(^6\) da... *It’s getting to the point where...*

**Došlo je do toga\(^6\) da... *It got to the point where...***

doći post-n

Observe how the first sentence uses the impf. verb, corresponding to English continuous (progressive) action, while the second one uses the perf. verb, since it has already *got* to the ‘point’.

(the rest is coming soon)

* The expression *u krivu* is very rare and non-standard in Serbia and Bosnia, but very common in Croatia.

Instead of *kava*, a slightly different word *kafa* is common in most parts of Bosnia and Serbia. In Bosnia, the form *kahva* is used as well, especially in parts where Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) live.

Constructions like *pita me se* and *kavu se kuha* are very rare in Serbia. Basically, the only use of such construction in Serbia is rhetorical *ako se mene pita*, which is often condemned by Serbian prescriptivists (i.e. the language police) as ‘corruption of language’.

• **Something Possibly Interesting**

It seems that some people in Croatia (likely, depending on the region) prefer the construction *kavu se kuha* over *kava se kuha* – I’ve seen even people “correcting” the normal se\(^2\)-passive into the se\(^2\)-with-A passive! Be prepared.
80 Present Adverbs and Adjectives

How to say *flying saucer* or *playing cards* in Croatian? English is here quite simple: the same form that’s used to make the Present Continuous tense (e.g. *I’m flying*) is re-used as an adjective.

Croatian has two special forms. The first one is called *present adverb* (or *present participle*). It’s a very simple form to make, just take the *pres-3pl* form of the verb and add -ći to it:

- čekati *wait* → čekajući
- ležati (*leži*) *lie, recline* → ležeći
- jesti (*jede*) *eat* → jedući
- učiti *learn, study* → učeći

Since all *pres-3pl* forms end in either -u or -e, all present adverbs end in -ući or -eći.

This form can be used in various ways. First, it can be used as an adverb, meaning *while x-ing*:

**Zaspao sam gledajući televiziju**. *I fell asleep while watching TV.*

Here the verb *zaspati* (*zaspi*) is a perfective verb meaning *fall asleep*. Such verbs will be described in the next chapter.

The case of any noun appended to the participle is the same as used with the verb:

**gledam televiziju** (A) *I’m watching TV* → **gledajući televiziju**

Adverbs are used in this way mostly in formal writing; in speech and casual writing, *time clauses* with *dok* are preferred, so you will hear usually:

**Zaspao sam [dok sam gledao televiziju]**. *I fell asleep [while I was watching TV].*

Furthermore, impf. verbs derived from *davati* *give* – which have alternative (and non-standard) present tense forms – have often adverbs which are derived from the non-standard form, for example:

**prodavati** (*prodaje*) *sell* → **prodajući**
**prodavajući**

The ratio of the two forms (as given by Google on the .hr domain; try it yourself) is roughly 2:1 in favor of the standard form **prodajući**. Therefore, expect to see and hear both forms.

There’s one irregular adverb, common in speech, used like this:

**poznavaćući + A from what I know about A**

There are more present adverbs used in phrases. A common one is:

**zahvaljivati** (-uje «) *thank* → **zahvaljući**
It’s used with DL:

**Zahvaljujući dobrom vremenu**<sup>DL</sup>, **plaže**<sup>N</sup> **su pune**<sup>N</sup>. *Thanks to the good weather, beaches are full.*

A lot of present adverbs can be *used as adjectives*, and that’s quite common in speech. This is usually possible only for adverbs made from verbs that *cannot have any object*, e.g. for the present adverb made from **spavati** sleep but not for the adverb made from **učiti** learn, study. So you can call UFO’s:

**Vidjela je leteće tanjure**<sup>A</sup>. *She saw flying saucers.*

You see how here the present adverb is understood as an adjective and put to the masc. *A-pl* form. Some common present adjectives are:

- **leteći** flying
- **ležeći** lying
- **odgovarajući** suitable
- **postojeći** existing
- **prateći** accompanying
- **trepćući** blinking
- **viseći** hanging
- **vodeći** leading

A couple of present adverbs have specific meaning as adjectives (besides the *inf*, only *pres-3* forms are listed here, since only those forms are important for formation of present adverbs and adjectives):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>present adj.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(bude) perf. be</td>
<td><strong>budući</strong> future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ići (ide) go</td>
<td><strong>idući</strong> following, next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moći (može +) can</td>
<td><strong>moguć</strong> possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slijediti follow</td>
<td><strong>slijeđeći</strong> next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teći (teče) flow</td>
<td><strong>tekući</strong> flowing, liquid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The adjective **budući** means *future* in e.g. *future tense*. The word **slijeđeći** is spelled so when used as an adjective, but **slijeđeći** if used as an adverb. The adjective **moguć** even lost the otherwise obligatory final -i.

Some present adjectives form combinations with specific meanings:

- **ležeći policajac** speed bump (lit. ‘lying policeman’)
- **tekući račun** checking (or current) account (lit. ‘liquid account’)

Don’t forget that they are *adjectives*, when used to describe a noun, or in set combinations:

**Ima**<sup>°</sup> **puno ležećih policajaca**<sup>6</sup> **na cesti**<sup>DL</sup>. *There are a lot of speed bumps on the road.*

There’s one English construction where *-ing* forms are used which translate as neither gerund nor present adverb:
She saw birds flying.

In Croatian, one way to express this is using kako (usually meaning how) or da with a small clause (with normal tense rules) after it:

Vidjela je ptice kako lete.
Vidjela je ptice da lete.

Another option is to use kad(a) and a clause. Recall this line from the example in 52 Stand, Become, Exist, Cease:

Čulo se samo kako ptice pjevaju. Only birds singing could be heard.

Here the birds singing is actually the subject of the verb čuti (чуje) hear, used in the mediopassive construction.

Since present adverbs stand for action performed by the noun after them (tekuća voda = flowing water = water that flows), they cannot be used for expressions like bathing costume: the costume doesn’t bathe, it’s just used when someone is bathing.

Therefore, there’s another option, used only as adjective, but looking really similar to the present adverb (the form has no name, unfortunately). For verbs with infinitive in -ati, it’s created by transforming that ending to -aći:

kupati bathe → kupaći šivati sew → šivači
spavati sleep → spavači žvakati (žvače) chew → žvakači

(Compare them to the present adverbs of these verbs, e.g. kupajući and spavajući.)

If verbs don’t end in -ati, it’s made from their pres-3 form in a way that the result always ends in -aći:

jesti (jede, jeo) eat → jedaći

These adjectives are used in set expressions only, e.g.:

brijaći aparat electric razor
igraća karta playing card
kupači kostim bathing costume
kupaće gaće swim briefs
spavaća soba bedroom
šivaća mašina sewing machine
žvakača guma chewing gum

The adjective kupači is virtually used only to describe those two nouns, so it’s colloquially very often used on its own, nouns are omitted. When in singular masculine it’s costume, and in plural neuter it’s briefs. Of course, it still changes as any adjective:

Otišla je bez kupačeg. (colloq.) She left without the swimming costume.
Zaboravio sam kupaće. (colloq.) I forgot my swim briefs.
Here the adjective kupači is in G, as required by the preposition bez without. We know it’s a costume, since it’s in singular! In the second sentence, the adj. kupaće is in A-pl.

The same happens to žvakaća guma chewing gum, usually shortened to just žvakaća.

® In Serbia, the pres. adj. poznajajući is considered non-standard.

In Serbia and most of Bosnia, the meaning liquid is expressed with another adjective: tečan (teč-), while tekući means only flowing.
81 Sneeze Once and Start Blooming

Croatian often uses patterns of verb derivation where meanings are derived by simply adding prefixes. For instance, let’s take the following verb pair:

\[ \text{padati} \sim \text{pasti (padne, pao)} \text{ fall} \]

From it, you can derive e.g. the following verb pairs with specific meanings:

\[ \text{ispadati} \sim \text{ispasti (ispadne, ispao)} \text{ fall out} \]
\[ \text{r spedati} \sim \text{raspasti (raspadne, raspao)} \text{ fall apart} \]
\[ \text{upadati} \sim \text{upasti (upadne, upao)} \text{ fall into} \]

All such pairs are of the same kind like the base pair: there’s a process (involving a kind of ‘falling’ that can be completed). But what about if we add \textbf{pri-} to the base pair:

\[ \text{prpadati} \sim \text{prpasti (prpadne, prpao)} \]?

The verb \textbf{prpadati} of course means \textit{belong}, but what should the perfective verb mean? Belonging is a \textit{state}; how can you complete it?

It turns out that the perfective verb is \textit{used}, but in the meaning \textit{begin to belong, start to belong}. For verbs that indicate lasting states, associated perfective verbs often mean \textit{entering the state}.

Such verbs are often hard to translate into English. The verb \textbf{prpasti} (...) will be usually translated as \textit{given, assigned} and so on, or the sentence would be rephrased.

Such perfective verbs that don’t mean completion or accomplishment are sometimes called \textit{inchoative} verbs (abbreviated as inch.).

To emphasize that the perfective verb has not the usual meaning of ‘completion’, but ‘getting into a state’, I’ll use a double tilde (~~). The prefix za- is often used to make such verbs:

\[ \text{mrziti} \sim \text{za- (‘) hate} \]
\[ \text{pamtiti} \sim \text{za- memorize} \]
\[ \text{voljeti (voli, volio, voljela) \sim za- (‘) love/like} \]

For example:

\textit{Ana je zavoljela zeleni čaj. Ana started to love green tea.}

Some pairs don’t follow this scheme:

\[ \text{cvjetati} \sim \text{pro- bloom} \]
\[ \text{spavati} \sim \text{zaspati (zaspi) sleep} \]
\[ \text{shvaćati} \sim \text{shvatiti understand, realize} \]
\[ \text{sviđati se} \sim \text{svidjeti (svidi, svidio, svidjela) se} \text{ like} \]

The verb \textbf{zaspati} has an alternative, non-standard \textit{pres-3} form \textbf{zaspe} that’s quite
common in more eastern regions of Croatia (and in Serbia, but it’s nowhere accepted as standard). The perf. verb usually corresponds to English fall asleep:

**Goran** je brzo **zaspao.** Goran quickly fell asleep.

(Historically, the pair meaning sleep was also derived with just za-; however, the verb spati (spī) sleep is now archaic in most of Croatia; it has been replaced by a more regular spavati, but the older verb is still used in some dialects.)

Many inchoative verbs can be rephrased using phase verbs, e.g.:

zaplakati (zaplače) start crying = početi plakati

However, some frequent verbs like zaspati (zaspi) are never rephrased – they are basically the only way to express the meaning fall asleep.

Inchoative verbs referring to states can be used with ‘frame’ and ‘round-trip’ time expressions. When used with ‘frame’ expressions (za¨ + time), it means how long it took to enter the state. For example:

**Shvatio** sam sve za pet minuta. I understood everything in five minutes.

When used with ‘round-trip’ expressions (na¨ + time), it means how long the state entered held. For example:

**Zaspala** sam na sat vremena. I fell asleep for an hour.

You’ll sometimes see inchoative verbs used with ordinary time expressions (i.e. with no prepositions) in the latter sense, i.e. how long the state lasted:

**Zaspala** sam sat vremena. I fell asleep for an hour. (sometimes used)

Some action verbs that have a meaningful start and completion of action, have two associated perfective verbs! For such verbs, I will list both perfective verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perfective</th>
<th>impf.</th>
<th>done</th>
<th>begin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>plivati</td>
<td>~ ot-</td>
<td>~ za-</td>
<td>swim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such groups of verbs can be called aspect triplets. Such common triplets are:

igrati ~ od- («) ~ za- («) play (game)
pjevati ~ ot- ~ za- sing
svirati ~ od- («) ~ za- («) play (music)

As you can see, the stress behaves the same in both perf. verbs. It really depends on the base verb.

(Some textbooks use the term inchoative only for verbs which mean entering a state, and call the start-of-action verbs ingressive. I’ll use one name for both kinds.)

While English often uses get + adjective to express entering a state, Croatian has
specific verbs:
- **ogladniti** («) perf. *get hungry*
- **ozdравити** perf. *recover, get healthy*
- **razboljeti** (*razbo*, ...) *se² perf. get sick*

For some meanings, you can either *make* someone something, or *get* something; the second meaning requires a *se²* in Croatian, i.e. it’s another example of mediopassive *se²*, when the subject changes ‘on its own’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>perf. verb</th>
<th>+ A</th>
<th>+ se²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>rasplakati</strong> (<em>rasplače</em>)</td>
<td><em>drive to tears</em></td>
<td><em>burst into tears</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>rastužiti</strong> («)</td>
<td><em>make sad</em></td>
<td><em>get sad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>razljutiti</strong> («)</td>
<td><em>make angry</em></td>
<td><em>get angry</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>razveseliti</strong> («)</td>
<td><em>cheer up (someone)</em></td>
<td><em>cheer up</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uvrijediti</strong> («)</td>
<td><em>offend</em></td>
<td><em>take offence</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such verbs usually start with **ras-** or **raz-**, as you can see. Such verbs sometimes don’t have impf. pairs at all.

For some meanings in Croatian, there’s a full verb pair that indicates getting into a state; the impf. verb sees entering a state as a process (e.g. it can take a while to become sick, it can take a while to get old, etc.):

- **pokretati** (*pokreće*) ~ **pokrenuti** (*pokrene*) *get moving*
- **starjeti**/*stariti* ~ **o-** *grow/get old*

Therefore, there are verb triplets with two verbs for entering the state: one impf. and another perf. A parallel in English would be:

*I was getting hungry.* = enter-impf.  
*I got hungry.* = enter-perf.  
*I am hungry.* = state (impf.)

There are three such triplets for body position verbs, one of them I’ve introduced in 52 **Stand, Become, Exist, Cease**; we can also list verbs *be* and *become as a kind of* triplet:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>enter-impf.</th>
<th>enter-perf.</th>
<th>state (impf.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lie</td>
<td>leći (legne, legao, legla)</td>
<td>ležati (leži)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sit</td>
<td>sjesti (sjedne, sjeo)</td>
<td>sjediti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stajati (staje)</td>
<td>stati (stane)</td>
<td>stajati (stoji)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>postajati (postaje)</td>
<td>biti (je² +)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s interesting how all verbs in the last row can have same arguments, i.e. nouns or adjectives in N:

**Goran**\textsuperscript{N} postaje gladan\textsuperscript{N}. Goran is getting hungry.

**Goran**\textsuperscript{N} je postao gladan\textsuperscript{N}. Goran got hungry.

**Goran**\textsuperscript{N} je gladan\textsuperscript{N}. Goran is hungry.

If we look further, we can find more inchoative triplets, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>enter-impf.</th>
<th>enter-perf.</th>
<th>state (impf.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>učiti learn, study</td>
<td>naučiti («) learn</td>
<td>znati know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doznavati (doznaje) find out, get to know</td>
<td>doznati find out, get to know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upoznavati (upoznaje) get acquainted with</td>
<td>upoznati get acq. with</td>
<td>poznавati (poznaje) know (person, city), be acquainted with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pair doznавati (doznaje) \sim doznati is for simple facts, with little effort, while učiti \sim na- («) is for complex topics (driving a car, Croatian, calculus, etc.). The last triplet is mostly for ‘knowing’ people and cities.

There is one more type of perfective verbs, where action consists of bits – one example is sneezing: it’s a sequence of individual sneezes. Croatian has verbs for both continuous sneezing and for a single sneeze:

**kihati** (kiše) sneeze (series)

**kihnuti** (kihne) sneeze (once)

Again, **kihnuti** (kihne) is a perf. verb – you cannot use it in the present tense, you cannot tell how long it took, and so on. However, there’s no completion or accomplishment – only one ‘atomic’ event. To indicate such perf. verbs, I’ll use a tilde with a small, superscript number one (~¹). Such verbs are:
kapati ~¹ kapnuti (kapne) drip
kucati ~¹ kucnuti (kucne) knock
štucati ~¹ štucnuti (štucne) hiccup
treptati (trepće) ~¹ trepnuti (trepne) blink

As you can see, such verbs frequently end in -nuti, with the regular -ne in pres-3. Perf. verbs with this ‘once’ meaning sometimes have a fancy name: semelfactive (abbreviated as smlf.); the corresponding impf. verbs are sometimes called iterative.

This doesn’t apply to all verbs where it could make sense: for instance, there’s no verb for "cough once".

There are verb pairs where the perf. verbs have meaning similar to ‘atomic’ – they mean for a short while, a bit. I will classify them as kind-of semelfactive, with the same mark (~¹), but you should be aware of the small difference. Three most common pairs like that are:

misliti ~¹ po- think
nadati se² ~¹ po- («) hope
osjećati ~¹ osjetiti feel

The perf. verbs above mean think for a short time and hope for a short time, or have a thought. They are often used in negative, to emphasize that somebody didn’t think even for a moment.

Don’t forget that there’s a substantial difference in meaning between verbs like zavoljeti (...) and pomisliti. The former verbs indicate entering a state which can last any amount of time – we don’t say how long, and if we want to express when the state ended, we have to use another verb. The latter ones are ‘atomic’, or small ‘pulses’, indicating that action or state lasted for a small amount of time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘inchoative’</th>
<th>‘semelfactive’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(start-of-state)</td>
<td>(atomic / brief)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zaspati (zaspi)</td>
<td>kihnuti (kihne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fall asleep</td>
<td>sneeze (once)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zavoljeti (zavoli,...)</td>
<td>pomisliti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>start to love</td>
<td>think for a moment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, there are perf. verbs where the two meanings are mixed. Two common ones are:

zaželjeti (zaželi,...)   ‘perf.’ wish
poželjeti (poželi,...)   ‘perf.’ wish

From what I’ve explained above, you would expect that poželjeti (...) means wish for a moment, and that zaželjeti (...) start to wish, but it’s not so – both have meaning
somewhere in between, and are used interchangeably.

There are also secondary, ‘iterative’ impf. verbs derived from semelfactive verbs. For example:

\textbf{pomisliti} smlf. \textit{think for a moment} $\rightarrow$ \textbf{pomišljati} («)

The relation of these two verbs is like \textbf{kihnuti} (...) vs. \textbf{kihati} (...) – the impf. verb stands for a series of individual short thoughts, with unspecified time between the thoughts (it could be hours, or days, or weeks, or more):

\textbf{misliti} impf. \textit{think}
\textbf{pomisliti} smlf. \textit{think for a moment, once}
\textbf{pomišljati} («) impf. \textit{think once a while}

All three verbs are sometimes translated as \textit{think}, which unfortunately hides various shades of meaning.

Finally, there are verb pairs that can be understood either as normal impf.-perf. pairs, or as iterative-semelfactive, depending on the context. Common pairs are:

\textbf{bacati} $\sim/\sim^1$ \textit{baciti} \textit{throw}
\textbf{pokaz\v{c}}ati (-uje «) $\sim/\sim^1$ \textbf{pokazati} \textit{(pokaže)} \textit{show}

In fact, most perf. verbs also can be used in this way, for short events, while most impf. verbs can be also used for series of short events.

\textbf{®} In Serbia, the verb \textbf{mrziti} \textit{hate} has the unexpected “Ekavian” form \textbf{mrzet} (\textit{mrzi}).

In Serbia and most of Bosnia, the verb \textbf{shvaćati} \textit{understand} has a bit different form \textbf{shvatati}; there’s no difference for the inchoative verb.
82 Visible and Unreadable: Potential Adjectives

There’s a group of adjectives derived from many verbs (but not all!) that stand for potential. They are kind of similar to passive adjectives. English has such adjectives too: examples are visible and readable.

They are usually derived by adding -ljiv to the verb root (that is, the infinitive form without -ati, -iti, -jeti, etc.):

čitati read → čit- → čitljiv readable
vidjeti see → vid- → vidljiv visible

They are frequently derived from perf. verbs:

prihvatiti perf. accept → prihvatljiv acceptable
shvatiti inch. understand → shvatljiv understandable
uzbuditi («) perf. excite → uzbudljiv exciting
zalititi («) perf. ignite → zalitljiv flammable

(Here I have used inch. as short for inchoative verbs, a kind of perfective verbs introduced in the previous chapter.)

The stress of such adjectives seems to be always on the syllable just before the last one (that is, one before -ljiv).

Few verbs that end in -siti or -sati have pot. adj. ending only in -siv. Common ones are:

podesiti perf. adjust → podesiv adjustable
prenositi transport → prenosiv portable

If the consonant that would come before -ljiv is n or nj, it gets fused with lj; some adjectives have both forms:

promijeniti perf. change → promjénjiv / promjenljiv variable
hraniti feed → hranjiv nutritious
sumnjati suspect → sumnjiv suspicious

(You will sometimes see the spelling sumljiv; that’s considered non-standard and a gross error by some people.)

Verbs that have pres-3 ending in -e usually don’t derive such adjectives with -ljiv, but with -iv, and they appear more similar to the infinitive form:

jesti (jede) eat → jestiv eatable
opisati (opiše) perf. describe → opisiv describable
savati (savije) perf. bend → savitljiv flexible

If the verb contains a sequence -ije-, it’s shortened in the potential adjective to -je- or just -e- (after r, preceded by another consonant):

dijeliti divide, share → djeļljiv divisible
lijepiti glue, stick → ljepljiv sticky

As in English, negated versions of some potential adjectives are more common than non-negated. The negation is done by simply appending ne- to the front. Common negated potential adjectives are:

- nerazumljiv incomprehensible
- neshvatljiv inexplicable
- neunijštiv indestructible
- nevidljiv invisible

The verb piti (pije) drink doesn’t have a regular potential adjective, but a specific adjective is used:

- pitak (pitk-) drinkable, potable

Also, a frequent negative potential adj. has an unexpected form:

- nezaboravan (nezaboravn-) unforgettable

Some potential adjectives stand for active ability, especially when someone likes to do something, or often does something; this happens mostly for verbs related to talking. For example:

- paziti take care → pažljiv careful
- pričati tell (stories) → pričljiv talkative
- šaliti se² joke → šaljiv funny, humorous
- šutjeti / šutiti be silent → šutljiv silent

Few more adjectives have (apparently) non-potential meaning:

- dirati touch → dirljiv touching, emotional
- hraniti feed → hranljiv nutritious
- osjetiti inch. feel → osjetljiv sensitive
- smrdjeti / smrditi stink → smrdljiv foul-smelling
- strpiti se² perf. be patient → strpljiv patient
- zanimati («) be interesting → zanimljiv interesting

Unlike passive adjectives, most potential adjectives are comparable (and always use the -iji suffix). The stress moves to the suffix (ljiv):

- pažljiv careful → pažljiviji more careful
- vidljiv visible → vidljiviji more visible

However, you should remember that not all verbs have potential adjectives, even if it would make sense.

Similar in form to potential adjectives – but not in meaning – are adjectives derived by adding -av. There are only a couple of them derived from verbs in frequent use:

- brbljati chit-chat → brbljav chatty
- prljati soil, pollute → prljav dirty
This suffix is used to derive adjectives from certain nouns:

- **dlaka** *body hair, animal hair* → **dlakav** *hairy*
- **hrđa** *rust* → **hrđav** *rusty*
- **krv f** *blood* → **krvav** *bloody*
- **mišić** *muscle* → **mišićav** *muscular*

These adjectives *never* have a case-base with the -a- dropped, while adjectives which end in -av for other reasons sometimes have, e.g. **mrtav** (mrtv-) *dead*.

*In Serbia and Bosnia, words for *rust* and *rusty* don’t have the initial h: they have forms rđa and rđav.*
83 Depth and Distance: Abstract Nouns

In Croatian, as in English, many adjectives (e.g. deep) have associated abstract nouns (e.g. depth).

As in English, various adjectives use various suffixes to create abstract nouns in Croatian. For some adjectives, -ina gets added to create an abstract noun:

- **brz** fast → **bržina** speed, velocity
- **topao (topl-)** warm → **toplina** warmth, heat
- **vješt** skilled → **vješćina** skill
- **vruć** hot → **vrućina** heat (extreme)

Of the two nouns standing for heat, only the noun **toplina** is used in the generic sense, e.g. in science. As you can see, the resulting noun has always stress on the i from the suffix.

Some the derived nouns have a non-abstract meaning:

- **divlji** wild → **divljina** wilderness
- **šupalj** (šuplj-) hollow → **šupljina** cavity

Adjectives that discard a part of them when making a comparative (e.g. -ok or -ak), discard it as well when making abstract nouns:

- **dubok** deep → **dubina** depth
- **širok** wide → **širina** width
- **težak** (tešk-) heavy → **težina** weight
- **visok** high → **visina** height, altitude

For some adjectives, there’s a shift in consonants, the same as in comparatives:

- **debeo** (debel) thick, fat → **debljina** thickness
- **jak** strong → **jačina** strength
- **tih** quiet, silent → **tišina** silence

(Abstract nouns don’t always have a shift when comparatives have one: for instance, from **visok**, the comparative is **viši**, but the abstract noun is **visina**, without the shift s → š.)

Abstract nouns can even be derived from some question-words that behave like adjectives, and even from few comparatives; results are often very generic nouns:

- **količ** how **big** → **količina** quantity
- **manji** smaller → **manjina** minority
- **velik** big → **veličina** size
- **veći** bigger → **većina** majority

Certain once abstract nouns evolved specific meanings, e.g. **nizina** means lowlands.

Abstract nouns in -ina have relational adjectives in -ski:
Few adjectives make abstract nouns by adding -oća:

čist clean → čistoća cleanliness
ghuh deaf → gluhoća deafness
hladan (hladn-) cold → hladnoća cold

Very few adjectives add -ota. If adjectives contain a sequence ije, it’s shortened to je in abstract nouns:

lijep nice, pretty → ljepta beauty
sljep blind → sljepoća blindness

Next, there are few adjectives that add -stvo, creating neuter nouns (after discarding the final -n in adjectives, if present). The stress is on the syllable right before the suffix:

bogat rich → bogatstvo richness
iskusan (iskusn-) experienced → iskustvo experience
siromašan (siromašn-) poor → siromaštvo poverty
zadovoljan (zadovoljn-) satisfied → zadovoljstvo satisfaction

This suffix is used to create abstract nouns out of a couple of other nouns as well (the process is not always regular):

car emperor → carstvo empire
član member → članstvo membership
kralj king → kraljestvo kingdom
prijatelj friend → prijateljstvo friendship

The vast majority of adjectives use another suffix to make abstract nouns: -ost (or a variation, -nost). It can be, in fact, regarded as the default suffix for abstract nouns. The result is always a feminine noun ending in a consonant:

glup stupid → glupost f stupidity
mlad young → mladost f youth, young age
slab weak → slabost f weakness
star old → starost f age

This suffix creates three quite important nouns, from present adjectives and a past adjective:

budući future → budućnost f future
moguć possible → mogućnost f possibility
prošao (prošl-) past → prošlost f past

The stress is mostly moved to the syllable that precedes the suffix. More important nouns created by this suffix:
Passive adjectives always use this suffix to create abstract nouns, usually corresponding to English -ness:

- **opasan (opasn-)** dangerous → **opasnost** f danger
- **sličan (sličn-)** similar, alike → **sličnost** f similarity
- **sučajan (sučajn-)** accidental → **sučajnost** f coincidence
- **stvaran (stvarn-)** real → **stvarnost** f reality
- **udaljen** distant → **udaljenost** f distance
- **važan (važn-)** important → **važnost** f importance

Potential adjectives always use this suffix to create abstract nouns as well:

- **gledan** watched (also popular) → **gledanost** f viewer ratings
- **otvoren** open → **otvorenost** f openness

The noun **gledanost** f means literally **watchedness** (however, this is an extremely rare English word).

In addition, there are (for most potential and passive adjectives), negated adjectives, and derived negated abstract words; for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>(verbal) noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>isključiti («)</td>
<td>excluded</td>
<td><strong>isključen</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perf. exclude</td>
<td>(turned off)</td>
<td><strong>isključenost</strong> f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(also turn off)</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>exclude</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exclusive</td>
<td><strong>exclusiveness</strong> f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strict</td>
<td><strong>strictness</strong> f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>isključenje</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>excluding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>isključenost</strong> f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>exclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, there are (for most potential and passive adjectives), negated adjectives, and derived negated abstract words; for example:

- **vidljiv** visible → **vidljivost** f visibility
- **osjetljiv** sensitive → **osjetljivost** f sensitivity

This is maybe the place to show the full range of derived words from a single (perfective) verb (of course, not all verbs have all the possible forms):

- **umjetan (umjetn-)** artificial → **umjetnost** f art

While English **art** has a wide meaning, Croatian **umjetnost** f means only painting, making sculptures and other high arts.
Some nouns changed meaning over time, or the adjectives they were created from fell out of use:

- **prednost** f priority, advantage
- **znanost** f science
- **radost** f joy
- **žalost** f sadness

Abstract nouns that don’t end in *-ina* usually don’t have relational adjectives — the adjectives they are derived from are used in relational meaning too — or form relational adjectives irregularly:

- **starost** f old age → **starački**
- **umjetnost** f art → **umjetnički**
- **znanost** f science → **znanstven** scientific

The relational adjectives **starački** and **umjetnički** are actually derived from nouns *starac* (starc-)* old man* and *umjetnik* artist.

Finally, it’s interesting that there are more abstract feminine nouns that don’t end in *-a*, which seem to be (at least historically) derived with *-t*. Common ones are:

- **bit** f essence, gist
- **čast** f honor
- **moć** f might, power
- **pomoć** f help
- **povijest** f history
- **propast** f downfall
- **smrt** f death
- **strast** f passion
- **vijest** f news
- **vlast** f authority, government

° The word **znanost** f science is specific to Croatia. In Bosnia and Serbia, the word **nauka** is more common; instead of **toplina** heat, **toplota** is used in Bosnia and Serbia. For **nauka**, the relational adjective is simply **naučni**.

Instead of **povijest**, the word for history is **historija** in parts of Bosnia, and **istorija** in Serbia and parts of Bosnia with Serbian majority.

• **Something Possibly Interesting**

Present irregularities can be a key to history. Nouns like **moć** might, power end in *-ć*, while other similar nouns end in *-t*. Likewise, *inf* of the verb can is **moći**, while most verbs have infinitives in *-ti*. Besides, the verb is highly irregular.

The most likely explanation is this: some time ago – likely more than 1200 years, maybe much more — the verb can had *inf* something like **mogti**, and the abstract noun was **mogti** (the difference was length of the last vowel). Therefore, the past forms and *pres-1* were and still are fully regular (**mog-la**, **mog-u**). (I’m here simplifying things a bit: in the distant past, the past and present endings were a bit different; also, the o in **mog-** wasn’t really an o.)

But then, for unknown reasons, sequences **kti** and **gti** changed their pronunciations into ĉi (the sound wasn’t of today ĉ, but an early version of it, a kind of softened t).
Later, short i’s were dropped from ends of words (as from most other positions as well). So, we are now left with t vs. ć.

Also, note the similarity of mog-ti with English may, might and German mögen, mag. If we would go back in time, we would find many more similarities.

• Examples

There’s a song from Massimo, a Croatian pop singer — Tišina Silence:

Do tebe me nosi tišina
To you silence is carrying me

Na krilima vremena
On wings of time

Mjesta još uvijek ima
There’s still some room

Kad zastanem pitat ću zvijezde
When I stop, I’ll ask stars

Koliko me dijeli do tebe
How far I’m from you

I tvojih visina
And your heights

(S. Bastiančić)

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

Mjesta još uvijek ima is an existential construct, with a bit unusual word order.
84 Western Urban Speech

I will describe specifics of the language currently spoken in Zagreb, the biggest city in Croatia. This speech is also quite well known to people in the surrounding area, and they usually use it in some circumstances (they use their home dialect at home and among friends).

The language spoken in Rijeka, the third biggest city in Croatia, is similar to Zagreb in many aspects. The following features are common to both Zagreb and Rijeka:

1. Use of 'western stress'. For instance, the verb do\text{\textacutedit}a\text{\textacutedit}ziti will be stressed on the second syllable.

2. No distinction in pronunciation of č vs. ć and d vs. dž, and no distinction in vowel length.

3. Infinitives without the final -i all the time.

4. Yes/no questions where unstressed forms are used as stressed, and simply put at the first position:
   
   — Si\text{\textacutedit} ga vidio? Did you see him?
   — Se bojiš? Are you afraid?

The Standard Croatian stressed form of si is jesi, while the particle se\text{\textacutedit}² cannot be used like that in Standard Croatian at all!

5. There are some specific words often used in both Zagreb and Rijeka, for example (the standard form is on the right):

   di where :: gdje

People from Zagreb will in colloquial settings also use the following features (starting from most common):

Adverbs ending in a vowel without the final vowel. Besides examples like sad / sada, found in many places, there will be words like (Standard forms are on the right):

   ak if :: ako
   kak how :: kako
   tak so :: taka

Specific words (some of them are common in certain other regions as well):

   niš nothing :: ništa

(the rest is coming soon...)
85 Small and Cute: Diminutives

Croatian – as many other languages, but unlike English – 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 *glava* head, but people prefer to call it *glavica* little head. Such words are called **diminutives** and usually have a different emotional content.

Diminutives are words that are derived through a process that’s only partially regular. Not all nouns have a diminutive, and there are various endings to derive them – they are like relational adjectives in that manner.

For nouns ending in -a, the main way to form diminutives is by replacing -a with -ica. The result is another noun, again ending in -a:

- *glava* head → *glavica* little head
- *krava* cow → *kravica* little cow
- *kiša* rain → *kišica* little rain
- *kuća* house → *kućica* little house
- *pčela* bee → *pčelica* little bee
- *riba* fish → *ribica* little fish
- *tata* m dad → *tatica* m little dad
- *žena* woman/wife → *ženica* little woman/wife

As you can see, this applies to words like *tata* as well – the result is a word that corresponds to English *Daddy*.

In some meanings, diminutives are always used: for example the golden fish from stories, who grants wishes, is always *zlatna ribica*.

Certain nouns ending in -ka or -ga shift consonants (like k → č, g → ž etc.) but it doesn’t happen to all nouns – forms must be learned:

- *baka* grandmother → *bakica* little grandmother
- *daska* plank → *daščica* little plank
- *mačka* cat → *mačkica* little cat
- *ptica* bird → *ptičica* little bird
- *ruka* hand, arm → *ručica* little hand, arm
- *noga* foot, leg → *nožica* little foot, leg

For some words, you’ll encounter both forms, e.g. *nožica* and *nogica* (forms with unchanged consonants are more common in the wider Zagreb area).

Croatian has two words for *girl* – one is colloquial, and another more formal; the derived diminutives have the same use:

- *cura* (colloq.) girl → *curica* little girl
- *djevojka* (formal) girl → *djevojčica* little girl

Certain diminutives have specific meanings. For example, *ručica* also means *handle* (e.g. on a door). More examples of a slight shift in meaning:

- *tikva* pumpkin → *tikvica* zucchini (courgette)
- *torba* bag → *torbica* purse
vreća  sack  →  vrećica  small bag, shopping bag®
žlica spoon  →  žličica  teaspoon®

For masculine nouns in a consonant, the main way is to add -ić, as if it were a case ending (it’s, of course, not a case ending):

ključ key  →  ključić
dož knife  →  nožić
komad piece  →  komadić®
list leaf  →  listić
nos nose  →  nosić

You can see how the stress for words like kolač shifts, as always when anything is added to them. Again, for babies and small children, people prefer to call their body parts prstić, nosić and so on.

For a few words (there’s no rule, as far as I can tell) -čić is added instead:

kamen stone  →  kamenčić
prozor window  →  prozorčić

For some nouns, consonants are shifted before -ić or -čić (e.g. c, k  →  č, h  →  š etc.):

lanac (lanc-) chain  →  lančić
krug circle  →  kružić
rak crab  →  račić
zec rabbit, bunny  →  zečić

The word lančić is always used for fine chains worn around the neck, while lanac is a heavy thing used to close gates, to lift loads etc.

Like for feminine nouns, certain diminutives have developed specific meanings:

brat brother  →  bratić cousin
novac (novc-) money  →  novčić coin

Historically, bratić meant something like ‘brother’s small (boy)’, and this was extended to name people after their fathers by diminutives:

Ivo  →  Ivić
Mate  →  Matić
Jure  →  Jurić
Tomo  →  Tomić

These were later used as last names – so you now understand why there are so many last names in Croatia and neighboring countries ending in -ić.

Sometimes, you’ll see diminutives from neuter nouns, derived with -ce, with many irregularities:

drvo tree  →  drvce
jezero lake  →  jezerce
sunce sun  →  sunašce
It’s interesting that the very word sunce is likely originally a diminutive as well.

However, in Kajkavian areas – generally the area around Zagreb, and north and northeast from Zagreb – another suffix to create masculine and neuter diminutives prevails: -ek (-eko for neuters). Since Zagreb is Kajkavian-influenced, you will find such words in Zagreb as well, usually:

`medo teddy bear → medek`
`srce heart → srčeko`

(NW Croatia)

These words are common when people talk to small children. In NW Croatia, diminutives are generally much more used than in other regions of Croatia: people will tell children to eat juhica and meseko which basically has no meaning except to sweeten the words juha soup and meso meat.

Similar to diminutives, but distinct, are hypocorisms, also known as pet names or nicknames. They are alternative words for things and people used within family, especially by children. One hypocorism is already mentioned above: medo for the usual medvjed bear.

Words mama Mom and tata m Dad are also, historically, a kind of hypocorisms.

Hypocorisms for personal names are mostly fixed in language; as in English, they usually involve shortening of names (in Croatian, to two syllables) and simplifying them:

`Branimir → Branko`
`Ivan → Ivo / Ive`
`Juraj → Jure / Jura`
`Katarina → Kata`

Petar (Petr-) → Pero *
Tomislav → Tomo *
Vladimir → Vlado *
Zvonimir → Zvonko / Zvone

Some nicknames have two forms; ones with -e are characteristic for Dalmatia, while ones with -o or -a are characteristic for inland Croatia. In Kajkavian regions, you would also hear forms ending in -ek:

`Ivan → Ivek` (NW Croatia)

Compare this to English names William → Bill or Robert → Bob. Many such nicknames are used as real names as well.

Diminutive-making mechanism is also applied to names and nicknames that end in -a or behave so, to make diminutive names:

`Branka → Brankica`
`Kata → Katica`
`Ruza → Ružica`

Ivo → Ivica m
Jure → Jurica m
Pero → Perica m

This is similar to English Bill → Billy, Rose → Rosie and Bob → Bobby.

Interestingly, a couple of verbs in Croatian have diminutive versions too! They are usually formed by inserting -k- before the verb ending. The process is not regular,
and only a limited number of verbs have diminutives:

- **gristi (grize, grizao, grizla)** bite → **grickati** nibble
- **lupati** knock, bang → **lupkati** tap

Some diminutive verbs are derived with -**uc**- or -**ut**-:

- **kašljati (kašlje)** cough → **kašljucati** cough lightly
- **skakati (skače)** jump → **skakutati (skakuće)** hop, bounce

For example, we would use the verb **grickati** nibble when someone eats a cracker or biscuit by small bites, especially children.

So, diminutives are largely irregular, but they are similar enough to the original word so that you can recognize their meaning quickly, even if you’re not familiar with the diminutive word.

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* Instead of **žlica** and **žličica**, words **kašika** and **kašičica** are used in Serbia and most of Bosnia.

Instead of **vreća** and **vrećica**, **kesa** and **kesica** are used in Serbia and most of Bosnia, but the non-diminutive **kesa** is used for **shopping bag**.

Besides **komad** and **komadić**, words **parče** (**parčet-**) and **parčence** are used in Serbia and parts of Bosnia.

Hypocorisms like **Pero** and **Tomo** have forms ending in -**a** (**Pera, Toma**) in Serbia, except in the southwest of Serbia.
86 More Verbs and Standing Outcomes

I’ll explain several useful verbs and verb families here, and also introduce a couple of advanced topics.

The first verb family is derived in this pattern:

\[
tv\text{or}\text{iti}
\]
\[
o-tv\text{ar}ati\ («) \sim o-tv\text{or}iti\ («)
\]

The base verb, \text{tvoriti}, is quite rare. The derived pairs are not:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>used with</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pri-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>leave ajar (‘almost close’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>za-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-</td>
<td>A (u¨ A)</td>
<td>transform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>create</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>se²</td>
<td>show up (colloq.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There’s not much to say about the first three verbs: they express 	extit{open} and 	extit{close} – either literal (\textit{window, shop}), or metaphoric (\textit{discussion, person}).

The last two verbs have specific meanings. The \textit{pre-} verb is similar to transport verbs derived by \textit{pre-}: it uses \textit{destinations} (expressed by u¨ + A) and optionally also \textit{origins} (expressed by iz¨ + G, matching the destination). The verb is used with either an object in A, or a se² (mediopassively, if something transforms ‘on its own’):

\textbf{Mali problem\textsuperscript{N} se pretv\text{or}io u veliki\textsuperscript{A}.} A \textit{small problem has transformed into a big one.}

The verb pair \textit{otvarati} («) \sim \textit{otvoriti} («) \textit{open} can illustrate a fine point when perfective verbs are used and where not. If you opened a window, and then closed it – and it’s a bit cold now in the room – and you want to express with a single verb what you did, you would use the \textit{imperfective} verb:

\textbf{Ot\text{var}ao sam prozor\textsuperscript{A}.} \textit{I opened the window.} (It’s maybe closed now.)

If you use the impf. verb, it doesn’t imply that the window is open now, or that it remained open for some time – but such things would be implied if you would use the perf. verb:

\textbf{Otv\text{ori}o sam prozor\textsuperscript{A}.} \textit{I’ve opened the window.} (And it’s open now.)

This is the ‘standing outcome’ principle. This is because perf. verbs \textit{focus on the outcome}, but the outcome – state of the window – is not relevant here (or not expected). It’s important that you touched it. An obvious way to say it’s not open
anymore is this:

Otvorio sam prozor\(^{\text{a}}\) i poslije ga\(^{\text{a}}\) zatvorio. I’ve opened the window and closed it later.

So, the second verb ‘undoes’ the first. It’s actually more general: only the last perfective verb in the sequence counts. That is, if you say:

Otvorio sam prozor\(^{\text{a}}\) i oprao ga\(^{\text{a}}\). I’ve opened the window and washed it.

It would imply only it’s washed now, not whether it’s open or closed. This is a very subtle, but important principle: only the last outcome in a sequence ‘stands’. We could paraphrase it as the last outcome standing! This likely sounds extremely complicated, but an example will make it (hopefully) clear (‘standing outcomes’ are in red):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>example</th>
<th>implies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Išla sam u trgovinu(^{\text{a}}).</td>
<td>imperfective!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was going/went to the shop.</td>
<td>no implications whatsoever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otišla sam u trgovinu(^{\text{a}}).</td>
<td>(I’m in the shop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have gone to the shop.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otišla sam u trgovinu(^{\text{a}}) i kupila pivo(^{\text{a}}).</td>
<td>(I have some beer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I went to the shop and bought beer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otišla sam u trgovinu(^{\text{a}}), kupila pivo(^{\text{a}}) i popila ga(^{\text{a}}).</td>
<td>(no beer; I might be drunk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I went to the shop, bought beer and drank it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pala sam.</td>
<td>involuntary event!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I fell.</td>
<td>no implications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the ‘standing outcome’ doesn’t apply to all perf. verbs – only to voluntary ones. Check the last row: pala sam doesn’t imply I’m still on the floor: it’s not something I did voluntary. It just happened.

Note that the impf. verb doesn’t really say we got to the shop at all. It just says we were going there, there was some action. But if we don’t say there were some problems on the way there, it’s enough. So the default, shortest way of saying something with a ‘standing outcome’ – if the ‘standing outcome’ doesn’t hold anymore – would be actually using the impf. verb.

Therefore, perf. involuntary verbs are used much more often than voluntary ones.

In real life, this rule is not completely clear-cut: you will hear both just išla sam u trgovinu and otišla sam u trgovinu for completed actions in the past and for speaker being obviously not in the shop anymore.

The important thing is that you will hear impf. verbs where you would naively – due to completion – expect perf. ones. Always keep in mind that perf. verbs are not just
about completed actions, but also about the outcomes, especially for voluntary actions – and the outcome of going somewhere is being there.

There’s another way to distance yourself from a past action expressed by a voluntary perfective verb – by using another tense, not yet described: the so-called plusquamperfect tense (in English, the name is often simplified to pluperfect tense). It roughly corresponds to he had opened and like.

The tense is formed like the common past tense, but there’s an extra past form of the verb biti (je² +), in the same gender and number as the other past form:

Gledala sam film. I was watching the movie. (fem. speaking)
Bila sam gledala film. (pluperfect)

You can visualize it as putting the verb in the past twice:

```
present  gledam I’m watching
↓ ...put the verb gledati into the past
past     gledala sam I was watching
↓ ...put the verb biti (je² +) into the past
pluperfect bila sam gledala I had been watching
```

Using this tense, we can put a distance from the action – there’s no ‘standing outcome’:

Bio sam otvorio prozor. I had opened the window. (But it was maybe closed later.)

It also serves to emphasize actions and states, like I was really doing it, I really did it, it has really happened:

Bila sam gledala film. I was really watching the movie.
Bio sam otvorio prozor. I did open the window. (despite it being closed now)

However, this tense is actually very rare in speech, just check these Google™ results (from the .hr domain):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>hits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gledao sam</td>
<td>152000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bio sam gledao</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gledao sam bio</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will find this tense occasionally in literature. There are actually even more tenses you’ll see sometimes in writing; they will be described in 99 Aorist Tense and Other Marginal Features.

Let’s go back to verbs. The next family is weird – there’s no base verb (or pair) – all verbs have prefixes. They are made attaching prefixes to this:

-**premati** («) ~ -**premiti** («)
Common verbs in this family are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>used with</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>equip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pos-</td>
<td>A (dest)</td>
<td>tidy, put to place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pri-</td>
<td>A (za” A1)</td>
<td>prepare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-</td>
<td>A (dest)</td>
<td>put to its place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do-</td>
<td>A (dest)</td>
<td>deliver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pair derived with pri- has a simple meaning, prepare. It’s used with an object or with a se:

Pripremio sam ručak. I’ve prepared lunch.
Pripremio sam se. I’ve prepared (myself).

You can express what for the preparation was with za” + A:

Pripremio sam se za put. I’ve prepared for the trip.

The most interesting verb pair is spremati ~ spremiti (since the prefix is merely a consonant, the stress shift in the present tense is not possible – the stress is always on the first syllable).

This verb pair has the basic meaning: bring something/someone to the optimal/requested state. It’s basically used for three things. First, to put things back to their places, e.g. if a book is out of its usual place (shelf), a toy is out of the box, etc.:

Spremio sam knjige. I’ve put the books back in place.

If the place is expressed, it’s a destination:

Spremio sam knjige na policu. I’ve put the books back to the shelf.

Then, this pair covers the meanings expressed by the pri- pair:

Spremio sam ručak. I’ve prepared lunch.
Spremio sam se. I’ve prepared (myself).

Finally, the third meaning is tidy:

Spremio sam sobu. I’ve tidied the room.

Next, there are two interesting verb families. One is derived like this:

vršiti
do-vršavati («) ~ do-vršiti («)

The base verb is sometimes used, in meaning do, make. Three derived pairs are quite common:
One derived pair matches the meaning of a phase verb pair I’ve already introduced:

 počinjati (počinje / počinje) ~ početi (počne, počeo) *start*
 završavati («) ~ završiti («) *end*

This verb pair is very useful:

 navikavati («) ~ naviknuti (navikne) (AX / se²) (na YA) *get/become used* (X) (to Y)

You’ll see this pair with the prefix pri- with roughly the same meaning, and with the prefix od- in the opposite meaning, like colloquial English ‘*get unused*’.

Next, there are four common verb pairs derived from this ‘pair’:

 -ključivati (-ključuje) ~ -ključiti («)

Common verbs in this family are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prefix</th>
<th>used with (origin, destination)</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>do-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td><em>finalize, complete</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iz-</td>
<td>A</td>
<td><em>carry out, execute</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>za-</td>
<td>A / CC</td>
<td><em>end, terminate</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is-</td>
<td>A (origin)</td>
<td><em>exclude, switch off</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pri-</td>
<td>A (destination)</td>
<td><em>join, connect, plug in</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u-</td>
<td>A (destination)</td>
<td><em>include, switch on</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>za-</td>
<td>A / CC</td>
<td><em>conclude</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
87 Player, Playroom and Playground: Common Derivations

In this chapter, I will explain how various derived nouns, such as player, playroom and playground are derived in Croatian.

The simplest nouns derived from verbs are of ‘player’ type. You simply remove the infinitive ending, and the vowel before it (if any) and add -ač:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>‘player’ noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>birati</td>
<td>birač elector, voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glasati</td>
<td>glasač voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>igrati</td>
<td>igrač player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kupati</td>
<td>kupač bather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pjevati</td>
<td>pjevač singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plivati</td>
<td>plivač swimmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plesati</td>
<td>plesač dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pušiti</td>
<td>pušač smoker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trčati</td>
<td>trkač runner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voziti</td>
<td>vozač driver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, all these words are stressed in the same way: the ‘western’ stress on -ač, and the standard stress on the syllable before it – therefore, the standard stress moves in all these words:

**igrač player → A igrača**

The feminine versions are simply derived by adding -ica (and consequently moving the standard stress):

**igrač player (m) → igračica player (f)**

**pjevač singer (m) → pjevačica singer (f)**

**vozač driver (m) → vozačica driver (f)**

While these nouns usually stand for people who do something, others derived in the same way can stand for various hardware too (I’ve listed only derived nouns; you can find verbs in a dictionary easily):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>čitač reader</th>
<th>prekidač switch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nosač carrier / prop</td>
<td>pokrivač cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grijač heater ®</td>
<td>punjač charger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otvarač opener</td>
<td>upaljač lighter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word **čitač reader** is related to devices only (e.g. card reader, e-book reader):
the word for a person who reads will be explained below.

However, not all verbs make nouns with -ač: some use -telj, and they always mean persons; the most common ones are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>‘player’ noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>čitati read</td>
<td>čitatelj reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gledati watch</td>
<td>gledatelj watcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graditi build</td>
<td>graditelj builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natjecati (natječe) se² compete</td>
<td>natjecatelj competitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roditelj parent</td>
<td>roditelj parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slušati listen</td>
<td>slušatelj listener</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, these nouns have the stress always on the third syllable from the end, and preserve the vowel before the infinitive ending.

The feminine versions of these nouns are simply derived by adding -ica and moving the stress to -telj-:

- čitatelj reader (m) → čitateljica reader (f)
- gledatelj watcher (m) → gledateljica watcher (f)

However, the noun roditelj parent is usually used in masculine forms only, regardless of person’s sex.

Some of these verbs have a bit colloquial alternative nouns ® which end in -lac, with the ‘case-base’ -oc-, while some other verbs have -lac (-oc-) nouns only:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>‘player’ noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>čitati read</td>
<td>čitalac (čitaoc-) reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gledati watch</td>
<td>gledalac (čitaoc-) watcher (colloq.) ®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slušati listen</td>
<td>slušalac (čitaoc-) listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misliti think</td>
<td>mislilac (mislioc-) thinker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nositi carry</td>
<td>nosilac (nosioc-) carrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roniti dive</td>
<td>ronilac (ronioc-) diver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s interesting that these nouns are often regularized in real life (to their case-base), so you’ll hear (and read) mislioc, nosioc, ronioc etc. as well – just check the Google™ hits (on the .hr domain):
However, some people think such regularized forms are signs of uneducated speech and writing (but it seems they are getting more common, and they can be found even in texts published on universities).

Then, a couple of verbs derive such nouns with -ac (-c-):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>‘player’ noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boriti se²</td>
<td>borac (borc-) fighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glumiti</td>
<td>glumac (glumc-) actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loviti catch, hunt</td>
<td>lovac (lovc-) hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kupiti perf. buy</td>
<td>kupac (kupc-) buyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pisati (piše) write</td>
<td>pisac (pisc-) writer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s interesting that only few of -lac and -ac nouns have feminine versions; from the nouns above, only this one has the feminine version:

glumac (glumc-) actor → glumica actress

(There’s a lot of debate should feminine forms of these nouns be introduced/invented or not.)

But that’s not all. There are also two suffixes used to derive such nouns that get attached to both verbs and nouns: one of them is -ar:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>‘player’ noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kuhati cook</td>
<td>kuhar cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slikati paint (pictures)</td>
<td>slikar painter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meso meat</td>
<td>mesar butcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pošta post</td>
<td>poštar postman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riba fish</td>
<td>ribar fisherman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stol table</td>
<td>stolar carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ura clock</td>
<td>urar watchmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zid wall</td>
<td>zidar mason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zub tooth</td>
<td>Zubar dentist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word ura is considered today a bit archaic, dialectal and non-standard, but the term for watchmaker is still derived from it.
With this suffix, the stress is basically unpredictable, as you can see, but it seems that with verbs, the more common pattern is the stress on the first syllable, while nouns derived from nouns get the ‘western’ stress on -ar, and the standard stress on the syllable before it – which makes the standard stress again movable.

The suffix -ar derives nouns from *verb roots*, which might be visible only in past forms or in the present tense:

peći (peče, pekao, pekla) bake → pekar baker

From such nouns, feminine versions are derived in the usual way:

kuhar cook (m) → kuharica cook (f)
slíkar painter (m) → slikarica painter (f)
žubar dentist (m) → žubarica dentist (f)®

Another suffix that gets attached to both verbs and nouns is -nik:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>‘player’ noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>korjstiti use</td>
<td>korisnik  user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liječiti cure</td>
<td>liječnik  physician ®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>početi (počne) perf. begin</td>
<td>početnik  beginner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vjerovati (vjeruje) believe</td>
<td>vjernik  believer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ljubav f love</td>
<td>ljubavnik  lover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moć f might, ability</td>
<td>moćnik  person in power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>put way</td>
<td>putnik  traveler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rad work</td>
<td>radnik  worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rat war</td>
<td>ratnik  warrior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vlast f government, rule</td>
<td>vlasnik  owner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The form početnik is derived a bit irregularly; the loss of -t- in korisnik and vlasnik is regular in Croatian, recall the adjective bolestan (bolesn-) sick, where the -t- is lost between s and n.)

From all such nouns, feminine nouns are derived in this way:

putnik traveler (m) → putnica traveler (f)
vlasnik owner (m) → vlasnica owner (f)

However, there are nouns derived with -nik that have nothing to do with people:

čaj tea → čajnik  teapot
riječ f word → rječnik  dictionary
ruda ore → rudnik  mine
ruka hand/arm → ručnik  towel
zlato gold → zlatnik  gold coin
Finally, a couple of verbs have two derived nouns — one for the person who is kind of ‘giving’, and another for the one who is ‘receiving’. The most common one is:

-učiti study / teach → učitelj teacher
učenik student

From it, feminine versions are regularly derived, as described earlier.

There are two more nouns that are derived from some verbs: one stands for ‘playroom’, and another for ‘playground’. The first type is derived with -onica, after removing the infinitive ending -ti:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>‘playroom’ noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>igri</td>
<td>play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kupati bathe</td>
<td>kupaonica bathroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>učiti study / teach</td>
<td>učionica classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You’ll often see shortened versions of these nouns, with only -ona, e.g. kupaona for bathroom; they are understood as a bit colloquial.

There are more terms where more than one word is used; the most common example are the words for bakery:

pekara
pekarna (colloq., common in Zagreb) bakery
pekarnica (standard, but less common)

For instance, on this bakery in Zagreb, there’s both pekara and pekarna:

Another term which has more than one word is flower shop, but this time, the
variation is regional:

- **cvječarnica** (Zagreb, elsewhere)
- **cvjetarna** (Rijeka area)

*flower shop*

For instance, on this flower shop in a small town near Rijeka, it’s **cvjetarna**:

![Flower shop](image)

Finally, there are ‘ground’ nouns, derived usually with **-lište**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>‘playground’ noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>igrati</td>
<td>igralište playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graditi</td>
<td>gradilište building site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kupati</td>
<td>kupalište bathing place, area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parkirati («) park (a car)</td>
<td>parkiralište parking area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some nouns have a bit specific meanings:

- **gledati** watch → **gledalište** auditorium
- **kazati** (kaže) say → **kazalište** theater

Colloquially, besides **parkiralište**, just **parking** is used for **parking lot**.

---

* The word **grijač** heater is used in an unexpected “Ekavian” form **grejač** in Serbia.

The word **stol** table is used in the form **sto** (stol-) m in Serbia and most of Bosnia.

Instead of **natjecati** (natječe) se² compete, the verb **takmičiti** se² is more common in Serbia and most of Bosnia; from it, the noun **takmičar** is derived.

Nouns like **čitalac** (čitaoc-) are standard in Serbia and most of Bosnia, while alternative nouns like **čitatelj** – standard and common in Croatia – are very rare in Serbia; however, when there’s only one form (e.g. **roditelj** parent), it’s common and standard in all countries.

Instead of the verb **kuhati** cook, the form **kuvati** is used in Serbia (where it’s
standard) and a part of Bosnia with Serbian majority. The derived noun is **kuvar**.

Instead of *urar watchmaker*, the word *časovničar* is used in Serbia and parts of Bosnia.

With some nouns in *-ar*, another suffix to derive feminine versions is used in Serbia and often in Bosnia: *-ka*, e.g. *zubarka* dentist (f).

In most of Bosnia, the word for *physician* isn’t derived from the verb *liječiti* cure, but from *lijek medicine*, with *-ar*: *ljekar*; in Serbia, the “Ekavian” form *lekar* is used.

Instead of *kazalište*, the word for *theater* in Serbia and most of Bosnia is **pozorište**.
There are a few details in Croatian which don’t really fit into the overall scheme of things.

First, there’s a phrase which can be used to express color. It uses a color adjective before the noun boja color, but both are the genitive case (singular):

- Majica\textsuperscript{N} je crvene boje\textsuperscript{G}. lit. The T-shirt is ‘of red color’.
- Hlače\textsuperscript{N} su plave boje\textsuperscript{G}. lit. The pants are ‘of blue color’.

Such expressions are old-fashioned and mostly obsolete. However, they are used in questions, i.e. when you ask what color is something. The answer would be just a color adjective, but in genitive singular (feminine, after boja color):

- Koje boje\textsuperscript{G} je majica\textsuperscript{N}? What color is the T-shirt?
  - Crvene\textsuperscript{G}. (G fem.) Red.
  - Crvena\textsuperscript{N}. (N fem.) Red.

- Koje boje\textsuperscript{G} je auto\textsuperscript{N}? What color is the car?
  - Crne\textsuperscript{G}. (G fem.) Black.
  - Crni\textsuperscript{N}. (N masc.) Black.

Alternatively, you can answer with an adjective in nominative, matching gender of the thing the question is about, as in the examples above.

This reminds of English expressions like men of honor, book of great importance, and so on. In fact, you will occasionally see more or less the same expressions in Croatian, using od” + G:

- Knjiga\textsuperscript{N} je od velike važnosti\textsuperscript{G}. The book is of great importance.

Then, there are expressions – often overlooked in grammars and textbooks – when two nouns are used together, e.g. king George or Hotel California. The last noun is a proper noun, i.e. a name (e.g. California), and a common noun before it describes its title (e.g. king) or kind (e.g. hotel).

Croatian uses such expressions more often than English, e.g. in names of rivers, lakes, cities and countries:

- rijeka Sava the Sava river (lit. ‘river Sava’)
- jezero Jarun the Jarun lake (lit. ‘lake Jarun’)
- Grad Zagreb the City of Zagreb (lit. ‘City Zagreb’)
- Republika Hrvatska the Republic of Croatia

Now, in some of these expressions, both nouns change case, and in others, the last word (the name) is ‘frozen’ in N.

If nouns stand for a person (or an animal, as Croatian almost always treats humans as a kind of animal), both nouns always change (examples show the accusative case):
moj prijatelj Igor my friend Igor → mog prijatelja Igora
teta Ana aunt Ana → tetu Anu

This also applies to the following nouns:

grad city  rijeka river

For example (u" + DL):

grad Rijeka the City of Rijeka → u gradu Rijeci
grad Split the City of Split → u gradu Splitu
rijeka Drava the Drava river → u rijeci Dravi

Since a great majority of rivers have feminine names in Croatian, use of rijeka river with masculine names of rivers is avoided. (Croatian so strongly prefers feminine river names, that even names like the Thames and the Rhine are adapted as feminine Temza and Rajna). You will mostly see ‘frozen’ masc. names of rivers, e.g. u rijeci Dunav:

rijeka Dunav the Danube river → (? ) u rijeci Dunavu

After most other nouns, only feminine names can change, but it’s optional – names are usually not changed. Often used nouns are:

hotel hotel kazalište theater  
ejezero lake općina municipality

For example (again u" + DL):

hotel Panorama → u hotelu Panorama / u hotelu Panorami kazalište Komedija → u kazalištu Komedija / u kazalištu Komediji

You will see changed feminine names now and then. However, masculine names are always ‘frozen’:

hotel Westin → u hotelu Westin jezero Jarun → u jezeru Jarun kazalište Kerempuh → u kazalištu Kerempuh

Bear in mind that ‘freezing’ happens only if a general noun is before the name, if the name is on it’s own, it of course always changes, e.g. u Westinu, u Jarunu, etc.

Standard Croatian prescribes that both nouns have to be always changed, but it’s rare, even in writing (e.g. the form u hotelu Westin is more than 100 times more common than u hotelu Westinu on the Internet).

Occasionally, you’ll see a kind of reversal of the structure described above, where a proper noun (i.e. a name) describes a common noun; an example is this tube of mayonnaise:
Such combinations appear as a kind of indeclinable adjective + a noun, in writing and in speech, where the word *majoneza mayonnaise* is in A, but the name preceding it is not:

**Volš Zvijezda majonezu? Do you like Zvijezda mayonnaise?**

(The last sentence is an example from the internet, promoting the product.)

We continue with more ‘weird’ things: end-stressed nouns. There’s a number of nouns – all loanwords, that is, words taken from other languages – that end on a stressed vowel (other than a). Despite the ending, they are all masculine, and the end vowel is never dropped – case endings are simply attached to it. Examples are:

- **file filet → u fileu**
- **kanu canoe → u kanu**
- **separe restoran booth → u separu**

The two consecutive vowels are pronounced separately, e.g. DL *kanu* is pronounced as three syllables: ka-nu-u.

Then, most masculine nouns in -a in plural can get feminine adjectives and past forms, although masculine adjectives and past forms are common too. For example:

- **Ubojica** je *uhvaćen*. The murderer was captured.
- **Ubojice** su *uhvaćeni*. The murderers were captured.
- **Ubojice** su *uhvaćene*. (also possible, the same meaning)

This virtually never happens for the noun *tata* m *Dad* – it’s almost always considered masculine in plural.

There’s one use of masculine gender that’s completely unexpected. The rule is: if two neuter nouns are linked by an *i*—, and they are not both in plural, they together behave as masculine plural, i.e. *adjectives and past forms are in masculine plural* have to be used:

- **More** i *nebo* su *bili crni*. *The sea and the sky were black.*
- **Jelo** i *piće* nisu *uključeni*. *Food and drink are not included.*

However, if both nouns are neuter and both are in plural, the neuter adjectives and past forms in plural are used:

- **Ramena** i *koljena* su *ogrebana*. *Shoulders and knees are scratched.*

This is a completely weird rule, I have to admit. Even weirder, it often applies to
feminine nouns not ending in -a:

**Sol**[^4]**N i mast**[^4]**N nisu bili skup**[^4]**N. Salt and lard were not expensive. **

The last feature seems to depend on the region.

(The rest is coming soon)

[^4]: Instead of the words above, these words are used in Serbia and most of Bosnia:

- *hlače pants, trousers → pantalone*
- *sol f salt → so (sol-) f*
- *majoneza mayonnaise → majonez*
- *općina municipality → opština*
- *kazalište theater → pozorište*
- *ubojica murderer → ubica*

Occasionally in Serbia, the family relation noun is not declined when before the name, so you might hear and read *teta Anu*, sometimes spelled with a hyphen: *teta-Anu*.

In some regions, and in parts of Serbia and Bosnia, words like *kanu* etc. are *not* stressed on the last syllable. There's a lot of variation among speakers from various regions.

While Standard Serbian accepts masculine nouns in -a as both masculine and feminine in plural, in actual speech in Serbia such words are *understood only as feminine in plural*. Check the Google™ statistics (on the .rs domain) for *gazda m landlord, boss* and *tata m Dad*:

| novi gazde | 52 |
| n`ove gazde | 7120 |
| naši tate | 4 |
| naše tate | 124 |

And when you examine the small number of occurrences of *novi gazde*, you find that most of them are written by someone in Croatia.
89 Customs and Traditions

This chapter will give a brief overview of words and expressions used in some Croatian traditions.

There are two verb pairs for *marry*: one is from the female perspective, another from the male perspective:

female: **udavati (udaje) se**² ~ **udati se**²
male: **ženiti se**² ~ o- («)

You would use the first verb if the subject is a woman, and the second verb if the subject is a man.

However, if the subject is a couple, the male version is used:

Oženit će se. *They will get married.*

Such reciprocal use of this verb pair is very common, but some Standard Croatian manuals don’t accept it, and suggest using another, gender-neutral verb pair (which is a bit archaic, and seldom used in speech):

vjenčavati («) se² ~ vjenčati se² *marry* (Std; rare in speech)

It’s possible, but slightly old-fashioned to use both verb pairs without the se²: then the subjects are *parents*, while one who gets married is the object – again, if your daughter gets married, you would use the first verb, if your son gets married, the second one.

The most important holidays in Croatia are:

Božić *Christmas*  Nova godina *New Year*
Uskrs *Easter*  Svi sveti *All Saints’ Day*

All except *Nova godina* *New Year* are Christian holidays. As most people in Croatia are Catholics, they are celebrated on the same dates as in most West European and North American countries ®. It’s a custom to give presents (esp. to children) for Christmas. The day before Christmas, when preparations are made, has a special name, but it’s not an official holiday (many people, if they are able to, will take a day of vacation, but others will work):

Badnjak *Christmas Eve*

All these days, except the All Saint’s Day, will have specially prepared meals (e.g. Badnjak will have fish). On the All Saint’s Day, many people will visit family graves (since great crowds gather at that day, many people will visit graves few days earlier or a day later).

Another holiday of some importance is:

Prvi maj (colloq.) *May 1st*
Observe how its name diverts from the usual grammar rules, you would rather expect Prvi (dan mjeseca) maja.

In some regions, esp. with more religious (Catholic) people, there’s a tradition to celebrate various holidays dedicated to Virgin Mary.

As in some other countries, there’s a period in late winter, known as Carnival, when masked processions and specific rituals occur. It culminates on the Tuesday 41 days before Easter. There are various names in Croatia, the common ones are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>karneval</th>
<th>mesopust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fašnik</td>
<td>poklade f pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maškare f pl.</td>
<td>pust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word fašnik is most common in Zagreb and the northwestern area; other names prevail elsewhere. For instance, this billboard advertises fašnik in Samobor, a town close to Zagreb:

(Pay attention how Samobor is transformed into the relational adjective samoborski). Meanwhile, this poster announces pust in Matulji, a small town close to Rijeka:

(The poster is in the local dialect of Matulji and generally surroundings of Rijeka; e.g. instead of u¨, the preposition is va¨, some case endings are different, etc. The term pust is also used in Slovenia.)

This custom varies in different parts of Croatia, its barely present in some parts (e.g. Slavonia), while in other parts (esp. northern part of the coast) it’s a major tradition and a great celebration.
In Serbia, and parts of Bosnia where there’s a majority of Serbs, religious holidays are celebrated on different dates, according to the tradition of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

In Bosnia, esp. in parts with a large Muslim population, additional holidays, usually known as Bajram are celebrated according to Muslim traditions.

Carnival traditions are uncommon in Bosnia and Serbia.
90 Number-like Words

There are several types of compound words derived from numbers.

The first type are derived adjectives of form number + measure. English examples would be 10-inch or four-year. In Croatian, they are spelled without a hyphen – in the standard spelling, at least – and the second part must be a (relational) adjective. The first part is derived from the ‘compounding forms’ of numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Compounding Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>jedno-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>dvo-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>tro-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>četvero-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>peto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>šesto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>sedmo-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>osmo-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>deveto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>deseto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>jedanaesto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>dvanaesto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>dvadeseto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>sto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>dvjesto-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>tisuću-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many</td>
<td>više-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example:

tródnevni three-day
četverogodišnji four-year
četrdesetogodišnji forty-year

The linking vowel (-o- in most forms) appended to create the compound form is lost in rare cases when an adjective begins with a vowel; it’s not lost if the vowel is a part of the original number:

desetjënčni 10-inch stojčni 100-inch

Despite being spelled as one word, they often pronounced with two places of stress, one on the number, another on the adjective. (You will occasionally see such adjectives in a non-standard spelling, as two words, or even with a hyphen, e.g. deset-inčni and deset inčni)

They are used as any other adjective:

Sutra počinje tródnevni festival. A three-day festival begins tomorrow.
Bili smo na dvotjednom odmoru. We were on two-week vacation.

(Observe also placing of the indefinite subject after the verb.)

With forms derived from numbers based on 10 (10, 20, 50, etc.) you’ll sometimes see forms without the vowel -o-, that is pedesetgodišnji besides usual pedesetogodišnji. You will also see non-standard forms derived from numbers 5, 6 and 7, like ones for 4, that is:
When such adjectives – derived from relative adjectives of time periods – are used with people and animals, they mean *three-year-old, forty-year-old*, etc. For example:

**Dovela je šestogodišnjeg sina**. *She brought her six-year-old son.*  

Note that the words derived from *šesto-* can mean both 6- and 600-; therefore, some people write compounds derived from 600- as *šeststo*-. In real life, confusion is rare – there are very few 600-year-olds around.

The second type uses suffix *-ak* to create numbers (not adjectives!) that correspond to English *-odd*. They are formed only from ‘round’ numbers, such as:

- **desetak** ten-odd
- **dvadesetak** twenty-odd
- **stotinjak** hundred-odd

Such numbers behave like 10, 20 and 100 – i.e. like quantity adverbs – G-pl is used with them, and the whole phrase behaves as neuter singular:

**Desetak ljudi** je na plaži. *Ten-odd people are on the beach.*

The third type are nouns derived from smaller numbers using *-ica* and *-ka* (the derivation is not regular, forms must be remembered):

- 1 → **jednica** unit  
- 2 → **dvojka**  
- 3 → **trojka** three-person team  
- 4 → **četvorka** four-person team  
- 5 → **petica**  
- 6 → **šestica**  
- 7 → **sedmica**  
- 8 → **osmica**  
- 9 → **devetka**  
- 10 → **desetka**

They mean e.g. ‘*digit two*, or colloquially, something with the number on it, e.g. a *playing card, bus or tram* – depending on the context:

**Čekat ću šesticu**. (colloq.) *I’ll wait for a number 6 tram.*

However nouns derived from 1, 3 and 4 have special meanings as well:

- **jednica** unit
- **trojka** three-person team
- **četvorka** four-person team

(English sometimes uses a noun for the *three-person team*, taken from Russian: *troika*. You see it’s almost identical to Croatian.)

For *two-person teams* (and other two-item groups), the common word is **par pair**.

The fourth type are *nouns* for ‘*x-year-olds*’ (i.e. boys/girls, men/women, but
occasionally other animals, even some products). They are derived from the ‘compounding forms’ with appended godišnji by further appending -njak (m) and -njakinja (f). As with the most other male/female pairs, the male form is also generic/default:

ČetverogodišnjaciN vole trčati. Four-year-olds like to run. (i.e. Four-year-old kids)

The fifth type are compound adjectives and adverbs derived with -struk, standing for multiplicity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiplicity adjectives</th>
<th>one-fold, single-layer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jednostruk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dvostruk</td>
<td>double</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dupli (colloq.)</td>
<td>triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trostruk</td>
<td>fourfold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>četverostruk</td>
<td>double</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peterostruk</td>
<td>triple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šesterostruk</td>
<td>fourfold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deseterostruk</td>
<td>10-fold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dvadeseterostruk</td>
<td>20-fold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stostruk</td>
<td>100-fold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mnogostruk</td>
<td>multiple, manifold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>višestruk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, they are derived from numbers in a specific way – from ‘compounding forms’, but for numbers 5 and over, there’s extra -ero- inserted between the ‘compounding form’ and the suffix -struk. While all these words are really used, some, like jedanaesterostruk 11-fold are very rare. All these words are adjectives, for example:

Razgovarali smo s trostrukim prvakima Europe¹. We talked to three-time European champions. (lit. ‘triple champions of Europe’)

The adjectives mnogostruk and višestruk are very common.

All these adjectives, in neuter form, are used as adverbs too, so you can tell how many times something is better:

Novi mobitelN je dvostuko boljiN. The new cellphone is twice better.
Novi mobitelN je duplo boljiN. (colloq., the same meaning)

Instead of dvostruk, the colloquial word dupli is very common in speech.
91 Taboo Words and Expressions

This chapter uses words and expressions some people might consider offensive.

There are several words that are often heard, but they are considered taboo outside younger people, when communication with their friends; they refer to sexual organs and sex. The most important verb is:

jebati (jebe) *fuck*

*Take care*: this verb is considered extremely *impolite and vulgar* in most circumstances. This verb is actually rarely used in its literal meaning.

Its pass. adjective jeben is sometimes used as an intensifier, exactly like English *fucking* (but observe it’s an adjective, unless used as an adverb, i.e. you have to change its case, gender etc.):

**Taj mobitel** N je jebeno skup N. *That mobile phone is fucking expensive.*

There are two quite common phrases with this verb, something like ‘emoticon-words’ (sometimes seen in abbreviation in colloquial writing, e.g. on Internet forums):

jebo te / jebote (abbr. jbt) = amazement
jebi ga / jebiga (abbr. jbg) = resignation

The most common verb pair derived from this verb is:

zajebavići («) ~ zajebati (zajebe) *screw up*

This verb is considered much less vulgar than the verb it’s derived from, and you can even hear it in less formal meetings at work.

With an optional object in A, this verb corresponds to English *make mistake, spoil*:

**Zajebao sam.** *I’ve screwed up.*

However, it’s more common to use this pair with se². There are two meanings then. First, it’s *make a mistake*, such that affects the subject. Next, the impf. verb with se² has the additional meaning *screw around.*

This is the most important *impolite/vulgar* noun:

kurac (kurc-) *penis, dick*

Besides its obvious meaning, it’s often used in a number of very colloquial (but considered nevertheless vulgar!) expressions with completely unexpected meanings:

boljeti (boli,…) + A + kurac (kurc-) *don’t give a fuck*

This, of course, literally means *someone’s dick hurts*, but it’s a *metaphor*. For example:
**Boli ga^ kurac^N. (vulgar!) He doesn't give a fuck.**

Since this is a metaphor, you'll often hear women using that expression too for themselves.

Next, kurac (kurc-) can be used as a metaphorical destination or location, which describes that something is failing completely, or is in a very bad shape, kind of similar to English *hell*, but considered much more vulgar:

**Sve^N ide u kurac^A. (vulgar!) Everything is going to hell.**

**Ivan^N je u kurcu^DL. (vulgar!) Ivan is in a very bad shape.**

Since the word kurac (kurc-) is quite a taboo, it's often replaced in such metaphorical locations and destinations with banana (I hope you get a shape-based metaphor):

**Država^N je u banani^DL. (colloq.) The country is in a very bad shape.**

The statement is no longer considered vulgar, merely colloquial, so you can hear it on TV.

Then, it's used in very colloquial communication as a replacement for thing.

(the rest is coming soon)

**• Something Possibly Interesting**

Although all words derived from jebati (jebe) fuck are taboo in some degree, you will hear a pop song playing in large supermarkets on Sunday morning with zajebavat clearly audible, and nobody will get offended. Editing songs and movies is seen in Croatia as destroying integrity of a piece of art, and censorship is virtually never done.

The choice of songs played in Croatian supermarkets is very wide – from current Croatian and international hits to alternative all-time favorites like *Love Will Tear Us Apart*. Unfortunately, I've never heard iieee.
93 Fine Points of Verb Aspect

I’ve introduced the verb aspect many chapters ago, and explained some details in later chapters. This chapter will wrap up all the missing parts.

First, some impf. verbs have special perf. verbs that are sometimes called ‘delimitative’. They are hard to exactly translate to English, but the idea is there was some action or state for some time, or space, not less.

For example, you have to go to work and work there for 8 hours. You can simply say:

Radio sam osam sati. *I worked for eight hours.*

However, you call also stress that you’ve fulfilled your duty for that day, by using a derived perfective verb odraditi («); nothing else is changed:

Odradio sam osam sati. *I worked for eight hours.* (focus on the time)

This verb sometimes corresponds to English work off or put in (hours), but there’s no single English construction which has the exact meaning.

Such verbs always start with od- or ot- and are especially used when you fulfill a duty, or what you did is taken off from a bigger requirement (e.g. you have to work 40 hours a week, you did 8 today, 32 to go).

Such verbs are an exception from the general rule that you can’t specify how long with a perfective verb. In fact, with many such verbs, you have to specify the duration, because this is the whole point of such verbs.

Another common such verb is:

odspavati («) perf. *sleep for a time*

For example, you can say:

Odspavala sam deset sati. *I slept for ten hours.* (focus on the time)

The time doesn’t have to be precise, you can say that you slept for a few hours.

(The rest is coming soon.)
99 Aorist Tense and Other Marginal Features

There are features in Croatian that you will see used from time to time. You don't need them in everyday life, but some people use them, and you'll see them in literature (but they are rare even in books).

First, there are several rarely used verb tenses.

The aorist tense is traditionally a past tense, but today it's usually used for events that have happened moments ago, or are about to happen right now. It's usually formed for perfective verbs, but it can be used with impf. verbs as well.

The aorist tense is a single word, usually formed from the infinitive. For verbs ending in -\textit{ti}, the ending is replaced with the following personal endings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
<th>sing.</th>
<th>plur.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>-h</td>
<td>-smo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-ste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-še</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I'll use abbreviations like aor-1, aor-3pl for various aorist forms, in the same way as for the present tense forms. Here are forms for several verbs (pres-3 and past forms are not shown, as they're not important for forming the aorist if verbs have -\textit{ti} in inf):

- \textit{naučiti} perf. learn $\rightarrow$ aor-1 \textit{naučih}
- \textit{pozvati} perf. call, invite $\rightarrow$ aor-1 \textit{pozvah}
- \textit{uzeti} perf. take $\rightarrow$ aor-1 \textit{uzeh}
- \textit{vidjeti} see $\rightarrow$ aor-1 \textit{vidjah}

Observe that it's not important if the verb is ‘regular’ or not: only the \textit{inf} ending matters.

For 2nd and 3rd person in singular, the ending is ‘empty’, so we get \textit{nauči} and \textit{uze}.

Verbs with \textit{inf} ending in -\textit{sti} and -\textit{ći} insert a vowel before the aorist endings, -\textit{o-} in aor-1 and plural, and -\textit{e-} in aor-23 (the form common to the 2nd and 3rd person):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>person</th>
<th>sing.</th>
<th>plur.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>-oh</td>
<td>-osmo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-oste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-oše</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For such verbs, aorist forms aren't derived from \textit{inf}. If they have past-\textit{m} in -\textit{ao}, it's removed, and aorist forms are derived from it; otherwise, they are derived from pres-3, after discarding the final vowel (which is always -\textit{e} for such verbs):
pojesti (pojede, pojeo) perf. eat → aor-1 pojedoh
reči (reče, rekao, rekla) perf. say → aor-1 rekoh

Verbs on -ći that have past-m in -kao or -gao shift the final consonant in aor-23 to the consonant used in pres-3:

aor-1 rekoh (past-m rekao)
aor-23 reče (pres-3 reče)

Verbs derived from ići don't fit into this scheme: their aorist forms are always derived from pres-3 (but they're quite irregular anyway):

naći (nađe, našao, našla) perf. find → aor-1 nađoh
otići (ode, otijšao, otijšla) perf. leave → aor-1 ođoh

The aorist forms are normally stressed like forms they're derived from: if they are derived from inf, on the same syllable as inf; if from pres-3, like it, etc.

However, in the standard stress scheme, aor-23 is always stressed on the first syllable, regardless of stress of other forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>aor-1</th>
<th>pojedoh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aor-23</td>
<td>pojede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aor-1pl</td>
<td>pojedosmo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of aorist is very rare in western parts of Croatia; in more eastern regions, it can be heard in storytelling and expressing immediate action, e.g.:

Ja ođoh. I'm leaving now.

Another past form (similar to the plusquamperfect tense) is the past conditional. It's like conditional, but has an extra past form of the verb biti (je² +), in the same gender and number as the other past form:

Gledala bih film. I would watch the movie. (fem. speaking)
Bila bih gledala film. I would have watched the movie.

This form was used to express intentions and opportunities in the past, but today it's optional, and almost everybody uses just the common conditional.

Then, there's yet another past tense: the imperfect tense. As its name says, it's formed from impf. verbs. It's so rare that I don't recall its endings. I think I've never used it in my life. If you are really want to learn its endings, look into Wikipedia.

Similar to present adverbs derived from verbs, there are also past adverbs. They correspond to English having seen it, she decided to.... They are normally formed from the past-f form of the verb, replacing the final -la with -vši:

see vidjela → vidjevši
For verbs where past-m form has an additional -a- in comparison to the past-f form, it's derived from the past-m form, replacing -o with -vši:

*can* **mogao** m, **mogla** f → **mogavši**

*grow up* (perf.) **odrastao** m, **odrasla** f → **odrastavši**

They are very rare in speech, and rarely used in writing:

**Vidjevši da neće uspjeti, odustala je.** *Having seen she wasn't going to succeed, she gave up.*

This meaning is usually expressed with **kad** *when* or **nakon** *after* instead of this rare form.

However, the past adverb **bivši**, derived from the verb **biti** (je² +) *be* is often used, but it's a true adjective, with the meaning *former, ex*:

**Vidjela je bivšeg muža.** *She saw her ex-husband.*

As in English, the adjective **bivši** is used colloquially on its own, meaning *ex-husband/boyfriend, or ex-wife/girlfriend*, depending on the gender, but it still changes like an adjective.

There's an interesting feature that was historically much more common: *use of indefinite adjectives*. So far, I've explained only so-called *definite adjectives*, which are usually used.

However, most adjectives also had indefinite forms. They could have different stress and case endings. I won't go into details of stress, but the endings in singular are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DL</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>neuter</td>
<td>-o</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-e)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. (not p/a)</td>
<td>dict.</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td>-u</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-om</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(-em)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc. (p/a)</td>
<td>dict.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, these look exactly like the noun endings.

Standard Croatian still insists on use of indefinite adjectives. They should be used with indefinite nouns, i.e. when you would use the indefinite article in English:

**Vidim crna konja.** *A see a black horse.* (very rare in use)

Then, some adjectives, according to Standard Croatian, have *only* indefinite forms, regardless of definiteness, and that includes all possessives in -ov or -ev, including **njegov** *his*: 

*eat* (perf.) **pojela** → **pojevši**
I see his brother. (Standard, but very rare)

This is almost always used

However, you'll see forms like above in some newspapers, on TV news, and in poetry.

Then, Standard Croatian insists that numbers 2-4 change according to case. You will sometimes see in writing DLI forms for numbers 2 and both in feminine gender and for 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>DLI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>obje f</td>
<td>objema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dvije f</td>
<td>dvjema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tri</td>
<td>trima</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If numbers change, nouns also change, into DLI-pl. For example:

Posjet **dvjema farmama** A visit to two farms (rare)

(If you check Google™, **u dvije** is about 30 times more frequent than **u dvjema**.)

Other forms – including masc. gender – exist in grammar books, but are very rare in use. You will sometimes see the forms above used for G as well.
A1 Nouns and Adjectives

Here's a summary of case forms for nouns and adjectives. Some cases are marked with an asterisk (*) meaning there is an explanation below the table.

This is the pattern for nouns in singular. The endings -a, -o, -e from nominative are replaced with other case endings, except where it's indicated that an ending is added to the nominative form (N +):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>noun type (N)</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DL</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-a (≈ fem.)</td>
<td>-u</td>
<td>*-i</td>
<td>-om</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut. (≈ -o, -e)</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td>-u</td>
<td>N + m</td>
<td>-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not masc. not p/a</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td>-u</td>
<td>-om (-em)</td>
<td>-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in masc. p/a</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-a fem.</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The five rows above are declension types — groups of nouns having the same endings. Since three of them are very similar (neuter and masc.), Croatian declension is often described having three classes (e.g. I, II and III in some books). Which group a noun belongs to is based on its gender and nominative ending:

- all nouns in -a change in the same way (almost all are feminine, few are masculine, e.g. tata Dad)
- all neuter nouns change in the same way (they all end in -o or -e, but converse doesn't hold: e.g. some nouns in -o are masculine, and don't belong to this group)
- all masculine nouns that don't end in -a (they usually end in a consonant) belong to one of two groups, distinguished by their meaning
- all feminine nouns that don't end in -a (they usually end in a consonant) belong to the last group

Certain feminine nouns, ending in either -ka or -ga, end in DL in -ci and -zi, respectively:

- **Amerika** America → **Americi**
- **knjiga** book → **knjizi**

The ending -em in the instrumental case is attached to nouns that end in a Croatian-specific letter, e.g.:

- **mrav** ant → **mravom**
- **konj** horse → **konjem**

There are endings for adjectives:
The default, dictionary form, as listed in dictionaries, usually has no endings, and is indicated with \textit{dict.} in the table. It can have an optional -i, and some adjectives have always -i in masc. N, and they are listed so in dictionaries.

As for nouns, alternate endings that contain \textit{e} instead of \textit{o} in masc. and neut. genders are attached to adjectives ending on a Croatian-specific letter:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{nov} new \rightarrow \textit{novom}
  \item \textit{loš} bad \rightarrow \textit{lošem}
\end{itemize}

The \textit{e}-endings also apply to all comparatives, even if they don't end in a Croatian-specific letter (e.g. \textit{širi} wider).

Pay attention that alternative endings don't exist for the feminine gender.

The \textit{p/a} in tables above stands for \textit{people and animals}.

These are the endings for nouns in plural. The DL and I cases are identical in plural. There's an additional complexity for masculine nouns, see remarks below:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Most short (one-syllable) masc. nouns ending on a consonant have either \textit{ov} or \textit{ev} inserted before the endings listed above. For some masc. nouns there's a consonant alternation in N and DLI.
  \item Details are described in \textit{29 Plural of Masculine Nouns and Adjectives}.
\end{itemize}

The genitive case in plural has many exceptions that get rather -i instead of -a. Additionally, some nouns get \textit{lengthened} by inserting an additional \textit{a} or by using the nominative form instead of their case-base:
Details are described in 44 Genitive Plural.

There are endings for adjectives in plural; forms for DLI and G are the same for all genders:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>N-pl</th>
<th>A-pl</th>
<th>DLI-pl</th>
<th>G-pl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td>-im</td>
<td>-ih</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masc.</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjectives that end in -j in N masc. sing. cannot get an optional -i. All such adjectives have specific meanings, e.g. taj (t-) this.

Possessive adjectives moj my, tvoj your and svoj have double forms in masc. (m) and neuter genders in singular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>DL</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fem.</td>
<td>moja</td>
<td>moju</td>
<td>mojoj</td>
<td>moje</td>
<td>mojom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neut.</td>
<td>moje</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>not p/a</td>
<td>= N</td>
<td>mojem(u)</td>
<td>mojeg(a)</td>
<td>mojim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p/a</td>
<td>moj</td>
<td>= G</td>
<td>mom(e)</td>
<td>mog(a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When an adjective is used as a noun or pronoun, it gets an additional -a in DLI-pl:

Na mladim ljudima svijet ostaje. The world is left to the young people.
Na mladima svijet ostaje. (the same meaning)
A3 Verbs

The dictionary form of verbs is *infinitive*. For a great majority of verbs, past forms can be simply derived from the infinitive. Another very important form is the 3rd pers. present singular (pres-3), the form to derive all other present forms from (except for three irregular verbs).

Based on their endings in infinitive and pres-3, verb are divided into *verb classes*. Various textbooks use different divisions. The division presented here is useful for someone learning Croatian as a foreign language.

### Present tense forms

All forms of the present tense have always the same endings (except for three irregular verbs) – only the *pres-3pl* depends on the vowel *pres-3* ends in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a-m</th>
<th>i-m</th>
<th>e-m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>pres-1</strong></td>
<td>-a-</td>
<td>-a-</td>
<td>-a-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pres-2</strong></td>
<td>-a-š</td>
<td>-i-š</td>
<td>-e-š</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pres-3</strong></td>
<td>-a</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pres-1pl</strong></td>
<td>-a-mo</td>
<td>-i-mo</td>
<td>-e-mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pres-2pl</strong></td>
<td>-a-te</td>
<td>-i-te</td>
<td>-e-te</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pres-3pl</strong></td>
<td>-aju</td>
<td>-e</td>
<td>-u</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two verbs have (fully regular) present forms only:

- **(bude)** perf. *be, get, become*
- **(veli)** *say*

While **(bude)** is one of most important verbs in Croatian, the verb **(veli)** is often used only in certain regions.

### Aorist forms

The aorist tense is not frequently used. It's a past tense, sometimes used for events that are about to happen right now. Usually it's formed for perfective verbs, but it can be used with imperfective verbs as well. Its forms are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>h</th>
<th>o-h</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>aor-1</strong></td>
<td>h</td>
<td>o-h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>aor-23</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>aor-1pl</strong></td>
<td>-smo</td>
<td>-o-smo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>aor-2pl</strong></td>
<td>-ste</td>
<td>-o-ste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>aor-3pl</strong></td>
<td>-še</td>
<td>-o-še</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The endings with a vowel (-o-h, etc.) are used only with verbs that have infinitives ending in -sti or -ći. For all other verbs, the aorist forms are simply formed from the infinitive by discarding -ti and adding aorist endings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>aor-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>naučiti perf. learn</td>
<td>naučih</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uzeti perf. take</td>
<td>uzech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pojести perf. eat</td>
<td>pojedoh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about forming the aorist tense for verbs in -sti or -ći, check *With possible sound shifts in infinitive and present* below.

### Simple verb classes

These are the easiest verb classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>past-m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>-a-ti</td>
<td>-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>-i-ti</td>
<td>-i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>-nu-ti</td>
<td>-n-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ova/uje</td>
<td>-ova-ti</td>
<td>-uj-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two out of four classes are completely determined by their infinitive form: all verbs with infinitives in -nuti belong to the n-verbs, and all verbs with infinitives in -ovati belong to ova/uje-verbs.

Unfortunately, it doesn't hold for verbs ending in -ati or -iti: they are not all a-verbs or i-verbs.

A great majority of verbs belong to these four verb classes. Past forms are simply obtained from the infinitive. Unprefixed a-verbs are more or less all *imperfective*, as almost all ova/uje-verbs. Virtually all n-verbs are *perfective*, except for the following verbs:

- brinuti worry
- čeznuti yearn
- ginuti perish, die
- tonuti sink
- trnuti numb
- trunuti rot
- venuti wither

The a-verbs are the *default class* of verbs: all new verbs that are adapted into Croatian (mostly colloquially) are adapted as a-verbs:

- četati chat (over Internet)
- printati print (from a PC)
(It seems that in Serbia ova/uje is the default verb class.)

**Unpredictable classes, without shifts**

A bit more difficult classes are *unpredictable, without sound shifts*. You basically have to remember both infinitive and *pres-3* form; however, there are no sound shifts. There are 7 classes in this group, divided into 2 subgroups. The first four are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>past-m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ava/aje</td>
<td>-ava-ti</td>
<td>-aj-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eva/uje</td>
<td>-eva-ti</td>
<td>-uj-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iva/uje</td>
<td>-iva-ti</td>
<td>-uj-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uva/uje</td>
<td>-uva-ti</td>
<td>-uj-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They all have -ati in the infinitive and are overall similar to a-verbs, except for the present forms. Three classes (ava/aje, eva/uje, iva/uje) out of the 4 above contain only a handful of of verbs. Common ones are:

- **davati** (daje) *give*
- **-znavati** (-znaje) *carevati* (caruje) *rule as an emperor*
- **kraljevati** (kraljuje) *rule as a king*
- **bljuvati** (bljuje) *vomit*
- **pljuvati** (pljuje) *spit*

All verbs listed are *imperfective*. Of course, verbs derived by prefixing those listed above belong to the same class, but some are *perfective*. Often used are ones derived from **davati** (daje), e.g. **do-davati** (do-daje). The "verb" **-znavati** (-znaje) is not used on its own, only verbs derived from it by prefixing are used, e.g. **po-znavati** (po-znaje).

Unfortunately, verbs ending in -ivati can be either a-verbs – e.g. plivati, pozivati – or iva/uje-verbs – e.g. dokazivati (dokazuje), etc. There are many iva/uje-verbs – too much to list here.

The next three classes are a bit more complicated, as two of them have a (predictable) alternation in the past forms. It's interesting that for some of them, Standard forms are different from forms used in speech and casual writing most of the time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>past-m</th>
<th>past-f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a/i</td>
<td>-a-ti</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-a-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je/i</td>
<td>-je-ti</td>
<td>-i</td>
<td>-i-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je/ije</td>
<td>-je-ti</td>
<td>-ij-e</td>
<td>-i-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only a limited number of verbs belong to the a/i-verbs. Some of them have general, quite basic meanings:

- **bježati** *run away*
- **bojati** *paint (wall, fence)*
- **bojati se** *be afraid*
- **brojati** *count*
- **čućati** *squat*
- **držati** *hold*
- **ležati** *lay*

- **klečati** *kneel*
- **trčati** *run*
- **spati** *sleep*
- **stajati** *stand*
- **-stojati**
- **strujati** *stream*

(Only infinitives are listed, pres-3 forms end in -i!) The verb **stajati** *stand* is irregular. This does not apply to verb derived from it, which have regular forms from **-stojati**. The verb **spati** *sleep* is quite archaic, but still used in some regions (however, verbs derived from it are common). Besides it, all a/i-verb feature Croatian-specific consonants.

The rest of a/i-verbs in common use stand for various sounds (again, I list only infinitives):

- **bečati** *cry (baby)*
- **blejati** *bleat*
- **bruji** *hum*
- **cvrčati** *chirr*
- **hučati** *boom*
- **ječati** *cry, shrill*
- **pištati** *squeak, beep*
- **pljuštati** *rain heavily, shower*

- **režati** *growl*
- **šuštati** *rustle, murmur*
- **vrištati** *scream*
- **zujati** *buzz*
- **zvečati** *twang*
- **zviždati** *whistle*
- **zvučati** *sound*

All a/i-verbs listed here are **imperfective**, and verbs derived from by prefixing are also a/i-verbs, but **perfective**, e.g. **dotrčati** *(dotrči)*, **zaspati** *(zaspi)* ...

As a rule, a/i-verbs have the stress fixed on the first syllable in the present tense, i.e. the stress doesn’t shift to negation in the standard stress scheme:

- **bježati** *(bježi)* *run away*  
  **vrištati** *(vrišti)* *scream*

The only exception is the verb **spati** *(spi)* *sleep*.

Four a/i-verbs above are marked with an asterisk (*). They also exist as plain i-verbs, in fact, Standard Croatian insists on them being just plain i-verbs, although a/i versions prevail in use:
mostly used  Std. Cro.
bojati (boji)  bojiti
brojati (broji)  brojiti
strujati (struji)  strujiti
zujati (zuji)  zujiti

(Google™ search of the .hr domain will show you the a/i-verb forms of these four verbs are 3-4 times more common than the i-verb forms.)

All verbs that end in infinitive in -jeti belong to the je/i-verbs, except for the following common verbs, which belong to the je/ije-verbs:

dospjeti (dospije, dospio, dospjela) perf. end up
razumjeti (razumije, razumio, razumjela) understand
smjeti (smije, smio, smjela) be allowed
uspjeti (uspije, uspio, uspjela) perf. succeed

However, many verbs that in Standard Croatian belong to the je/i-verbs are reshaped as plain i-verbs in colloquial communication, even in newspapers. This does not affect their present forms, only the infinitive and past forms. The following verbs are seldom seen with -je- in infinitive and past, -i- forms prevail even in newspapers (only infinitives are listed for sake of brevity, you can work out other forms):

gnijeljeti rot  strepjeti fear, quail
hlapjeti evaporate  šumjeti whirr, hum
starjeti age, grow old  tammjeti darken

(For example, Google™ gives 1250 hits for hlapiti on the .hr domain, but just 87 for hlapjeti.) Therefore, don't be surprised that Standard Croatian dictionaries list only forms starjeti, starjeli, but you hear are read just stariti and starili all the time. Of course, this applies to all verbs derived by prefixing from the verbs above, e.g. instead of ostarjeti you will mostly see just ostariti.

For the following common verbs, i-forms prevail in casual communication, while je/i-forms prevail in written communication, newspapers, etc. (again, only infinitives are listed):

gorjeti burn  trpjeti suffer
grmjeti thunder  vrtjeti spin, turn
smrdjeti stink  visijeti hang
štedjeti save (money)  vrvjeti swarm
šutjeti be quiet  žudjeti yearn

With a possible sound shift in present
This is a class (or two classes, if you like it) that contains a lot of verbs. Its characteristic is -ati in the infinitive, and e in the pres-3, with a possible sound shift. The shift does not happen if the consonants before -ati are Croatian-specific (usually j) or r:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>past-m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ja-ti</td>
<td>-j-e</td>
<td>-ja-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a/*e</td>
<td>-sa-ti</td>
<td>-š-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td>etc.</td>
<td>etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Common verbs that fall into this class without a sound shift are:

- **brijati** (brije) shave
- **češati** (češe) scratch
- **derati** (dere) tear
- **grijati** (grije) heat
- **kašljati** (kašlje) cough
- **lajati** (laje) bark
- **orati** (ore) till
- **penjati** (penje) se² climb
- **sijati** (sije) sow
- **smijati** (smije) se² laugh
- **stajati** (staje) stop, stand
- **stenjati** (stenje) groan
- **trajati** (traje) last

There are many common verbs with a sound shift. Here are verbs with the shift k or c → č, e.g. **skakati** (skače) – only infinitives are listed for brevity:

- **hrkati** snore
- **mikati** move
- **nicati** sprout
- **plakati** cry, shed tears
- **klicati** shout, cheer
- **-ricati**
- **skakati** jump
- **srkati** sip (while eating)
- **ticati** touch
- **wikati** yell
- **žvakati** chew

The following verbs have change h or s → š, e.g. **pisati** (piše):

- **brisati** wipe, clear
- **kihati** sneeze
- **klesati** chisel
- **kresati** trim
- **jahati** ride (animal)
- **mahati** wave
- **mirjati** («) smell
- **njihatj** sway, wobble
- **pisati** write
- **puhati** blow
- **sisati** suck

The following verbs have change g or z → ž, e.g. **rezati** (reže):

- **kazati** say, tell
- **klizati** slide, skate
- **lagati** lie, tell lies
- **lizati** lick
- **mazati** spread (on bread, skin)
- **pomagati** help
- **puzati** crawl
- **rezati** cut
- **stizati** arrive, make on time
- **vagati** weigh
- **vezati** tie
Vowel-root

This class is the simplest one historically, there's just -ti in infinitive and -je in pres-3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>past-m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vowel-root</td>
<td>-ti</td>
<td>-j-e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only a limited number of verbs fall into this class:

- biti (bije) beat
- piti (pije) drink
- čuti (čuje) hear
- šiti (šije) sew
- kriti (krije) hide
- viti (vije) wave

The verb biti (bije) is rare in Croatia nowadays, but verbs derived from it – e.g. ubiti (ubije) perf. kill – are common. The same holds for viti (vije). One more verb – šiti (šije) – is archaic, šivati is much more frequent in meaning sew – but verbs derived from it are not.

Additionally, two perfective verbs also fall into this class:

- obuti (obuje) perf. put on (shoes)
- umiti (umije) perf. wash (face)

With possible sound shifts in infinitive and present

This set of classes is basically the same as vowel-root, but they historically didn't have a vowel before -ti in infinitive, so all kinds of sound assimilations happened in the infinitive as well as in the present! Verbs belonging to this class often have different consonants in all three main forms (infinitive, present, past). Most verbs in this group have -ao in past-m.

It's possible to group verbs based on their (historic) final consonants. Following classes don't have major alternations; they characteristically have -sti in the infinitive, and their historic final consonant is revealed in present forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>past-m</th>
<th>past-f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>s-root</td>
<td>-s-ti</td>
<td>-s-e</td>
<td>-s-a-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>st-root</td>
<td>-s-ti</td>
<td>-st-e</td>
<td>-st-a-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b-root</td>
<td>-ps-ti</td>
<td>-b-e</td>
<td>-b-a-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z-root</td>
<td>-s-ti</td>
<td>-z-e</td>
<td>-z-a-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d/t-root</td>
<td>-s-ti</td>
<td>-d-e</td>
<td>-o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-s-ti</td>
<td>-t-e</td>
<td>-o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Except for d/t-root verbs, only a handful of verbs fall into these classes. They are:

- **grepsti** (grebe, grebao, grebla) *scratch*
- **gristi** (grize, grizao, grizla) *bite*
- **musti** (muze, muzao, muzla) *milk*
- **rasti** (raste, rastao, rasla) *grow*
- **tresti** (trese, tresao, tresla) *shake, shiver*
- **vesti** (veze, vezao, vezla) *embroider*
  - **-vesti** (-veze, -vezao, -vezla)

The second **-vesti** (etc.) is a base many verbs are derived from, with the basic meaning *drive*, e.g. **odvesti** (etc.) *drive away*. The verb **grepsti** (etc.) is rare, more common is variant **grebati** (grebe). Of course, verbs are derived from the other verbs listed above too, e.g. **odrasti** (etc.).

The following verbs belong to the d/t-root verbs:

- **bosti** (bode, bo / boo, bola) *stab, prod*
- **jesti** (jede, jeo, jela) *eat*
- **krasti** (krade, krao, krala) *steal*
- **presti** (prede, preo, prela) *spin* (yarn); *purr*
  - **-vesti** (-vede, -veo, -vela)
- **cvasti** (cvate, cvao, cvala) *blossom*
- **mesti** (mete, meo, mela) *sweep*
- **plesti** (plete, pleo, plela) *knit*

Again, many verbs are derived from them, and the base **-vesti** (etc.) is used only to derive verbs from, with the basic meaning *lead*.

The following class has major alternations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>inf</th>
<th>pres-3</th>
<th>past-m</th>
<th>past-f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>k/g-root</td>
<td>-ći</td>
<td>-č-e</td>
<td>-k-a-o</td>
<td>-k-la</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This class is called **k/g-root** for historical reasons – there are no g-root verbs in common use today. All alternations in various forms are shown here, with **vući pull** as an example (again, the original k is seen in past-m and pres-3pl):
Such verbs are (only infinitives are listed for brevity):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>vu-ći</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pres-3</td>
<td>vu-če</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pres-3pl</td>
<td>vu-ku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past-m</td>
<td>vu-kao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past-f</td>
<td>vu-kla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imper-2</td>
<td>vu-ci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pass. adj.</td>
<td>vu-čen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- obući perf. wear (clothes)
- peći bake
- reći perf. say
- sjeći (siječe) cut
- tući beat
- vući pull

Of course, there are also verbs derived from them. The verb sjeći has ije instead of je in present forms.

Verbs in all these classes, from s-root to k/g-root have a rightward stress shift in the present tense (in the Standard scheme) if they have at least three syllables:

- odrasti (odraste)
- ispeći (ispeče)
- obući (obuče)

All these classes have the aor-1 in -oh, with their historic final consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inf</th>
<th>aor-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d/t-root</td>
<td>pojesti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k/g-root</td>
<td>reći</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In aor-23, the consonant before the ending -e changes like in pres forms:

rekoh aor-1 → reče aor-23

**With vowel alternation**

These classes have their pres-3 different from inf/past not by change of consonants, but vowels. They are further divided into three subclasses. The first one has infinitive on -ati; it contains the following common verbs:

- brati (bere) pick (fruits)  srati (sere) shit (impolite!)
- klati (kolje) slaughter  slati (šalje) send
- prati (pere) wash  zvati (zove) call

All these verbs are imperfective, verbs derived from them by prefixing are all
perfective; both have have pass. adj. ending in -an (e.g. pozvan invited).

The next class has infinitives in -eti and -uti:

- kleti (kune) curse         naduti (nadme) perf. bloat
- mljeti (melje) mill         oteti (otme) perf. hijack
- žeti (žanje) rip, harvest    uzeti (uzme) perf. take

The following roots also fall into this class; they are used to derive several important verbs, all perfective:

- četi (-čne):
  - početi (počne) perf. begin
  - začeti (začne) perf. conceive
- peti (-pne):
  - napeti (napne) perf. wind up
  - popeti (popne) se² perf. climb
  - raspeti (raspne) perf. crucify
  - zapeti (zapne) perf. stumble
- sutí (-spe):
  - nasuti (naspe) perf. cover
  - rasuti (raspe) perf. dissipate

The verbs from this class have pass. adj. obtained just by removing -i from the infinitive (e.g. počet, napet, rasut, otet). This all also holds for verbs derived from them by prefixing.

Finally, these two verbs are today quite archaic, but verbs derived from them are common:

- mrijeti (mre, mro) die
- strijeti (stre, stro) spread

The second verb has another possible infinitive form: strti. These verbs are imperfective; verbs derived from them by prefixing (e.g. u-mrijeti) are perfective, and still belong to this class. To get impf. pairs of the prefixed verbs, use verbs ending on -irati (-ire), e.g. um-irati (um-ire).

**With inserted n in present**

Certain verbs have present like n-verbs, but have infinitives without n, leading to all possible sound shifts in infinitive and past forms. All such verbs are perfective.

This is the only verb in this class without sound shifts (and all verbs derived from it, most of them very frequent!):

- stati (stane) perf. stop

The following verbs behave as d/t-root in the past and infinitive:
pasti (padne, pao) perf. fall
sjesti (sjedne, sjeo) perf. sit
sresti (sretne, sreo) perf. encounter

The following verbs behave as k/g-root in the past and infinitive, and some of them also appear as regular n-verbs:

-bjeći (-bjegne, -bjegao, -bjegla):
  izbjeći (izbjegne, izbjegao, izbjegla) perf. avoid
  pobjeći (pobjegne, pobjegao, pobjegla) perf. run away
leći (legne, legao, legla) perf. lie (down)
pomoći (pomogne, pomogao, pomogla) perf. help
stići (stigne, stigao, stigla) perf. arrive (on time)
dići (digne, digao, digla) perf. raise
  also dignuti (digne)
nići (nikne, nikao, nikla) perf. sprout
  also niknuti (nikne)
pući (pukne, pukao, pukla) perf. break, burst
  also puknuti (pukne)
taći (takne, takao, takla) perf. touch
  also taknuti (takne)

The root -bjeći is not used on its own, it's used to derive verbs, listed above.

Of course, all this applies also to verbs derived by prefixing from the above verbs, e.g. po-taknuti / po-taći.

Irregular past

These verbs have past, inf and pres-3 quite different, but forms of the present tense are normally derived from their pres-3. They are:

ići (ide, išao, išla) go
otići (ode, otišao, otišla) perf. leave
-ći (-de, -šao, -šla)
-nijeti (-nesem, -nio, -nijela)

From the root -ći (etc.) perfective verbs of motion and naći (etc.) are derived; from -nijeti (etc.), perfective verbs derived from bring, e.g. od-nijeti (od-nesem, od-nio, od-nijela) perf. take away.

Irregular present

There are three verbs with specific forms in the present tense, their inf and past forms are kind of expected. They are be, will and can:
Present tense forms of **biti** and **htjeti** also have stressed (longer) forms.
A5 Word Order

The word order consists of two 'components':

- mandatory order
- non-mandatory order

Words that have mandatory order cannot be tweaked to emphasize something or carry some information; words with non-mandatory order can be.

Non-mandatory order

The default order in sentences like Ana is watching TV is the same as in English (SVO):

**Ana gleda televiziju.**

In sentences of type X is PLACE, there are two equally used word orders:

- when PLACE is first, it's about PLACE and a something new (X) was introduced;
- when X is first, it's about X, which is something already known.

This roughly corresponds to definiteness:

**Pismo je na stolu.** The letter is on the table.

**Na stolu je pismo.** A letter is on the table. / There's a letter on the table.

This also holds for the verb *nalazi se*² is found, is placed.

The same holds for sentences of type subject + verb (SV). The subject comes first if it's something known, and comes after the verb if it's a new thing introduced:

**Film počinje.** = *The movie is starting.*

**Počinje film.** = *A movie is starting.*

However, the word order can be changed as well to emphasize something.

In sentences where somebody experiences something from the environment (cold, heat, boredom) or pain, the experiencer comes first, despite not being the subject:

**Ani je hladno.** Ana is cold.

**Anu boli noga.** Ana's leg hurts.

Locations and directions usually come after verbs:

**Ana ide na posao.** Ana is going to work.

**Živimo u Zagrebu.** We live in Zagreb.

Adverbs usually come before verbs:

**Ana često gleda televiziju.** Ana often watches TV.
Ana sutra ide na posao. Ana is going to work tomorrow.
Danas idem u kino. I'm going to cinema today.

The default order of nouns with adjectives is possessive adjective - adjective - noun:
tvoja plava košulja your blue shirt
moja ljubav my love

In poetry and songs, the order can be changed:
tvoja košulja plava
ljubav moja

In the vocative case, the default order of nouns and adjectives is reversed:
 ljubavi moja! o my love!

The default order or nouns with genitive attribute is noun - noun in G; it's very rarely tweaked in poetry and songs:
kraj filma end of the movie

With counting, the most common order is possessive adjective - number - adjective - noun:
moje dvije crvene jabuke my two red apples

Mandatory order: enclitics

All second-position words come always in predefined order, in one block:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of second-position words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>li²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bih², bi², bismo², biste² (conditional verb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sam², si², smo², ste², su² (all except je²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ću², ćeš², će², ćemo², ćete²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi², ti²,... (pronouns in DL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me², te²,... (pronouns in A and G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>se²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je² (usually left out if se² is present)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before second-position words, there's one or more words in the "first position". Words like i¨, ni¨ and a¨ (which all translate as and), prepositions (e.g. u¨, na¨, pod¨, etc.) and the negative particle ne¨ don't "count", and cannot fill the first position on their own:

Gladan sam. I'm hungry.
I ja sam gladan. I'm hungry too.
Two or more words that count, if they form a "phrase", can together occupy the first position:

**Moj prijatelj je ovdje.** *My friend is here.*

These "phrases" are absolutely *never* split:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hold the 1st position: never split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preposition + word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U sobi je hladno.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It's cold in the room.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ne bojim se.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I'm not afraid.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These "phrases", where one noun is described by another, are very rarely split:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hold the 1st position: very rarely split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>noun + za” + noun in A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Četka za kosu je u ladici.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The hairbrush is in the drawer.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun + na” + noun in A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Igračke na baterije su jeftine.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Battery-powered toys are cheap.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun + od” + noun in G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sok od naranče je u frižideru.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The orange juice is in the fridge.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun + noun in G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kraj filma je glup.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The end of the movie is stupid.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These "phrases" are very rarely split in speech, but you can see them split in formal writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hold the 1st position: split in formal writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adjective(s) + noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Moj stari prijatelj je ovdje.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>My old friend is here.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preposition + adjective(s) + noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>U mojoj sobi je hladno.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It's cold in my room.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ivana Horvat je ovdje.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ivana Horvat is here.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Godina dana je prošla.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A year passed.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard Croatian manuals often suggest breaking down such phrases and placing the second-position words mechanically; this is very rare in speech (except on Public Radio and TV):

**Moj je prijatelj ovdje.** (formal)
Names are rarely split even in formal writing, but you can see it sometimes:

**Ivana je Horvat ovdje.** (very rare)

These "phrases" can hold the 1st position, but are sometimes split even in everyday speech:

### Hold the 1st position: splitting is optional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intensity adverb + adverb</td>
<td><strong>Jako dugo je čekala.</strong></td>
<td>She waited for a very long time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number + noun</td>
<td><strong>Troje ljudi te čeka.</strong></td>
<td>Three people are waiting for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quantity + noun</td>
<td><strong>Puno ljudi te čeka.</strong></td>
<td>A lot people are waiting for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baš <strong>absolutely</strong> skoro <strong>almost</strong> + adverb</td>
<td><strong>Skoro uvijek je hladno.</strong></td>
<td>It's cold almost always.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pronoun/adjective</td>
<td>Baš svi su ovdje.</td>
<td>Absolutely everybody is here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other combinations cannot form such "phrases". For example, **opet again** + verb is not such a phrase, and it cannot hold the 1st position:

**Opet se igra.** *He/she is playing again.*

### Word order in clauses

Clauses have their own second position; if they start with a conjunction (e.g. **jer** in the following example), any second-position words come right after it:

**Trava**¹ je² mokra [**jer**¹ je² padala kiša]. *The grass is wet because it has rained.*

Sometimes, short time adverbs – such as **sad(a)** *now*, **još** *still* and **već already* – are placed immediately after **jer**, second position words come after the adverb. For example:

**Ne želim knjigu**¹ [**jer**¹ **već**¹ sam ju² **pročitao**]. *I don’t want the book [because I’ve already read it].*

The same can happen with stressed pronouns (e.g. **meni**).

This quite rare.

(the rest is coming soon)...
A7 Stress (u/c)

This chapter uses specific stress symbols, different than in the rest of Easy Croatian.

I will give you an overview of stress in Croatian, both Standard Croatian, non-standard and in closely related languages. Everything that follows applies to Standard Croatian and Standard Bosnian and Standard Serbian unless otherwise is explicitly stated.

General Issues

First, in the Standard Croatian, each vowel can be either short or long. There can be more than one long vowel in one word. I will mark the vowels as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel length</th>
<th>short vowel</th>
<th>a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>long vowel</td>
<td>ā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This holds also for "vocalic" r: there's long ř; however I will mark it as ř, since just a line over r is, unfortunately, not rendered right in some browsers and mobile phones.

The stress can be either falling or rising. The falling stress has a tone that's audibly first high and then falling and staying low. Since the stressed vowel can be either short or long, there are 4 combinations – the 4 classic "accents" as described in the 19th century:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>short vowel</th>
<th>long vowel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>falling stress</td>
<td>ři - ba sŭn - ce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rising stress</td>
<td>vo - da rū - ka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have introduced here the following, special, non-standard markings:

- if only one vowel is underlined, it's the stressed vowel with the falling intonation;
- if two vowels are underlined, one after another, the first of them is the
stressed vowel with the rising intonation;
• as a special case, if no vowels are underlined, the first vowel is stressed with the falling intonation (you'll see the reason a bit later).

(There are also standard stress markings in Croatian. However, these markings are not really transparent, so in certain books and linguistic works, alternative marks are often used.)

Now, most textbooks (including the schoolbooks in Croatia) mention two classic rules that restrict the place of stress:

#1 the falling intonation can appear only on the first syllable;
#2 the rising intonation cannot appear on the last syllable (therefore it cannot appear at all in one-syllable words).

Now, the restriction #2 is actually obvious from my notation: you have to underline two vowels, therefore, you need a word with at least two vowels! There's no way to set a rising stress on the last vowel – only the first vowel you underlined will be stressed.

However, the restriction #1 is not obvious, and it's actually not always respected in real life, even in areas where people use stress very close to the standard at home (enter non-initial falling tones into Google™).

This all so far is only the introduction to real issues. The main feature of stress in Standard Croatian is that it changes in various forms of one word. Moreover, the vowel length changes in some forms! For example, the word lonac pot has all possible alternations (rising vs. falling, short vs. long vowel):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>sing.</th>
<th>plur.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>lonac</td>
<td>lönči</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>lönca</td>
<td>lonäcä</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, there are words that have the same stress in all forms. To make it even more complex, stress sometimes shift to prepositions.

**Noun Stress**

However, there's an underlying system, bizarre but regular. Let's first visit the noun stress: nouns are basically divided into three groups. Let's first see how the a-nouns (nouns ending in -a in N) behave:
We see one thing all nouns have in common: the vocative case has the "automatic" falling stress – no vowels are underlined. Another thing that's not obvious from the usual spelling – the case ending in G is a long e.

The nouns in the group "B" are boring: the stress stays on the same syllable and is same in all forms (except in the vocative, but that's a special form anyway).

The group "A" gets interesting when an unstressed preposition (e.g. u) is placed before the noun: the stress "spreads" to it, i.e. moves one syllable to the left, but gets the rising intonation.

This stress shift we still see in such nouns is called Neoštokavian stress shift. It's the origin of the rising intonation in the Standard Croatian: whenever (well... almost whenever) there was another syllable before the stressed syllable with the falling intonation, the stress moved left, and changed the intonation. It also happened centuries ago to nouns like žena. There are still regions in Croatia where that noun keeps the older stress, žena (we are sure that stress is older because such nouns in Russian have the stress at the "old" position as well).

This is why a rising stress cannot appear on the last syllable – there have to be one syllable after it, one that had the original (falling) stress. We can simply show what has happened and what still happens:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;C&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>riba</td>
<td>žena</td>
<td>voda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DL</td>
<td>ribi</td>
<td>ženi</td>
<td>vodi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>ribe</td>
<td>ženê</td>
<td>vodê</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>ribu</td>
<td>ženu</td>
<td>vodu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>ribo</td>
<td>ženo</td>
<td>vodo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA-pl</td>
<td>ribe</td>
<td>žene</td>
<td>vode</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such stresses are called 'new' (this is relative: they are centuries old), hence the neo-in Neoštokavian.

This shift happens only to falling stresses. They were transformed almost always when they were not on the first syllable – this is the reason for the classic rule #1.

Now, we examine the nouns in the group "C". They are completely unlike "A" or "B" nouns: their stress varies according to noun case. In the accusative case, if there's
an unstressed preposition before the noun, the stress again shifts to it, but it's *still falling*. In fact, it shifts as leftward as it can:

- **vodu**
- **u-vodu**
- **i-u-vodu**

Such shift is the reason for my "special case" notation – when no vowels are underlined, as in A and N-*pl* of "C" nouns – there's a falling intonation stress on the very first syllable, including all unstressed words before the noun that are pronounced together with it.

There's no way to tell which nouns are in the group "C" just by looking at them in the nominative – they must be remembered. Textbooks say there's about 60 such a-nouns. The common ones are:

- **daska** plank
- **grāna** branch
- **grēda** wooden beam
- **igla** needle
- **kosa** hair (on scalp)
- **mētla** broom
- **ovca** sheep
- **pčela** bee
- **pēta** heel
- **rosa** dew

- **snijēda** Wednesday
- **strijēla** arrow
- **sīna** fem. roe deer
- **stijēna** rock
- **strāna** side
- **vōjska** army
- **zora** dawn
- **žīma** winter
- **zvijēzda** star

The nouns above have the strange "automatic" falling stress only in A. However, a couple of common nouns can have such stress in DL as well:

- **dūša** soul
- **rūka** arm/hand
- **glavā** head
- **voda** water
- **noga** leg
- **zemlja** ground, country, Earth

(The rest is coming soon...)
A8 Dialects

This chapter uses specific stress symbols, different than in the rest of Easy Croatian.

(This chapter is under construction.)

I'll give a brief overview of dialects in Croatia and neighboring countries.

Croatia belongs to the South Slavic language area, and to the wider Slavic area. Both these areas are essentially dialect continua, that is, areas where any dialect is similar to the dialect next to it, which is similar to the one next to it, and so on: difference between dialects increases with distance, and there are very few sharp dialect borders.

Many features of South Slavic dialects change roughly in the northwest-southeast direction, represented by the arrow in this map:

(The arrow should go, and does go further into Macedonia and Bulgaria, but I will concentrate on dialects in Croatia and countries next to it.)

Going in the direction of the arrow (i.e. to the south-east), features change in this way:

- There are fewer noun forms (that is, different case endings). In Slovenia, nouns have singular, dual and plural forms, and 6 cases with different endings in plural. In
the area around Niš, Serbia, there is only singular and plural, and only two cases (N and A). In Macedonia, nouns have no cases! This doesn't apply to the vocative case, though.

- There are **more verb tenses in use**. In the western parts of Croatia, the aorist tense is very rarely used. It doesn't exist at all in Slovenia. In Serbia, it's used every day in speech. When you reach Macedonia, there are 9 tenses.

- **Infinitives are less used** and finally disappear in South of Serbia, where only da + present is used.

- **Vocatives are more often used** – in western parts of Croatia, vocatives are rare, N is used when calling someone. In Bosnia and Serbia, they are frequently used.

- There are **more Greek and Turkish loan words** further you go to the south-east.

There are couple of forms that are specific for ‘west’ and ‘east’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>‘west’</th>
<th>‘east’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>you can</td>
<td>moreš</td>
<td>možeš</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four men/boys</td>
<td>četvero</td>
<td>čtvoro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each feature splits the area at a different line. Standard Croatian has the ‘eastern’ možeš, but the ‘western’ četvero.

Furthermore, there's something interesting: **most dialectal variation is in the northwest**. In the central and southeastern areas, there's less dialects on the same land area. (That's due to history.) It's obvious from this simplified and not-too-accurate dialect map, showing the dialects in villages in middle 20th century (click on the image to enlarge):
Dialects are marked with the following two-letter abbreviations, here grouped into traditional dialect groups (the usual term in Croatian is narječje):

‘Slovene’: CR - Carinthian, ST - Styrian, PA - Pannonian, UC - Upper Carniolan, LC - Lower Carniolan, RV - Rovte, LI - Littoral;

‘Kajkavian’: ZM - Zagorje-Međimurje, TP - Turopolje-Posavina, KP - Križevci-Podravina, PR - Prigorje;

‘Čakavian’: NČ - Northwestern Čakavian, CČ - Central Čakavian, SČ - Southeastern Čakavian;


There are other ways to divide dialects: for example, the classification of ‘Čakavian’ dialects shown here is after Dutch linguist Willem Vermeer; you'll find other ways to classify them in many books. Some dialects shown here together are usually shown separately – even if they are quite alike neighboring ones – for traditional (and political) reasons (e.g. Lower Carniolan dialects in Croatia are usually shown separately as ‘goranski’, etc.

The grouping of dialects into ‘Kajkavian’, ‘Čakavian’ and ‘Štokavian’ is usually
presented as something fundamental. However, it's not really so: for example, Northwestern Čakavian dialects have a lot of similarities with the Littoral dialects in Slovenia; ‘Kajkavian’ Zagorje-Međimurje dialects have many similarities with Pannonian dialects in Slovenia; ‘Torlak’ dialects are often grouped with ‘Štokavian’, but they have many similarities with dialects in Macedonia and Bulgaria as well; there’s no sharp border between Southeastern Čakavian and ‘Štokavian’ Western Ikavian; ‘Štokavian’ Slavonian dialects have similarities with ‘Čakavian’ dialects, etc.

**The Origin of Dialects**

Western South Slavic Dialects differ in many ways, one of them is development of old vowels. Western South Slavic, some 1000 years ago, had the following vowels (the situation was different in Eastern South Slavic, i.e. today Macedonia and Bulgaria), and all of them could be either short or long:

```
i u
ě a ö l r
ë e o
a
```

To mark long vowels, in descriptions of old, reconstructed forms, and in brief descriptions of various dialects, I’ll just write them double, e.g. aa or ee. For instance *sun* was *sslince* and *hand* was *röoka*.

Developments of the old vowels ě and a – often called yat and yer – are most obvious to the majority of speakers. Actually, ‘Ijekavian’, ‘Ikavian’ and ‘Ekavian’ are just different developments of the vowel ě (yat).

The vowels ě and ö were nasal, like in today French or Portuguese.

There were also two specific consonants, usually labelled as d' and t'. They were palatal (softened) d and t. The verb *doći (dode)* was earlier *dojti (dojde)*; in some dialects, *jt* and *jd* have later changed.

(I’m using slightly specific symbols here; usually, in specialized literature, ę and ő are used instead of my ě and ö. Unfortunately, they are not displayed properly on some mobile phones and e-book readers. Also, l and r are usually used instead of l and r. Neither symbols are compatible with the [IPA notation](https://www.ethnologue.com/glossary/ipa).)

Then, we need marks for various types of stress. I’ll use the following marks for stress and tones within one syllable:

- **a** short, stressed
- **aa** long stressed vowel with a falling tone
- **aaa** long stressed vowel with a rising/flat tone

The tone I mark as **aa** is also called ‘neoacute’; it doesn’t exist in Standard Croatian.
And finally, I’ll use the following marks for two-syllable tones, where the stressed syllable has another syllable with the high tone that follows it:

\[ \underline{a}...\underline{a} \text{ short stressed} \]
\[ \underline{aa}...\underline{a} \text{ long stressed} + \text{ a high tone following it} \]

This can be summarized simply: the first underscored vowel is stressed, the underscores mark high tones.

If you are going to read any dialectological works, you’ll see the standard ‘accent marks’. Unfortunately, they are not rendered well on some mobile phones and e-book readers, they are difficult to distinguish at small font sizes, and, finally, they are quite counter-intuitive. Here’s how my marks translate to the standard ones (the diacritics are also shown in brackets):

\[ \begin{align*}
\underline{aa} &= \ddot{a} (\text{–}) \\
\underline{a} &= \breve{a} (\text{\(\backslash\)}) \\
\underline{aa} &= \grave{a} (^) \\
\underline{aa\ldots a} &= \acute{a}\ldots a (/)
\end{align*} \]

Therefore, what I write as e.g. ōō is in most linguistic works written as ǫ with-a-tilde-above.

Stress systems in various dialects have the origin in the old system, reconstructed for the old West South Slavic, for the period od some 1000 years ago, where there were at least 2 tones on the syllables. The stress could have been on any syllable, and unstressed syllables could be also short or long. The reconstructed forms of some words are:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{mlēēk} & \text{ milk} \\
\text{röök} & \text{ hand} \\
\text{věťar} & \text{ wind} \\
\text{ključ} & \text{ key} (\text{G kljuuča}) \\
\text{sesta} & \text{ sister} (\text{G-pl sestaær}) \\
\text{žen} & \text{ woman, wife} (\text{A ženõ})
\end{align*} \]

(It's possible to reconstruct even earlier forms – in many cases, thousands years earlier – but they aren't important here.)

‘Kajkavian’ (Zagorje-Međimurje)

An example ‘Kajkavian’ dialect is the speech of Konjščina, with a detailed description by Vedrana Gudek, available online.

The first impression anyone has about ‘Kajkavian’ are specific vowels. While there are only 5 vowels in e.g. Zagreb, the traditional speech of Konjščina has many more:
The vowel € – a kind of ‘open e’, like in English *bad* or German ä – is the characteristic vowel for ‘Kajkavian’. Unfortunately, it’s usually written just as e: there’s no proper orthography for it (dialectologists usually use ȩ, which is not visible on all devices, or sometimes æ).

Vowels ie, uo, ou are *diphthongs*, similar to English ow in *low, how*, but the i’s and u’s in them are, unlike in English, pronounced very quickly, they are very short, so I could have written them also as i̯e, u̯o, o̯u.

Unfortunately, long vowels ii, εε are too usually written just with i and e. Here are a couple of words with various vowels:

- **di̯e** child (**djete**, usually spelled **dijete**)
- **mė̯se** meat (**meso**)
- **rou̯ka** hand (**ruka**)
- **suonce** sun (**sunce**)

(For comparison, forms spoken in Zagreb are given in brackets).

In ‘Kajkavian’ (and in dialects in Slovenia) there’s one important constraint: normally, only stressed vowels can be long, i.e. there are no unstressed long vowels, while stressed vowels can be either long or short. Since the vowel length and stress often changes according to the word form (i.e. gender, case), this produces many alternations:

- **dober** (m) vs. **duobra** (f) *good*
- **rouka** (N) vs. **rukami** (l-**pl**) *hand*

These are specific developments of old vowels and consonants in this dialect (other ‘Kajkavian’ dialects have very similar developments):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>short</th>
<th>long/diphthongs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i u</td>
<td>ii uu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e i̯e</td>
<td>ee uu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o oo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε a</td>
<td>εε aa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many ‘Kajkavian’ dialects (but not all) have -e instead of -o in all neuter nouns and adjectives in neuter gender, i.e. **segle** village vs. std. **sela**.

When compared with the forms reconstructed for the old language – some 1000
years ago – in most ‘Kajkavian’ dialects (but not all) the stress has shifted from the very end of the word, becoming the ‘neoacute’ on the preceding syllable; sometimes, the syllable that gets the stress will be lengthened:

rööka → rouka hand
žena → žegna woman, wife
viino → viino wine

The old jd and jt are mostly unchanged in ‘Kajkavian’, while t' changed into č, and in most dialects d' into j.

There’s no č sound – only č, which is pronounced a bit ‘softer’ than in the Standard Croatian. Consonants at the end of words become ‘devoiced’, i.e. d is pronounced as t, b as p, g as k, z as s, etc. For instance, the z in mraz frost is actually pronounced as s, while the pronunciation of genitive mraza is as z, since the consonant is not final.

The present tense verb plural endings in this dialect are more regular than in Standard Croatian; the ending for the 1st pers. plural is quite specific:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>sing.</th>
<th>plur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>-m</td>
<td>-mε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>-š</td>
<td>-tε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-ju</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(the rest is coming soon)
A9 Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin

Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin are separate standard languages quite similar to the Standard Croatian (some people consider them ‘variants’ of a single language). I will summarize the most important differences.

You should keep in mind that there are regions in Croatia where some ‘Serbian’ words are used, and some ‘Croatian’ words can be found in Serbia as well. Of course, Bosnian and Montenegrin are somewhere in the middle. Furthermore, we can talk about ‘Croatian’ and ‘Serbian’ only if we discuss the standardized languages. If we take into the account how people actually speak, the situation is much more complex.

Spelling

The major difference is that Serbian and Montenegrin use another alphabet – Cyrillic. However, each letter of Croatian Latin corresponds to one letter of Serbian Cyrillic. Actually, in Serbia today the Cyrillic alphabet is mostly used in official and ceremonial uses. Majority of newspapers are published in the ‘Serbian Latin’ script (identical to ‘Croatian Latin’). 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 is in Latin only. Even the web site of Serbian government has links ћирилица Cyrillic and латинica Latin on the top (Cyrillic is chosen by default). Statistics show that about 1/6 of text on Serbian web sites is written in the Cyrillic script.

In Montenegro, the Cyrillic alphabet is even less used. The web site of Montenegrin government has the two links on top, but the Latin script is displayed as default. Most web pages, even official ones, are in Latin script only.

Besides using Cyrillic script sometimes, there are few differences in spelling (both in Serbian/Montenegrin Latin and Cyrillic). The first one is spelling of foreign names. Serbian and Montenegrin usually respell them using approximated pronunciation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Serbian spelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Njujork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Bush</td>
<td>Đordž Buš</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Čikago</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second difference is spelling of the future tense. When an infinitive in -t is immediately followed by an auxiliary ću², češ²... it’s spelled together, and the infinitive-final -t is discarded, with possible sound mutations:
This is, however, merely a spelling convention: the words ću², ćeše² are second-position words; therefore, Serbian words like pisaću are limited to the 1st position in a sentence! They are usually listed as separate verb forms in Serbian grammars.

**Ekavian ‘Pronunciation’**

As I have already mentioned, there are three common ‘pronunciations’: Ijekavian, Ikavian and Ekavian (there are more in various dialects, but these three prevail in public). The name is misleading, since the difference is visible in spelling as well. The basic difference is: where Standard Croatian has Ijekavian mljeko, Ikavian has mliko and Ekavian mleko for milk.

People usually associate Ekavian (mleko, pesma) and not Ijekavian (mljeko, pjesma) with Serbian, but it’s not really true, since Serbs use both as standard: most Serbs outside of Serbia (e.g. Bosnia, Croatia and Montenegro) use Ijekavian, and Serbs in most of Serbia, including Belgrade, use only Ekavian. You can find both in Serbian newspapers, but Ekavian clearly dominates. (The Serbian Standard is much less strict than Croatian, there is a bigger choice of ‘acceptable’ variants.)

If you find a ‘dictionary of differences’ listing bijeli as ‘Croatian’ vs. beli as ‘Serbian’ you can immediately conclude it’s oversimplifying things.

There’s a tradition of playing down differences between Ekavian and Ijekavian: most people, especially in Serbia, are used to hear and read both (but they can write and speak only Ekavian). However, Ekavian forms are not completely trivial – they cannot be completely obtained from (Standard Croatian) Ijekavian forms, and Ijekavian forms cannot be obtained at all from Ekavian. For example, there are some words where Ekavian has e, in comparison to Ijekavian i, like in these common verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>Ijekavian</th>
<th>Ekavian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>heat</td>
<td>grijati (grije)</td>
<td>grejati (greje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laugh</td>
<td>smijati (smije) se²</td>
<td>smejati (smeje) se²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hate</td>
<td>mrziti</td>
<td>mrzet (mrzi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sit</td>
<td>sjediti</td>
<td>sedeti (sedi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be worth</td>
<td>vrijediti</td>
<td>vredeti (vredi)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These differences are sometimes surprising to native speakers as well: very few
people in Croatia would guess the forms *mrzeti* and *vredeti*. Different verbs have to be learned: the verb *brijati* (*brije*) *shave* has the same form in both ‘pronunciations’, while *grijati* (*grije*) *heat* doesn’t. The verb *sjediti* shows the expected *je* vs. *e* in the 1st syllable, besides the unexpected *i* vs. *e* in the second one (the same holds for *vrijediti*). Therefore, Ekavian forms of these verbs turn out to be more complicated.

However, the verb *vidjeti* and similar ones, including *razumjeti*, are much simpler in Ekavian: their past forms are always regular, and verbs like *razumjeti* are plain verbs in Ekavian, all forms regularly derived from the *inf*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>Ijekavian</th>
<th>Ekavian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>want</td>
<td><em>htjeti</em> (<em>hoće +, htiO, htiela</em>)</td>
<td><em>hteti</em> (<em>hoće +</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td><em>vidjeti</em> (<em>vidi, vidio, vidjela</em>)</td>
<td><em>videti</em> (<em>vidi</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand</td>
<td><em>razumjeti</em> (<em>razumije,...</em>)</td>
<td><em>razumeti</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may</td>
<td><em>smjeti</em> (<em>smije, smio, smijela</em>)</td>
<td><em>sleti</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ekavian verbs *razumeti* and *sleti* have a specific ending in *pres-3pl: -eju*, which is different from Ijekavian or Ikavian.

Sequences -*je*- in endings of verbal adjectives are not subject to these differences. In all ‘pronunciations’, words *voljen* *loved*, *priljen* *received* etc. have the same form.

The same applies to verbal nouns in -*je*; the difference in *sjećanje* vs. *sećanje* (both meaning *memory*) is only in the 1st syllable; the final -*je*, which forms the gerund, is not affected.

There are more words with non-trivial correspondences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>Ijekavian</th>
<th>Ekavian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>part</td>
<td><em>dio</em> (<em>dijel</em>)</td>
<td><em>deo</em> (<em>deel</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last year</td>
<td><em>lanj</em></td>
<td><em>lan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lazy</td>
<td><em>lijen</em></td>
<td><em>lenj</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When -*je* comes after a vowel which is not *i* (e.g. *dvoje* *two people*, *jaje* *egg*) the forms are the same in Ekavian, Ijekavian and Ikavian. Of course, the same applies to verbal forms such as *pije* *he/she drinks* *nije* *he/she/it is not* etc. Ekavian forms have to be *learned* if you want to know them.

I will list Serbian words in both Ijekavian and Ekavian forms in this chapter.

**Other partially regular differences**

A major difference is loss of *h* in native words in Serbian (both Ekavian and Ijekavian; however, it was restored at the beginning of words in standard Serbian). It
has been replaced by either v or j:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deaf</td>
<td>gluh</td>
<td>gluv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dry</td>
<td>suh</td>
<td>suv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fly (insect)</td>
<td>muha</td>
<td>muva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cook (verb)</td>
<td>kuhati</td>
<td>kuvati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>son’s wife</td>
<td>snaha</td>
<td>snaja</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In nouns ending in -ol, Serbian (both Ekavian and Ijekavian) had lost final -l, which is restored whenever any ending is added. It also happened to -r in nouns and adverbs ending in -er:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>salt</td>
<td>sol f</td>
<td>so (sol-) f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>table</td>
<td>stol</td>
<td>sto (stol-) m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ox</td>
<td>vol</td>
<td>vo (vol-) m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evening</td>
<td>večer f</td>
<td>veče (večer- f)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yesterday</td>
<td>jučer</td>
<td>juče</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>also</td>
<td>također</td>
<td>takode</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This change didn’t happen in bol pain.

The noun veče is considered neuter in N and A, and feminine when it gets any ending, which is an occasional source of confusion for native speakers.

There are a bit simplified forms or pronouns; however, these forms are colloquially used in Croatia as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>who</td>
<td>tko</td>
<td>ko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone</td>
<td>netko</td>
<td>neko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what</td>
<td>što</td>
<td>šta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some words there’s su in Croatian vs. sa in Serbian, while in others there’s no difference; common examples are:
As you can see, such words often correspond to English words with **co-** or **con-**, but there’s no real rule which words have the difference, and which don’t.

### Vocabulary Differences in Nouns and Adjectives

Serbian has some specific common nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bladder</td>
<td>mjehur</td>
<td>bešika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>week</td>
<td>tjedan (tjedn-)</td>
<td>nedjelja nedelja sedmica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>island</td>
<td>otok</td>
<td>ostrvo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pants, trousers</td>
<td>hlače f pl.</td>
<td>pantalone f pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farmer’s market</td>
<td>tržnica</td>
<td>pijaca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>floor (of a building)</td>
<td>kat</td>
<td>sprat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wave</td>
<td>val</td>
<td>talas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handbag, purse</td>
<td>torba</td>
<td>tašna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wheel (not to steer)</td>
<td>kotač</td>
<td>točak (točk-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>condition, prerequisite</td>
<td>uvjet</td>
<td>uslov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>air</td>
<td>zrak</td>
<td>vazduh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some words are only slightly different:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eyeglasses</td>
<td>naočale f pl.</td>
<td>naočari f. pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>price-list</td>
<td>cjenik</td>
<td>cjenovnik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salary</td>
<td>plaća</td>
<td>plata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>point, dot</td>
<td>točka</td>
<td>tačka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priest</td>
<td>svećenik</td>
<td>sveštenik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physician (m)</td>
<td>liječnik</td>
<td>ljekar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lekar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physician (f)</td>
<td>liječnica</td>
<td>ljekarka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lekarka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coal</td>
<td>ugljen</td>
<td>ugalj (uglj-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are also different terms related to modern life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>factory</td>
<td>tvornica</td>
<td>fabrika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>football</td>
<td>nogomet</td>
<td>fudbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>train</td>
<td>vlak</td>
<td>voz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>movie theatre</td>
<td>kino</td>
<td>bioskop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mobile phone</td>
<td>mobitel</td>
<td>mobilni (adj.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Especially, terms related to cooking, food, and standard house items show numerous differences; these terms are often completely unknown outside their 'territory'.
However, in real life, the variation in culinary terms is much greater, especially within Croatia. Some ‘Croatian’ terms like riža and mrkva are also used in Serbia, especially in some parts, and sometimes a distinction is made between mrkva and šargarepa.

There are numerous differences in scientific terms, especially chemistry and biology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>green beans</td>
<td>mahune f pl.</td>
<td>boranija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apricot</td>
<td>marelica</td>
<td>kajsija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bread</td>
<td>kruh</td>
<td>hljeb hleb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beans</td>
<td>grah</td>
<td>pasulj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rice</td>
<td>riža</td>
<td>pirinač</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carrot</td>
<td>mrkva</td>
<td>šargarepa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leek</td>
<td>poriluk</td>
<td>praziluk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vinegar</td>
<td>ocat (oct-)</td>
<td>sirće (sirćet-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soup</td>
<td>juha</td>
<td>supa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spoon</td>
<td>žlica</td>
<td>kašika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cup (of tea, coffee)</td>
<td>šalica</td>
<td>šolja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scissors</td>
<td>škare f pl.</td>
<td>makaze f pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>towel</td>
<td>ručnik</td>
<td>peškir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hydrogen</td>
<td>vodik</td>
<td>vodonik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oxygen</td>
<td>kisik</td>
<td>kiseonik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nitrogen</td>
<td>dušik</td>
<td>azot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tin</td>
<td>kositar (kositr-)</td>
<td>kalaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gas</td>
<td>plin</td>
<td>gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liquid</td>
<td>tekućina</td>
<td>tećnost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(chem.) compound</td>
<td>spoj</td>
<td>jedinjenje</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(chem.) solution</td>
<td>otopina</td>
<td>rastvor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cell (in biology)</td>
<td>stanica</td>
<td>ĉelija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mammal</td>
<td>sisavac (sisavc-)</td>
<td>sisar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rat</td>
<td>štakor</td>
<td>pacov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camel</td>
<td>deva</td>
<td>kamila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>science</td>
<td>znanost</td>
<td>nauka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, prison cell is just ćelija in both Croatian and Serbian. Croatian uses ćebitelj for human family, while Serbian uses porodica, and both usually use just porodica for families in biology (sets of closely related species).

There are also different terms in math, and generally school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>triangle</td>
<td>trokut</td>
<td>trougao (trougl-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rule (to draw lines)</td>
<td>ravnalo</td>
<td>lenjir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straight line</td>
<td>pravac (pravc-)</td>
<td>prava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curve</td>
<td>krivulja</td>
<td>kriva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sum</td>
<td>zbroj</td>
<td>zbir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>degree</td>
<td>stupanj (stupnj-)</td>
<td>stepen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equation</td>
<td>jednadžba</td>
<td>jednãčina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lecture, class in school</td>
<td>sat</td>
<td>čas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class (group of students)</td>
<td>razred</td>
<td>odjeljenje</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, notice that razred in both Croatia and Serbia means grade in school (e.g. prvi razred first grade).

Some words have only a slightly different form due to different adaptation of foreign words (this table includes only characteristic words showing ways words differ):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accent</td>
<td>akcent</td>
<td>akcenat (akcent-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fascist</td>
<td>fašist</td>
<td>fašista</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flu</td>
<td>gripa</td>
<td>grip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cassette</td>
<td>kazeta</td>
<td>kaseta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mayonnaise</td>
<td>majoneza</td>
<td>majonez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orange</td>
<td>naranča</td>
<td>narandža / pomorandža</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chimp</td>
<td>čimpanza</td>
<td>šimpanza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clown</td>
<td>klaun</td>
<td>klovn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The form kaseta is standard in Croatian as well, but it’s very rare in real use.

Some words adapted from Greek have k- in Croatian, and h- in Serbian; another, less common difference in such words is -b- vs -v-, and -c- vs -k-:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chemistry</td>
<td>kemija</td>
<td>hemija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chaos</td>
<td>kaos</td>
<td>haos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chlorine</td>
<td>klor</td>
<td>hlor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surgeon</td>
<td>kirurg</td>
<td>hirurg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labyrinth</td>
<td>labirint</td>
<td>lavirint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ocean</td>
<td>ocean</td>
<td>okean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some regions, countries and cities also have different names, sometimes the difference is slight:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>Atena</td>
<td>Atina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>Babilon</td>
<td>Vavilon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>Cipar (Cipr-)</td>
<td>Kipar (Kipr-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>Europa</td>
<td>Evropa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persia</td>
<td>Perzija</td>
<td>Persija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Nizozemska (adj.)</td>
<td>Holandija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Rumunjska (adj.)</td>
<td>Rumunija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Španjolska (adj.)</td>
<td>Španija</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are more different names, these are just the most common; the difference applies to derived adjectives and names of inhabitants, of course. Additionally, there’s a difference in adjectives derived from places ending in -iški:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parisian</td>
<td>pariški</td>
<td>pariski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisian</td>
<td>tuniški</td>
<td>tuniski</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Words related to government, having the suffix -kracija in Croatian, have -kratija in Serbian:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bureaucracy</td>
<td>birokracija</td>
<td>birokratija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>democracy</td>
<td>demokracija</td>
<td>demokratija</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are terms which correspond to two words in Croatia – an ‘international’ one, and a word made from Slavic roots (or borrowed from Czech in the 19th century) – which are used interchangeably, or one is formal and the other colloquial, or there’s
a small difference in meaning, while only the ‘international’ word is used in Serbian. Common pairs are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian &amp; Croatian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>library</td>
<td>knjižnica</td>
<td>biblioteka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>machine</td>
<td>stroj</td>
<td>mašina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music</td>
<td>glazba</td>
<td>muzika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>system</td>
<td>sustav</td>
<td>sistem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, in Croatia, only knjižnica is used for public libraries, while biblioteka can mean any book collection, e.g. in someone’s home.

In Serbian, suffixes -ka and -kinja are more common to derive feminine nouns, while Croatian prefers -ica; again, in some terms there’s no difference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>university student (f)</td>
<td>studentica</td>
<td>studentkinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctor (f)</td>
<td>doktorica</td>
<td>doktorka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher (f)</td>
<td>učiteljica</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mathematician (f)</td>
<td>matematičarka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forms studentica and doktorica are accepted as standard in Serbian as well, but are much less common than the alternative forms.

There are some specific adjectives as well; again, some are only slightly different:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>common</td>
<td>opći</td>
<td>opšti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy, lucky</td>
<td>sretan (srećn-)</td>
<td>srećan (srećn-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used</td>
<td>korišten</td>
<td>korišćen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secure, safe</td>
<td>siguran (sigurn-)</td>
<td>bezbjedan (-n-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vocabulary differences in verbs**

Verbs ending in -isati (-iše) are very characteristic of Serbia and most of Bosnia; they usually correspond to Croatian verbs in -irati («). They are all adaptations of foreign words. Common ones are:
verb | Croatian | Serbian
--- | --- | ---
define | definirati («) | definisati (-še)
formulate | formulirati («) | formulisati (-še)
generate | generirati («) | generisati (-še)
function | funkcijirati («) | funkcionišati (-še)
ignore | ignorirati («) | ignorisati (-še)
integrate | integrirati («) | integrisati (-še)
intervene | intervenirati («) | intervenisati (-še)
manage, oversee | kontrolirati («) | kontrolisati (-še)
operate | operirati («) | operisati (-še)
reform | reformirati («) | reformisati (-še)
reserve | rezervirati («) | rezervisati (-še)
tolerate | tolerirati («) | tolerisati (-še)

(The thin vertical line, as usual, divides the constant part on the left of it from the variable part on the right.) They also have stress on different syllables.

However, it’s completely wrong to think that all Croatian verbs in -irati correspond to Serbian verbs in this way. In fact, there are many verbs in -irati used in Serbia as well, such as:

analizirati («) analyze | planirati («) plan
diplomirati («) graduate (on univ.) | studirati («) study (on univ.)
kopirati («) copy | šokirati («) shock
krejirati («) create | trenirati («) train
maskirati («) mask | varjirati («) vary
parkirati («) park (a car) | etc.

Also, some Croatian -irati verbs correspond to Serbian ones in -ovati (-uje).
Common ones are:

verb | Croatian | Serbian
--- | --- | ---
improvise | improvizirati («) | improvizovati (-uje)
isolate | izolirati («) | izolovati (-uje)
combine | kombinirati («) | kombinovati (-uje)
compensate | kompenzirati («) | kompenzovati (-uje)
modernize | modernizirati («) | modernizovati (-uje)
organize | organizirati («) | organizovati (-uje)
pack | pakirati («) | pakovati (-uje)
When such verbs have -cirati in Croatian, they have -kovati in Serbian:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disinfect, sanitize</td>
<td>dezinficirati («)</td>
<td>dezifikovati (-uje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identify</td>
<td>identificirati («)</td>
<td>identifikovati (-uje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complicate</td>
<td>komplicirati («)</td>
<td>komplikovati (-uje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modify</td>
<td>modificirati («)</td>
<td>modifikovati (-uje)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occasionally, there’s a non-trivial correspondence to Croatian -irati verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>comment</td>
<td>komentirati («)</td>
<td>komentarisati (-še)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many recently adapted verbs – mostly colloquial – often have just -ati in Croatia vs -ovati (-uje) in Serbia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>like (on Facebook)</td>
<td>lajkati</td>
<td>lajkovati (-uje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surf</td>
<td>surfati</td>
<td>surfovati (-uje)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strike (in workplace)</td>
<td>štrajkati</td>
<td>štrajkovati (-uje)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are few more verbs are used a bit differently in Serbian.

The verb smjeti (smije, smio, smjela) may – in Ekavian form smeti – has an additional meaning in Serbia: dare.

The verb umjeti (umije, umio, umjela) know how – in Ekavian form umeti – is quite common in Serbia:

Umijem da plivam! I know how to swim. (Ijekavian)
Umem da plivam! (the same, Ekavian)

These verbs are specific as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>Croatian</th>
<th>Serbian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be silent</td>
<td>šutjeti / šutiti</td>
<td>čutati (čuti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>move, shift</td>
<td>pomićati (pomiče)~</td>
<td>pomjerati («)~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pomaknuti (pomakne)</td>
<td>pomjeriti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pomerati («)~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pomeriti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mention</td>
<td>spominjati ~¹</td>
<td>pominjati ~¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spomenuti (spomene)</td>
<td>pomenuti (pomene)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watch, look at</td>
<td>promatrati («)</td>
<td>posmatrati («)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grammar and other differences

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. The use of these adverbs is different in Croatian and Serbian:

Puno hvala! Thanks a lot. (mostly Croatian)
Mnogo hvala! Thanks a lot. (Serbian, sometimes Croatian)
Jako sam umorna. I’m very tired. (mostly Croatian)
Mnogo sam umorna. I’m very tired. (Serbian)
Vrlo sam umorna. I’m very tired. (both languages, more formal)

Observe that mnogo is normally used in both Croatian and Serbian meaning much before comparatives: mnogo veći much bigger. This is a subtle difference.

There some often-used nicknames for men in Serbia ending in -a: Pera (from Petar), Vlada (from Vladimir and similar), Brana (from Branislav), etc., all behaving as any name ending in -a. They are quite rare in Croatia, where forms Pero, Vlado, etc. are preferred.

A famous difference is preference for da + present instead of infinitives in Serbia. Using infinitives in Serbia is not ungrammatical, but they are simply rarely used (especially in speech); these results are from Google™, in thousands (try yourself similar expressions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form</th>
<th>Croatia (.hr)</th>
<th>Bosnia (.ba)</th>
<th>Serbia (.rs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Željem da kažem</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Željem reći</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Željem da idem</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Željem ići</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As usual, Bosnia (which includes Ijekavian Serbian in parts of Bosnia) is somewhere in between.

Montenegrin

Montenegrin uses more or less the same vocabulary and spelling conventions as Serbian, but only the Ijekavian variant. It uses few specific forms, like nijesmo vs. Croatian/Serbian nismo we aren’t. Words having sequences dj in Croatian often have d in Montenegrin:
Recently the Montenegrin alphabet introduced two additional letters: ś and ż (there are Cyrillic versions as well) for specific consonants heard in speech there – but they are rarely used in real life.

It has been observed that Montenegrin public media have recently started to use more Croatian forms than before.

**Bosnian**

*Bosnian* (or: *Bosniak*, there’s a dispute over name – there are disputes about almost everything) uses only Latin script and Ijekavian. Two spelling differences (e.g. *Njujork* and *imaću*) are used sometimes in Bosnian, but it seems that Croatian versions occasionally prevail (*New York*, *imat ću*). Standard 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 when not in Croatian (one example is *lahko easy* vs Croatian *lako*; of course, *lahko* exists in some dialects in Croatia too, but it’s not standard). There are some specific terms, e.g. *daidža uncle* (Croatian *ujak*).

Bosnia-Herzegovina is today officially tri-lingual, as evidenced by this warning on a box of cigarettes that displays three *identical* sentences (the first one is just in Cyrillic; I have taken a photo of an actual box):

```
Пушенье озбиљно штети вама и другима око вас. Pušenje ozbiljno šteti vama i drugima oko vas.
Пушене озбильно штети вама и другима около вас. Pušenje ozbiljno šteti vama i drugima oko vas.
```
L1 Common Names

These are the most common names in Croatia in recent decades, from government statistics and other sources. Names marked with * are popular in 2000's, at least according to lists of primary schools students.

These are the common female names (all ending in -a):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ana *</td>
<td>Ivana</td>
<td>Ljubica</td>
<td>Nina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anamarija</td>
<td>Ivona</td>
<td>Lucija *</td>
<td>Paola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andreja ¹</td>
<td>Jadranka</td>
<td>Magdalena</td>
<td>Patricija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonija ¹</td>
<td>Jana</td>
<td>Maja</td>
<td>Petra *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anja</td>
<td>Jasmjna</td>
<td>Marija *</td>
<td>Renata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anja</td>
<td>Jelena</td>
<td>Marijana</td>
<td>Sandra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arijana ¹</td>
<td>Karla *</td>
<td>Marjna</td>
<td>Sanja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Kata</td>
<td>Marta *</td>
<td>Sara *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branka</td>
<td>Katarjna</td>
<td>Martjna *</td>
<td>Snježana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brankica</td>
<td>Katica</td>
<td>Maša</td>
<td>Silvija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dora *</td>
<td>Klara</td>
<td>Matea *</td>
<td>Suzana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunja</td>
<td>Kristina</td>
<td>Mia *</td>
<td>Tanja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eljena</td>
<td>Ksenija</td>
<td>Mihagla</td>
<td>Tamara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ema *</td>
<td>Lana *</td>
<td>Mirjana</td>
<td>Tea *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>Laura *</td>
<td>Mirna</td>
<td>Tena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabrijela</td>
<td>Lea *</td>
<td>Monika</td>
<td>Tihana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>Leona</td>
<td>Morana</td>
<td>Tina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordana</td>
<td>Leonarda</td>
<td>Nada</td>
<td>Valentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helena</td>
<td>Lidija</td>
<td>Natalija</td>
<td>Vedrana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irena</td>
<td>Lorena</td>
<td>Nika *</td>
<td>Vesna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iva</td>
<td>Lucija *</td>
<td>Nikoližna</td>
<td>Željka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Names marked with a subscript one (¹) are also often found in alternative spelling, without the -j-, e.g. Andrea instead of Andreja.

These are common (and less common) female names not ending in -a and therefore not changing in cases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dolores</td>
<td>Erin</td>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>Nives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris</td>
<td>Ines *</td>
<td>Karmen</td>
<td>Meri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli</td>
<td>Ingrid</td>
<td>Natali</td>
<td>Stefani</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are common male names ending in a consonant:

(under construction)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alen</td>
<td>Dragan</td>
<td>Krešimir</td>
<td>Mladen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antun</td>
<td>Dragutin</td>
<td>Kristijan</td>
<td>Petar (Petr-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branimir</td>
<td>Filip *</td>
<td>Krunoslav</td>
<td>Patrik</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are male names like René that behave as if ending in a consonant (A Renéa, etc.).

These are common male names ending in -o or -e; when they get any case ending, the final vowel is removed (e.g. Marko → A Marka):

- Darko
- Hrvoje
- Jadranko
- Karlo
- Mate

The following male names are common in Dubrovnik and the surrounding area; they change as Marko:

- Đivo
- Pavo
- Stijepo
- Vlaho
- Niko

These are common male names ending in -io; when they get any case ending, it's attached to -ij- (e.g. Mario → A Marija):

- Antonio
- Dario
- Mario
- Silvio

These are common male names ending in -a. They change as any noun in -a:

- Andrija
- Borna
- Ivica
- Luka
- Nikola
- Jurica
- Matija
- Saša

Some of these names, e.g. Borna, Ivica and Saša as sometimes used as female names.

There are common male names (historically nicknames) that behave as if ending in -a, that is, Ante → A Antu, etc.

- Ante
- Braco
- Bruno
- Dado
- Dino
- Drago
- Duje
- Edo
- Frano
- Franjo
- Ivo
- Ivo

(to be expanded)
L2 Countries and Nationalities

(under construction; some stress marks and data missing)

This is a list of often used country and region names, in Croatian, together with associated adjectives, and names of inhabitants (both male and female)

The first line contains the English name of a region/country, the Croatian name, and if the name is an really an adjective, there's a mark (adj.); otherwise, adjective is listed after an arrow; then there are names for inhabitants, first male, then female, separated by a tilde.

Although the names of inhabitants are unpredictable, there are couple of common patterns. Nouns for many inhabitants follow the ‘ac/ka scheme’:

Amerikanac (Amerikanc-) ~ Amerikanka
The part before -ac, -c- and -ka stays the same (but observe the stress shift left in feminine, in the standard stress scheme!) so there's no need to list all forms over and over; I'll instead just write – in the usual way:

Amerikanac (-c-) ~ -ka

There's a scheme that's a small variation to the previous, the ‘ac/kinja scheme’:

Danac (Danc-) ~ Dankinja
It applies only to short names (one syllable before -ac), and there's no stress shift.
I'll write just:

Danac (-c-) ~ -kinja

There's yet another common scheme for nouns, where male noun is always shortened in plural forms, the ‘in/ka scheme’:

Kanđanin (N-pl Kanđani) ~ Kanđanka
Observe that the stress is the same in male and female noun. I'll write just:

Kanđanin (N-pl -i) ~ -ka

Regardless of the scheme, the endings, there's a rule for all nouns for male inhabitants: they always have plural with just -i, regardless of number of syllables:

Hrvat Croat → Hrvati  Rus Russian → Rusi

This means that consonant shifts in masculine N-pl apply as well:

Čeh Czech → Česi  Grk Greek → Grci

Furthermore, certain names of male inhabitants have specific forms (listed below) and are marked by an asterisk (*).

Some countries have more than one name for inhabitants in use; the more common is listed first.
These are common countries and regions in Europe:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>country/region (→ adjective)</th>
<th>inhabitants, male ~ female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria Austrija → austrijski</td>
<td>Austrijanac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain Britanija → britanski</td>
<td>Britanjac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium Belgija → belgijski</td>
<td>Belgijanac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia Bosna → bosanski</td>
<td>Bosanjac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria Bugarska (adj.)</td>
<td>Bugarin (N-pl -i) * ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia Hrvatska (adj.)</td>
<td>Hrvat ~ Hrvatska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus Cipar (Cipr-) → ciparski</td>
<td>Ciparacin (N-pl -i) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Rep. Češka (adj.)</td>
<td>Čeh ~ Čehinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark Danska (adj.)</td>
<td>Danac (-c-) ~ -kinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England Engleska (adj.)</td>
<td>Englez ~ Engleskinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland Finska (adj.)</td>
<td>Finac (-c-) ~ -kinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France Francuska (adj.)</td>
<td>Francuz ~ Francuskinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany Njemačka (adj.)</td>
<td>Njeman (N-je) ~ Njemica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece Grčka (adj.)</td>
<td>Grč ~ Grčinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary Mađarska (adj.)</td>
<td>Mađar ~ Mađarica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland Irska (adj.)</td>
<td>Irac (-c-) ~ -kinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland Island → islandski</td>
<td>Islandanin (N-pl -i) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy Italija → talijanski[1]</td>
<td>Talijan ~ Talijanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands Nizozemska (adj.)</td>
<td>Nizozemac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway Norveška (adj.)</td>
<td>Norvežanin (N-pl -i) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland Poljska (adj.)</td>
<td>Poljak ~ Poljakinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal Portugal → portugalski</td>
<td>Portugalac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia Rusija → rusi</td>
<td>Rus ~ Ruskinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania Rumunjska (adj.)</td>
<td>Rumunj ~ Rumunjka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland Škotska (adj.)</td>
<td>Škot ~ Škotkinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia Srbija → srpski</td>
<td>Srb ~ Srpskinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia Slovačka (adj.)</td>
<td>Slovak ~ Slovakinja</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Country/Region and Region Adjectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Inhabitants, Male ~ Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slavonia</strong></td>
<td><strong>Slovenski</strong></td>
<td>Slov*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spain</strong></td>
<td><strong>Španjolska</strong></td>
<td>Španj*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sweden</strong></td>
<td><strong>Švedska</strong></td>
<td>Šved*an (N-pl -i) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Switzerland</strong></td>
<td><strong>Švicarska</strong></td>
<td>Švica*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkey</strong></td>
<td><strong>Turčin</strong></td>
<td>* ~ Turk*inja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wales</strong></td>
<td><strong>velški</strong></td>
<td>Velš*an (N-pl -i) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are common countries and regions outside Europe:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Inhabitants, Male ~ Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Africa</strong></td>
<td><strong>afrički</strong></td>
<td>Afrikan*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>America</strong></td>
<td><strong>američki</strong></td>
<td>Amerikan*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arabia</strong></td>
<td><strong>arapski</strong></td>
<td>Arap* ~ Arapkinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil</strong></td>
<td><strong>brazilski</strong></td>
<td>Brazil*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada</strong></td>
<td><strong>kanadski</strong></td>
<td>Kan<em>ad</em>an (N-pl -i) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chile</strong></td>
<td><strong>čileanski</strong></td>
<td>Čile<em>an</em>ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>China</strong></td>
<td><strong>kineski</strong></td>
<td>Kine* ~ Kineskinja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egypt</strong></td>
<td><strong>egipatski</strong></td>
<td>Egip*ćan (N-pl -i) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>India</strong></td>
<td><strong>indijski</strong></td>
<td>Indij*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Japan</strong></td>
<td><strong>japanski</strong></td>
<td>Japan*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are major regions within Croatia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Inhabitants, Male ~ Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dalmatia</strong></td>
<td><strong>dalmatinski</strong></td>
<td>Dalmatin*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Istria</strong></td>
<td><strong>istarsi</strong></td>
<td>Istrijan ~ Istrijanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zagorje</strong></td>
<td><strong>zagorski</strong></td>
<td>Zagor*ac (-c-) ~ -ka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All masc. nouns that end in -in lose that ending in plural; furthermore, the noun **Turčin Turk** has specific forms in plural:
The nouns **Arapin** and **Bugarin** have double present tense forms, e.g. both **Arap** and **Arapin**, etc. (shorter forms are not accepted in Standard Serbian).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Srbin</th>
<th>Turčin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Srbina</td>
<td>Turčina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-pl</td>
<td>Srbi</td>
<td>Turci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLI-pl</td>
<td>Srbima</td>
<td>Turkima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-pl</td>
<td>Srbe</td>
<td>Turke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-pl</td>
<td>Srba</td>
<td>Turaka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Easy Croatian (rev. 47b) / L2 Countries and Nationalities
**L3 Cities and Towns**

This chapter contains grammatical information about towns and cities in Croatia – e.g. do they change like adjectives, or they have a specific-case base – and Croatian names some other important cities.

There are many settlements with town status in Croatia (although many of them are fairly small). The following ones consist of one word:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bakar (-r-)</th>
<th>Krk</th>
<th>Pula</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belišće</td>
<td>Kutina</td>
<td>Rab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benkovčac (-c-)</td>
<td>Kutjevo</td>
<td>Rijeka (DL -ci)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bjelovar</td>
<td>Labin</td>
<td>Rovinj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buje</td>
<td>Lepoglava</td>
<td>Samobor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buzet</td>
<td>Lipik</td>
<td>Senj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cres</td>
<td>Ludbreg</td>
<td>Sinj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crikvenica</td>
<td>Makarska (adj.)</td>
<td>Sisak (-c-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Čabar (-r-)</td>
<td>Metković</td>
<td>Skradin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Čakovčec (-c-)</td>
<td>Našice f pl.</td>
<td>Slatina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Čazma</td>
<td>Nin</td>
<td>Slunj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daruvar</td>
<td>Novalja</td>
<td>Solin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delnice f pl.</td>
<td>Novigrad</td>
<td>Split</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drniš</td>
<td>Novska (adj.)</td>
<td>Supetar (-r-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubrovnik</td>
<td>Obrovac (-c-)</td>
<td>Šibenik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Đakovo</td>
<td>Ogulin</td>
<td>Trilj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Đurđevac (-c-)</td>
<td>Omis</td>
<td>Trogir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garešnica</td>
<td>Opatija</td>
<td>Umag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gliptić</td>
<td>Opuzen</td>
<td>Valpovo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospić</td>
<td>Orahovica</td>
<td>Varaždin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hvar</td>
<td>Orosevje</td>
<td>Vinkovci m pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilok</td>
<td>Osijek</td>
<td>Virovitica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imotski (adj.)</td>
<td>Otočac (-c-)</td>
<td>Vis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivančec (-c-)</td>
<td>Otok</td>
<td>Vodice f pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jastrebarsko (adj.)</td>
<td>Ozalj (-lj-)</td>
<td>Vodnjan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karlovac (-c-)</td>
<td>Pag</td>
<td>Vrbno (-c-)</td>
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<td>Kastav (-v-)</td>
<td>Pakrac</td>
<td>Vrbosko (adj.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaštela n pl.</td>
<td>Pazin</td>
<td>Vrgorac (-c-)</td>
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<td>Klanjec (-c-)</td>
<td>Petrinja</td>
<td>Vrlika (DL -ci)</td>
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<td>Knin</td>
<td>Pileternica</td>
<td>Vukovar</td>
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<td>Komiza</td>
<td>Ploče f pl.</td>
<td>Zabok</td>
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<td>Kopriwnica</td>
<td>Popovača</td>
<td>Zadar (-r-)</td>
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<td>Korčula</td>
<td>Poreč</td>
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<td>Kraljevica</td>
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<td>Krapina</td>
<td>Pregrada</td>
<td>Zlatar</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Since Križevci and Vinkovci would have two consonants before the G-pl ending -a, they are split by another a:

Križevci → iz Križevaca
Vinkovci → iz Vinkovaca

The following names consist of an adjective + noun:

Beli Manastir  Hrvatska Kostajnica  Slavonski Brod
Donja Stubica  Mali Lošinj  Stari Grad
Donji Miholjac (-c-)  Mursko Središće  Sveta Nedelja
Duga Resa  Nova Gradiška  Varaždinske Toplice f pl.
Dugo Selo  Novi Marof  Velika Gorica
Grubišno Polje

There are four specific names:

Biograd na Moru – only the 1st word changes
Ivanić-Grad – only the last part changes
Novi Vinodolski – contains two adjectives
Sveti Ivan Zelina – contains an adjective and two nouns

These names are often shortened to just Biograd, Ivanić, Novi and Zelina, and change normally (Novi like an adjective).

Warning. Some towns have names that deviate from Standard Croatian, e.g. it’s rather Sveta Nedelja instead of Nedjelja.

These major cities in Europe have Croatian names different than English ones:

Atena Athens  Bukurešt Bucharest  Rim Rome
Beč Vienna  Kijev Kiev  Solun Salonica
Beograd Belgrade  Napulj Naples  Trst Trieste
Budimpešta Budapest  Prag Prague  Venecija Venice

Several German, Italian, Polish and Russian cities have names closer to native ones than in English:

Keln Cologne  Minhen Munich  Torjno Turin
Milano Milan  Moskva Moscow  Varšava Warsaw

Some major cities in Europe have slightly specific pronunciation in Croatian:

Berlin London Madrid Paríz

Adjectives are normally derived from cities and towns (except ones that are already adjectives) by adding -ski. However, some cities have irregular forms or there are consonant alternations:

Beč → bečki  Paríz → pariški
Dubrovnik → dubrovački  Prag → praški
Đakovo → đakovački  Šibenik → šibenski
Križevci → križevački  Trst → tršćanski
Moskva → moskovski  Zagreb → zagrebački

Cities in -k, -ka, -ca or -ce have adjectives in -čki:

Crikvenica → crikvenički  Osijek → osiječki
Krk → krčki  Rijeka → rječki
Našice → našički  Zabok → zabočki
Core Dictionary

A small, 'core' dictionary is included.

Each item contains a base word, and one or more derived words:

- **brod** m *ship* — base word
- **brodski** rel adj. — derived word

Each word is defined with its form (here: **brod**), type (here: m) and meaning (here: *ship*). The types are abbreviated as follows:

- **m** noun, masculine gender (not people/animals)
- **mª** noun, masculine gender (people/animals)
- **f** noun, feminine gender
- **n** noun, neuter gender
- **adj.** adjective
- **pass. adj.** passive adjective
- **adv.** adverb
- **impf.** verb, imperfective
- **perf.** verb, perfective
- **v.p.** verb pair: an imperfective and a perfective verb
- **v.t.** verb triplet: an imperfective and 2 perfective verbs

Both nouns and adjectives with specific *case-bases* have them immediately after their nominative form.

*Nouns* with non-obvious forms are listed with them. If a noun uses the preposition **na** in a obvious way (e.g. not *on table*), it's marked in the following way:

- l/a physical location/destination
- act. used metaphorically, as activity (e.g. **na kavi**)
- met. meteorological conditions (e.g. **na suncu**)

Terms with gender pairs (mª and f) are listed in a way that the generic noun comes first. For example, **prijatelj** mª stands for both masculine and generic *friend*; the same holds for **lav** mª *lion*; for a group of friends of mixed sex, you would use **prijatelji**; for a group of lions, **lavovi**, unless all are females.

However, generic names for *cat* and *fox* are **mačka** f and **lisica** f; you would use masculine terms only for those cats and foxes you're sure they are masculine; for a mixed group of cats, you would use **mačke**. Therefore, feminine nouns are listed first for *cat* and *fox*.

It's assumed that two-syllable masc. nouns that have one-syllable case-base get just an -i in N-pl, as all masc. nouns with more than one syllable do:

- **kupac** (kupc-) mª *customer, buyer* → N-pl **kupci**

When it's not the case, the N-*pl* is listed (and all plural forms follow from it):
**češalj (češlj-) m (N-pl češljevi)**

Adjectives (except for passive and relational adjectives) are assumed to have regular comparatives (with -iji). If it's not so, the comparative is listed, if there's no comparative, it's again marked as (no comp.).

Verbs are listed with their arguments. Besides standard abbreviations (i.e. A = accusative, etc.) there are the following ones:

- **CC** content clause
- **DC** desire clause
- **INF** another verb in infinitive

Certain entries have a link to a chapter (or more chapters) with examples and usage notes, marked with §.

After that, there are regional and other variations, in curly braces {...}. They use the following abbreviations:

- **B** parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina
- **colloq.** colloquial in most of Croatia
- **E** Ekavian (used in Serbia)
- **HL** h-less: Serbia, parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, colloquially parts of Croatia
- **I** Ikavian (parts of Dalmatia, Istria)
- **M** Montenegro
- **NW** Northwest Croatia, roughly greater Zagreb region
- **R** colloquial in a part of Croatia
- **S** Serbia
- **std.** Standard Croatian
A
a conj. and, but § 12, 55
adresa f address (mail, street)
ako conj. if § 70
alat m tool
ali conj. but § 55
andeo (andel-) m§ angel
· andeoski rel. adj.
Amerikanac (Amerikanc-) m§ American
· Amerikanka f
· američki rel. adj.
apoteka f (colloq.) pharmacy (also: ljekarna)
auto (aut-) m car
autobus m bus
· autobusni rel. adj.
automobil m car (more formal)
· automobilski adj.
autocesta f highway (na” l/d) (also: autoput)
avion m airplane
· avionski rel. adj.

B
bacati ~ baciti v.p. throw
· bačen pass. adj. thrown
bajka f (G-pl bajki) fairy tale
baka f (DL baki) grandmother
· bakin poss. adj.
balkon m balcony
banka f bank
bar / barem adv. at least
baviti se² impf. (I) spend time, be engaged in
beba f baby
berba f (G-pl berbi) vintage, harvest of fruits
brati (bere) ~ po- v.p. pick (fruits, flowers)
besplatan (besplatn-) adj. free, offered without payment
bez prep. (+ G) without
bezbrižan (bezbrižn-) adj. not worried at all
bicikl m bicycle
bijeg m (N-pl bijegovi) escape, flight
bijel adj. (comp. bjelji, bjeliji) white
· bjelina f whiteness, empty space on paper
bilježiti ~ za- v.p. note {E: beležiti}
bilježnica f notebook {E: beležnica}
biljka f plant (vegetation)
· biljni rel. adj. herbal
birati ~ izabrati (izabere) v.p. select, choose (A); se² get elected
· biran pass. adj. selected, elected
bistar (bistr-) adj. clear; smart, bright
· bistrija f transparency
biti (je² +; imper-2 budi) ~ (bude) v.p. be (many uses)
bježati (bježi) ~ pobijeći (pobjegne,
pobijegao, pobijegla) v.p. escape; run away from DL
blagajna f cash register (na” l/d) {B/S: kasa}
blagajnik m§ cashier
· blagajnica f
· blato n mud
· blatan (blatn-) adj. muddy
blizak (blisk-) adj. (comp. bliži) close
· blizina f closeness
blizu adv. close; (+ G) close to
coca f bottle
bog m§ god
· božica f goddess
· božji rel. adj.
bogat adj. rich
· bogatsstvo n richness, plenty
bogataš m§ rich man
· bogatašica f rich woman
· bogataški rel. adj.
boja f color; paint {colloq: farba; coast: pitura}
bojati (boji) (Std: bojiti) ~ o- (~) v.p. paint (e.g. fences; for paintings: slikati)
<table>
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<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>bojati (boji) se² impf. be afraid (of G)</td>
<td>§ 69</td>
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<tr>
<td>bol f (sometimes m) pain (pl usually bolovi m)</td>
<td>§ 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>bolan (boln-) adj. painful</td>
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<td>bolest f illness, disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>bolesnički m adj. person, patient</td>
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<tr>
<td>- bolesnica f</td>
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<tr>
<td>- bolesnički rel. adj.</td>
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<td>bolestan (bolesn-) adj. ill</td>
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<td>bolnica f hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>- bolnički rel. adj.</td>
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<tr>
<td>boljeti (boli, bolio, boljela) impf. hurt (the person who experiences pain is in A)</td>
<td>§ 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>bolji adj. comp. better; → dobar</td>
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<td>bor m pine tree</td>
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<td>borac (borc-) m adj. fighter</td>
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<td>borba f (G-pl borbi) fight</td>
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<td>bgoriti se² impf. fight; (s I) fight with I; (protiv G) fight against G</td>
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<td>brada f chin; beard</td>
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<td>brak m marriage</td>
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<tr>
<td>- u braku pred. married</td>
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<td>- bračni rel. adj. marital</td>
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<td>brana f dam</td>
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<td>braniti ~ o- («) v.p. A / se² (od G)</td>
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<tr>
<td>defend (A / oneself) (from G)</td>
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<td>branošu f flour</td>
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<td>brat m adj. brother; as pl. braća (coll.)</td>
<td>§ 40</td>
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<td>bratić m adj. male cousin (female: sestračka)</td>
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<td>brava f lock</td>
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<td>brdo n hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>- brdski rel. adj.</td>
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<td>brijati (brije) ~ o- v.p. shave A / se²</td>
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<td>brija f concern, worry</td>
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<tr>
<td>brinuti (brine) (se³) impf. worry; (za A) care (about A); (o DL) care (about DL)</td>
<td>§ 69</td>
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<tr>
<td>crven adj. red</td>
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<td>crisati (brise) ~ po-, iz- v.p. (A) delete, erase (A)</td>
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<td>brod m ship</td>
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<tr>
<td>- brodski rel. adj.</td>
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<tr>
<td>broj m number, count</td>
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<tr>
<td>brojati / brojiti (broj) ~ iz- («) v.p. count (brojati is more common, although brojiti is Standard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>brz adj. (comp. brži) fast</td>
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<tr>
<td>- bržina f speed</td>
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<tr>
<td>na bržinu at first glance; on short notice</td>
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<td>bubreg m kidney</td>
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<tr>
<td>- bubrežni rel. adj.</td>
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<tr>
<td>bučan (bučn-) adj. noisy</td>
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<tr>
<td>budala f fool</td>
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<td>budan (budn-) adj. awake</td>
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<tr>
<td>buditi ~ pro- («) v.p. wake up A; se² wake up</td>
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<tr>
<td>buka f noise</td>
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<td>buni m well</td>
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<td>bura f strong wind on the Croatian coast, coming from inland</td>
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<tr>
<td>bušiti ~ pro- («) / iz- («) v.p. drill, perforate (A)</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>car m adj. (N-pl carevi) emperor</td>
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<td>- carica f empress</td>
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<tr>
<td>- carski rel. adj.</td>
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<td>cesta f road (na® l/d) {l: cista}</td>
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<tr>
<td>cijeli adj. whole {l: cilo}</td>
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<tr>
<td>- cijelina f the whole, entirety</td>
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<td>cijena f price</td>
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<td>cilj m aim; finishing line</td>
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<tr>
<td>- ciljni rel. adj.</td>
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<td>cipela f shoe</td>
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<td>crkva f church</td>
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<td>- crkvenci rel. adj.</td>
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<td>crn adj. black</td>
<td>§ 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>crta f line</td>
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<tr>
<td>crtati ~ na- v.p. draw (a sketch, drawing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>crve ž m drawing (na® l/d)</td>
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<td>crv m adj. (N-pl crvi) worm</td>
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<tr>
<td>crven adj. red</td>
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<tr>
<td>cura f (colloq.) girl, girlfriend (more formal: djevojka)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- curica f (colloq.) little girl</td>
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<tr>
<td>curiti ~ is- («) v.p. drip, leak</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ćetvrt (N-pl četveto) m flower
· četveće n coll.
· čvetni rel. adj.

Č
čaj m tea (na¨ act.)
· čajni rel. adj.
čak adv. even, more than expected
čamac (čamc-) m small boat
čarapa f sock, stocking
čaroban (čarobn-) adj. magic, magical
čargbnjak m³ wizard
čarolija f spell, magic
čast f honor
· svaka čast! kudos! (used as praise)
častan (časn-) adj. honorable
· časna sestra (or just časna) nun
čaša f glass (e.g. of water)
čavao (čavl-) m nail (to hammer, not on fingers)
čekati ~ do- v.p. wait (for A) § 3
češći m hammer
čekić m steel
· čelični adj.
čepe m cork
čest adj. (comp. češći) frequent
čestitati («) impf. (DL) (na¨ DL) congratulate (DL) (on DL)
čestitka f greting card
česati (češe) ~ po- («) v.p. scratch A (only to remove itch; to leave marks: grebatì)
česalj (češlj-) m (N-pl češljevi) comb
česljiati ~ po- v.p. comb A / se²
česnjak m garlic
četiri number 4
četrdeset number 40
četvero number four people § 47
četvorica coll. four men § 68
četvrtak (četvrtk-) m Thursday
četvrti adj. fourth § 31
· četvrt f quarter
· četvrtna f quarter
činiti impf. do, make A (raditi is more common); se² seem; impers. se² (DL) da... it seems (to DL) that...
čist adj. (comp. čišći) pure, clean
· čistoča f cleanliness
čistiti ~ q- v.p. clean (A)
čitati ~ pro- v.p. read (A) (to DL)
· čitan pass. adj. read
· čitljiv adj. readable
čitav adj. whole, undamaged
čizma f boot
čokolada f chocolate
· čokoladni rel. adj.
čovjek m³ human, man; as pl. ljudi m pl. § 29
čučati (čučići) ~ čučnuti (čučne) v.p. crouch
čudan (čudn-) adj. strange
čuditi ~ za- v.p. astonish A; se² be astonished (by DL); se² da... be astonished that...
čudo n (N-pl čuda / čudesa) wonder, miracle
čuti (čuje) impf. (can) hear A; mediopass; za A hear of A; da... hear that...
čupati ~ is- v.p. (iz G) pull out A (from G)
čuvati impf. (A) keep (A); A (G) guard A (from G)
čuvar m³ guard
· čuvvarica f
čvrst adj. (comp. čvršći) sturdy, robust, firm
· čvrstoća f firmness
čvor m knot

Č
češća adj. bald
· češćavost f baldness
češća m nugget of grilled minced meat, traditional Bosnian fast food
· čevapčić m the same thing as čevap
D

da conj. yes, so, that (many uses) § 50, 56, 59, 70, 77
dah m breath
davati (daje) ~ dati v.p. give (A) (to DL)
dakako adv. of course (similar: naravno)
dakle conj. therefore, so
dalek adj. (comp. dalji) distant, far
d rojina f distance
dan m (N-pl dani) day
· danas adv. today § 18
· današnji adj. today’s § 76
dar m gift
da na dar pred. as a gift
darjati («) ~ darovati (daruje), v.p.
donate, give (A) (to DL), as a gift (used for giving of any gift to anyone) (see also: poklanjati)
datum m date
debeo / debel (debel-) adj. (comp. debiji) thick; fat (for people/animals)
deblijina f thickness
deset m number 10
desni adj. right (opp. to left)
detalj m detail
· detaljni rel. adj.
devet m ({G} number 9)
dijeliti ~ po- («) (na A1) divide A (to A1); (s I, DL) share (with I, DL)
dijete (djetee-) n child; as pl. djeca coll. § 40
· dječji rel. adj. {B/S: also dječiji}
· dječji vrtić kindergarten
dim m smoke
· dimni rel. adj.
dio (dijel-) m (N-pl dijelovi) part
dirati ~ dirnuti (dirne) v.p. touch (A)
disati (diše) impf. breathe (A)
divan (divn-) adj. wonderful
divlji adj. (no comp.) wild
· divljina f wilderness
diviti se² impf. admire (DL)

dizalica f crane, jack, a device to lift things

dizati (diže) ~ dignuti (digne) v.p. (s G)
· lift A (off G); se² raise, get off bed
dječak m³ (formal) boy
· dječački rel. adj.
djed m³ grandfather {R: deda, did...}
djelomično adv. partially
djetinjstvo n childhood
djevojčica f (formal) little girl (also: curica)
djevojka f (formal) girl (also: cura)
djevojački rel. adj.
dlaka f body hair, animal hair (on head: kosa)
dlakav adj. hairy
dlani m palm (of hand)
dnevnii adj. daily
dnevnik m diary; daily newspaper;
· major evening TV news (na” l/d)
dno n bottom (na” l/d)
do prep. (+ G) next to G; up to G § 21
dobar (dobr-) adj. (comp. bolji) good
dobijati («) ~ dobiti (dobije) v.p. A (od G) get A (from G)
dodavati (dodaje) ~ dodati v.p. add (A) (to DL); pass A (e.g. ball) (to DL)
dodan pass. adj. added; passed (ball)
dogovarati («) ~ dogovoriti («) v.p. (s I) (da...) come to agreement (with I) (that...); se² (da...) negotiate (that...)
dogovoren pass. adj. agreed
dogovor m agreement, deal
dok conj. while § 54
dokaz m proof
· dokazni adj.
dokazivati (-uje «) ~ dokazati (dokaže)
v.p. prove (A); (DL) da prove (DL)
· that...
dolazak (dolask-) m arrival, coming
dolaziti ~ doći (dođe, došao, došla) v.p.
· arrive (opposite: odlaziti) § 42, 79
dolina f valley
dolje adv. down
dom m home
  · doma adv. home, at home § 16
  · domaći adj. (no comp.) domestic, home-made
domovina f homeland
  · domovinski rel. adj.
donji adj. (no comp.) lower
donositi («) ~ donijeti (donese, donio, donijela) v.p. bring A (to DL) § 65
donosen pass. adj. brought
doprinos m contribution
doprinositi («) ~ doprinijeti (doprineše, doprino, doprinišlera) v.p. contribute (to DL)
dopust m vacation (na~ act.)
dopuštati («) ~ dopustiti («) v.p. allow (A); da... allow (DL) to... (see also: dozvoljavati)
dopušten pass. adj. allowed
doručak (duroč-) m breakfast (na~ act.)
dosadan (dosadn-) adj. boring
dosta adv. enough; quite a lot
  · dostaj je DL G = DL has enough of G
  · dostupan (dostupn-) adj. accessible
dovoditi («) ~ dovesti (dovede, doveo, dovela) v.p. bring A (to DL) § 65
dovden pass. adj. brought
dovoziti («) ~ dovesti (doveze, doveo, dovela) v.p. bring, drive A / se² (to DL) § 65
dovršavati ~ dovšiti v.p. complete A (see also: završavati)
dovršen pass. adj. completed
dozvoljati («) ~ dozvoliti («) v.p. allow (A) (see also: dopuštati)
drag adj. (comp. draži) dear
drugačije / drukčije adv. differently
drugdje adv. elsewhere, somewhere else
drugi adj. second; another
država f state, country
  · državni adj.
držati (drži) impf. hold (A)
dubok adj. (comp. dublji) deep
dubina f depth
  · dubinski rel. adj.
dućan m small shop
dug m debt
dug adj. (comp. dulji / duži) long
dužina f length
duljina f length
dugak (dugačk-) adj. (no comp.) long
duh m spirit
dva number 2
dvojica coll. two men § 68
dvoje number two people § 47
dvorac (dvorc-) m castle
dvorana f hall, big room
dvoranski rel. adj.
dvorati («) ~ dovesti (doveze, doveo, dovela) v.p. bring, drive A / se² (to DL) § 65
dvorište n courtyard, yard (na~ / u~ l/d)
dvorišni rel. adj.
dvostruk adj. (no comp.) double

Dž

džamija f mosque
džem m jam
džep m pocket
  · džepni rel. adj.

don m sole (of e.g. shoe)

ekipa f team, crew
ekipni rel. adj.
ekran m (TV) screen (na~ l/d)
elektroč (električ-) adj. electric
emitirati («) impf. emit, broadcast (A)
Engleska m³ Englishman
  · Engleskinja f Englishwoman
  · Engleska f (adj.) England
  · engleski adj. English
eno pres. (+G) there's G (over there)! § 22

É

ekipa f team, crew
  · ekipni rel. adj.
ekran m (TV) screen (na~ l/d)
elektroč (električ-) adj. electric
emitirati («) impf. emit, broadcast (A)
Engleska m³ Englishman
  · Engleskinja f Englishwoman
  · Engleska f (adj.) England
  · engleski adj. English
eno pres. (+G) there's G (over there)! § 22
eto pres. (+G) there's G! § 22

evo pres. (+G) here's G! § 22

F
faliti impf. (colloq.) miss; uses cases unlike English: what/who is missing is in N; optionally, who is affected/feels it is in DL (see also: nedostajati) § 23

fakultet m univ. department (na“ act.)
· fakultetski rel. adj.

fen m hairdryer

film m movie, film (na“ media, l/d)
· filmski rel. adj.

fin adj. subtle, fine
· finoća f refinement

Francuz mª Frenchman
· Francuskinja f Frenchwoman
· Francuska f (adj.) France
· francuski adj. French

frizer mª hairdresser
· frizerka f
· frizerski rel. adj.
· frizerski salon hairdresser's

frižider m (colloq.) fridge (used almost always, although Standard is hladnjak)

G

gablec m (colloq. inland) mid-day meal, usually when at work (colloq. coast: marena; Standard: užina)
gać f pl. underpants
· gaćice f pl. panties
gadan (gadn-) adj. nasty, disgusting
gadati impf. aim (at A)
galama f fuss, uproar
galeb mª (N-pl galebovi / rare galebî) gull, seagull
garaža f garage
· garažni rel. adj.
gasiti ~ u- (~) v.p. extinguish A; se² smother
gazda mª landlord, owner (of a shop, bar etc.)
· gazdarica f

gdje adv. where § 15 {M: de, gđe}
glad f hunger
· gladan (gladn-) adj. hungry
glas m voice
glasan (glasn-) adj. loud
glava f head
· glavni adj. capital, main, principal
gledati ~ po- v.p. watch A
· gledan pass adj. watched
gluh adj. (no comp.) deaf
· gluhoća f deafness

glumac (glumc-) mª actor
· glumica f actress
· glumački rel. adj.

glup adj. (comp. gluplji) dumb, stupid
· glupost f stupid thing, stupidity

gljiva f mushroom
gnijezdo n nest
godina f year [g. / god.]
· godišnji adj. yearly, annual
· godišnji (odmor) vacations [g.o.]
· godišnje doba season (e.g. summer)
gol adj. (no comp.) naked {S: go (gol-)
gol m goal (in football, etc.) (na“ l/d)
golem adj. (no comp.) enormous, gigantic
golub mª (N-pl usually golubovi) pigeon
· golubica f
gomila f crowd, mob
gorak (gork-) adj. (comp. gorči) bitter
· gorčina f bitterness
gore adv. up
gorjeti (gori, goro, gorjela), also goriti ~ iz- (~) v.p. burn
gospodar mª master
· gospodarica f mistress
gospodin mª mister (polite title) [g.] § 72
gospoda f madam [gda]
gospodica f miss [gdica]
gost m³ (N-pl gosti, G-pl gostiju) guest
  · gošća f
  · gostinski adj.
gostionica f tavern, inn
  · gostionički adj.
gotov adj. (no. comp.) prepared, ready, done
gotovina f cash
  · gotovinski rel. adj.
gover m speech
  · governi rel. adj.
govoriti («) ~ reći (reče, rekao, rekla)
  v.p. (o DL) speak (about DL); da... tell that...
grad m city, town
  · gradski rel. adj.
graditi ~ iz- («) / sa- («) v.p. build (A)
gradanin m³ (N-pl građani) citizen, city dweller
  · građanka f
  · građanski adj. civil
graham m bean(s)
grana f branch
  · granški adj.
  · granje n coll.
  · grančica f small branch, twig
granica f borderline, limit (na° l/d)
  · granični adj.
grebati (grebe) ~ o- v.p. scratch (A)
  (leaving marks; to scratch very lightly: češati)
greben m reef
grijeh m (N-pl grijesi / grijehovi) sin
grijehiti ~ po- («) v.p. err, make mistake, sin
grijati (grije) ~ za- / z- v.p. warm up A / se² (opposite: hladiti) [E: grejati]
  · grijan pass. adj. heated
gristi (grize, grizao, grizla) impf. bite (A)
grb m emblem, coat of arms
grm m bush
  · grmlje n coll.
grob m tomb
groblje n cemetery (na° l/d)
grom m thunder
grozan (grozn-) adj. terrible
grub adj. (comp. grublji) rough, brutal
grubost n crudeness, brutality
gubiti ~ iz- («) v.p. lose (A)
gubitak (gubitk-) m loss
guliti ~ o- («) v.p. peel A / se² (to peel "skin", orange, potato...; for onions: ljūštiti)
guma f rubber; (car) tire
  · gumen adj. rubber
gumb m (N-pl gumbi) button {B/S: dugme (dugmet)}
gumica f eraser
gurati ~ gurnuti (gurne) v.p. push (A)
  · gurnut pass. adj. pushed
guska f goose
gust adj. (comp. gušći) dense, thick, viscous
  · gustogća f density
gušter m³ lizard
gušterica f small lizard (e.g. Podarcis sucula, Podarcis melisellensis)
gutati ~ pro- v.p. swallow (A)
gutljaj m gulp, sip
gužva f rush, (traffic) jam

H
hajde (verb with only imperative) word used for encouraging, c'mon, let's go § 53
himna f (G-pl himni) anthem
hitan (hitn-) adj. urgent
  · hitna (pomoć) ambulance
hlače f pl. trousers {S: mostly pantalone}
hlad adj. shade
hladan (hldn-) adj. cold
  · hladno je DL = DL is cold
  · hladnoća f cold
hladiti ~ o- («) v.p. cool A; make A cooler; se² cool + mediopass.
  (opposite: grijati)
hladnjak m (formal) fridge (rare; usually colloq. fržider m is used)
htjeti (hoće +, htio, htjela) impf. want
A / INF § 31
hodati impf. walk (to walk a dog: šetati)
hodnik m hallway
hrabar (hrabr-) adj. brave
• hrabrost f courage
hrana f food
hraniti ~ na- («) v.p. feed A / se²
• hranjiv adj. nutritious
hrpa f pile, heap
Hrvat m² Croatian (person)
• Hrvatica f
• hrvatski adj. Croatian
• Hrvatska f (adj.) Croatia
hvala f thank you (polite word)
hvatati ~ uhvatiti v.p. catch (A)

i conj. and § 55
iako conj. although § 70
ići (ide, išao, išla) impf. go
idući adj. (no comp.) next
igla f needle
igra f game, play
igrač m² player
• igračica f
igračka f toy
igrati ~ od- v.p. play A (sport); se² (s I)
   play (with I); also mutual se²
ili conj. or § 55
imati impf. (negative: nemati) have A
   (used also in existential constructions)
ime (imen-) n (pl imeña-) name
inače adv. otherwise, in other situations
inozemstvo n foreign countries
• u inozemstvu abroad
ipak adv. nevertheless, however
iscrpljen adj. exhausted
• iscrpljenost f exhaustion
ishod m outcome

isključivati (-uje «) ~ isključiti («) v.p.
   exclude A; switch off A; mediopass.
• isključen pass. adj. turned off, excluded
• isključiv adj. exclusive, restricting
iskopati perf. → kopati
• iskopan pass. adj. dug out
iskorištavati («) ~ iskoristi («) v.p.
   utilize, exploit A
• iskorišten pass. adj. exploited
• iskorištavanje n exploitation
iskra f spark
iskren adj. sincere, truth telling
• iskrenost f frankness, sincerity
iskusan (iskusn-) adj. experienced
• iskustvo n experience
ispit m school test, exam (na~ act.)
• ispitivati (-uje «) ~ ispitati («) v.p.
   assay, test (A)
• ispitan pass. adj. tested, examined
ispod prep. (+ G) under G, below G § 42
• ispravljati ~ ispraviti v.p. correct A § 79
   • ispravljena pass. adj. corrected
ispravak (ispravč-) m correction
ispravan (ispravn-) adj. correct, right, functioning
ispred prep. (+ G) in front of § 42
• ispričati perf. → pričati
• ispričan pass. adj. told; excused
ispunjavati («) ~ ispuniti v.p. fulfill A
• ispunjen pass. adj. fulfilled, filled in
ispustati («) ~ ispustiti («) v.p. drop A,
   emit A (gas, sound)
• ispuštiti pass. adj. left out, dropped
isti adj. (no comp.) same
istiti (ističe) ~ istići (istikne, istakao, istakla) / istaknuti (istikne) v.p.
   emphasize A; se² stand out
• istaknut pass. adj. distinguished,
   standing out
istina f truth
istok m east (na~ l/d)
• istočni adj. eastern
istraživati (-uje «) ~ istražiti («) v.p. / explore A
istražen pass. adj. explored
iz prep. (+ G) from, out of (opposite to u" DL) § 21
iza prep. (+ G) behind, after § 42
izabrati perf. → birati
izazov m challenge
izbjeglica m³/f refugee
izbjeglički adj.
izbliza adv. closely, from close distance
izbor m choice
izbori m pl. elections (na" act.)
izbrisati perf. → brisati
izbrisano pass. adj. erased
izbrojati / izbrojiti («) perf. → brojati
izbrojen pass. adj. counted
izbušiti perf. → bušiti
izdaleka adv. from afar
izgledati («) impf. look, appear § 12
izgled m look, appearance
izgorjeti / izgoriti perf. → gorjeti
izgraditi perf. → graditi
izgrađen pass. adj. built
izgubiti perf. → gubiti
izgubljen pass. adj. lost
izlaziti ~ izači (izađe, izašao, izašla) v.p. (iz G) exit (G) (the perf. verb has Std. forms izići etc.) (opposite: ulaziti) § 42
izlaz m exit (na" l/d)
izlagati (izlaže) ~ izložiti v.p. expose (A) (to DL)
izložen pass. adj. exposed, on exhibition
izlog m shop window
izložba f exhibition (na" act.)
između prep. (+ G i G1) between G and G1
izmijeniti perf. → mijenjati
izmijenjen pass. adj. changed, altered
izmišlji («) ~ izmišliti v.p. invent, contrive (A) (invent a story, a device)
izmišljen pass. adj. imagined, designed
iznad prep. (+ G) above G § 42
iznajmljivati (-uje «) ~ iznajmiti («) v.p. (od G) hire, lease A (from G); lease A to DL § 73
iznajmljen pass. adj. rented
iznenada adv. suddenly
iznenađati (-uje «) ~ iznenađiti («) v.p. (sl) surprise A / se² (with l)
iznenaden pass. adj. surprised
iznenadenje n surprise
iznimka f exception
izračunati perf. → računati
izračunat pass. adj. calculated, computed
izradio / izradio (-ije) perf. → raditi v.p. manufacture A
izrađen pass. adj. manufactured, made
izvaditi perf. → vaditi
izvađen pass. adj. pulled out, extracted
izvagati perf. → vagati
izvan prep. (+ G) outside of G
izveštaj m report
izvlačiti («) ~ izvući (izvuče, pres3-pl izvuku, izvukao, izvukla) v.p. (iz G) pull A / se² out (off from G)
izvučen pass. adj. pulled out
izvoditi («) ~ izvesti (izvede, izveo) v.p. bring out A (people, cattle); do, perform A, play A (music)
izveden pass. adj. performed (more)
izveden pass. adj. performed (once)
izvoli (pl izvolite) here you are, how may I help you, etc. (polite words) § 12
izvor m source (na" l/d)
izvorni rel. adj. original
izvrstan (izvršn-) adj. excellent
izvrašavati («) ~ izvrašiti («) v.p. execute, complete A
jadan (jadn-) adj. miserable  
jadnik m² poor, miserable person  
   · jadnica f  
jagoda f strawberry  
jaje (jaj- / jajet-) n (N-pl jaja) egg  
jak adj. (comp. jači) strong  
   · jakost f strength  
   · jačina f strength  
jakna f jacket  
jako adv.i. very, strongly § 8  
jasan (jasn-) adj. clear; understandable  
jastuk m pillow, cushion {colloq. coast  
   · kušin}  
jedan (jedn-) adj. one, used as number  
   1; § 18  
jesti (jede, jeo) ~ po eat (A)  
jedin adj. (no comp.) single, unique  
jednak adj. (no comp.) equal  
   · jednakost f equality  
jednom adv. once  
jednostavan (jednostavn-) adj. simple,  
   not complex  
   · jednostavnost f simplicity  
jedro (G-pl also jedara) n sail  
jedva adv. just, barely  
ejftin adj. cheap (opposite: skup)  
jelen m³ deer  
jelo n meal, dish  
ejlovnik m menu  
jer conj. because § 50  
jesen f autumn  
   · jesenski rel. adj.  
jezero n (pl jezer-) lake  
   · jezerski rel. adj.  
jezik m tongue; language  
   · jezični rel. adj.  
jez m² hedgehog; (sea) urchin  
jos adv. more; still § 2, 4  
jučer adv. yesterday [B/S: juče]  
   · jučerašnji rel. adj. yesterday’s § 76  
juha f soup {R/B/S: supa}  
junak m² hero  
   · junakinja f  
   · junački adj.  
jutro n morning  
   · jutros adv. this morning § 18  
   · jutrošnji adj. this morning’s § 76  
jug m south (na” l/d)  
   · južni adj. southern  

K  
kad(a) adv. when § 54, 70  
kada f bathtub  
kakav (kakv-) adj. (no comp.) what like  
kako adv. how  
kamen m stone  
   · kameni rel. adj.  
   · kamenje n coll. stones, rocks  
kamion m truck  
   · kamionski rel. adj.  
kanta f bin  
   · kanta za smeće trash can  
kao conj. as, like § 13  
   · kao da as if § 77  
kapa f cap  
kaplja f drop, droplet  
kaput m coat  
karta f card; map; (train, bus) ticket  
kasan (kasn-) adj. late  
   · kasnije adv. later  
kasniti ~ za- («) v.p. be late  
kašalj (kašlj-) m cough  
kašljati (kašljje) impf. cough  
kat m floor (in a building, e.g. first,  
second; ground floor: prizemlje) {B/S:  
   sprat} § 31  
katkad adv. from time to time  
kava f coffee (na” act.) {B/S: kafa}  
kazna f penalty, punishment  
kazati (kaže) impf. (da...) tell (DL  
   (that...)  
kažnjavati («) ~ kazniti v.p. (na” A1)  
punish A (with A1)  
   · kažnjen pass. adj. punished  
kći f (A kćer daughter {colloq./R: kćer,  
   kćerka...}  
keks m (N-pl keksi) biscuit  
kihati (kiše) ~ kihnuti (kihne) v.p.  
sneeze
kino n cinema {B/S: bioskop}
kip m statue
kipući adj. (no comp.) boiling
kiseo (kisel-) / kisel adj. sour, acidic
· kiselina f acid
kiša f rain (na` met.)
· kišni adj. rainy
kišiti impf. rain (much more often:
· padati i kiša)
kładiti se² ~ 0- v.p. (s l) (da...) bet (with
l) (that...)
klinac (klin-) m³ (colloq. NW, S) kid
· klinka f
klupa f bench
ključ m key
· ključni rel. adj.
knjiga f book
· knjižni, književni rel. adj.
knjižara f bookstore
književnost f literature
knjižnica f library {B/S: biblioteka}
kocka f cube; (colloq.) any square-like
shape
· kockica f dice
· kockast adj.
kočiti ~ za- (~) v.p. break (while driving
car, bike)
kod prep. (+ G) at G, by G § 20
· kod kuće at home
koji (+) adj. that, which (used for
relational clauses)
kokoš f hen, chicken
· kokoški rel. adj.
kolač m cake
kolica n pl. cart; wheelchair
kolčina f quantity
kolik adj. (no comp.) how big
koliko adv.q. how much/many § 8, 40
kolodvor m main (train, bus) station
· kolodvorski rel. adj.
kolovo m (formal) August {B/S:
· kolovoški adj.
koljeno n knee § 27
komad m piece [kom.] {S: parče
· (parčet-) n} § 47
končano adv. finally, eventually
konj m³ (N-pl konji) horse
· na konju pred. on the pig’s back
· konjski rel. adj.
kopati ~ is- v.p. dig (A)
kora f crust; bark
korak m step
korisnik m³ user
· korisnica f
· korisnički rel. adj.
korist f utility, effect, use
koristan (korisn-) adj. useful
krjstiti ~ is- v.p. use A; is useful (to DL)
kos adj. inclined, slanted
· kosina f incline
kosa f hair
kost f bone
koštati impf. cost A
košulja f shirt (T-shirt: majica)
kova f skin, leather
· kožni rel. adj.
kraći (krađe, krao) ~ u- (~) v.p. (od G)
· steal (A) (from G)
krađa f theft
kraj m end; part of land (na` l/d)
· na kraju finally
· krajnji rel. adj. ultimate
kralj m³ king
· kraljica f queen
· kraljevski rel. adj.
krasan (krasn-) adj. splendid, wonderful
kratak (kratk-) adj. (comp. kraći) short
krava f cow
· krvlji rel. adj.
krevet m bed (also: postelja)
· krevetni rel. adj.
kretati (kreće) ~ krenuti (krene) start
· moving, set off (see also: pokretati)
krilo n wing
kriv adj. (comp. krivliji) wrong; guilty § 79; curved
krivac (krivc-) m³ culprit, guilty one
kriviti ~ o- («) v.p. A blame
križ m cross {B/S: krst}
  · križni rel. adj.
krov m roof (na- l/d)
  · krovní rel. adj.
krpa f rug
krug m circle
  · kružni rel. adj. circular
kruh m bread
  · krušni rel. adj.
krumpir m potato (also often: krompir)
kruna f crown
  · krunski rel. adj.
krupan
kruna f crown
  · krunski rel. adj.
kruh m bread
  · kružni rel. adj. circular
kuća f house
  · kućni rel. adj.
kuhar m³ cook, chef
  · kuharica f (also means cookbook)
  · kuharski rel. adj.
kuha f cook, chef
kuhati
  · kuhić rel. adj.
kupac (kupc-) m³ customer, buyer
kupati ~ o- («) v.p. bathe A / se²
  · kupaće (gaće / gaće) swimming briefs § 80
  · kupacija (kostim) bathing costume § 80
kupovati (kupuje) ~ kupiti v.p. (od G)
  · kupljena f bought
kušati impf. taste A
kut m (N-pl also kutevi) angle; corner
  · kutni rel. adj.
kutija f box
kvar m breakdown, defect

kvariti ~ po- («) v.p. spoil A; se² get
  spoiled, break (e.g. car)

L
labud m³ (N-pl labudovi, rare labudi)
  · labudi rel. adj.
ladica f drawer
lagan adj. light; easy (has comp., but
  lakši is more frequent)
lagati (laže) ~ s- v.p. (o DL1) lie, tell lies
  (to DL) (about DL1)
lak adj. (comp. lakši) light; easy (mostly
  used in comp.; also: lagan) {B: lahak
  (lahk-)}
  · lakoča f ease
lanac (lanc-) m chain
  · lančan rel. adj.
lav m³ lion
  ·lavica f
  · lavljica rel. adj.
laž f lie
  · lažan
lažnik (lažn-) adj. fake
led m ice
  · leden adj. icy
leđa n pl. back (body part), backside
  · leđni rel. adj.
leptir m³ butterfly
let m flight
letjeti (leti, letio, letjela) impf. fly
  · leteći adj. flying
ležaj m (N-pl ležajevi / ležaji) bearing,
  generic bed
ležati (leži) impf. lie, rest (see also:
  lježati)
lječiti ~ iz- («) v.p. heal (A)
  · lječen pass. adj. treated
lječnik m³ physician
  · lječnica f
  · lječnički rel. adj.
lječko (N-pl lječkovi) medicine, drug
ljen adj. lazy {S: lenj}
  · ljenost f lazyness
ljepe adj. (comp. ljepeši) beautiful, nice
lijepiti ~ za- («) v.p. (za A) glue, stick A
(to A1)
· lijepljen pass. adj. glued
lijevi adj. (no comp.) left (as opp. to
right; opp: desni)
lijegati (liježe) ~ leći (legne, legao,
legla) v.p. lie down, come to rest (see
also: ležati)
limun m lemon
· limunski rel. adj.
lipanj (lipanj-) m (formal) June {B/S: jun
/juni} § 31
lisica f fox
· lisac (lisc-) m³
· lisičji rel. adj.
list m leaf; sheet of paper § 40
listati ~ pro- v.p. browse, turn pages of
A
listopad m (formal) October {B/S:
oktobar (oktober-)}
lišće n coll. leaves, foliage (see also:
list)
livada f meadow
· livadni rel. adj.
lizati (liže) ~ po- («) v.p. lick A
lokva f puddle, small pool of liquid
lomiti ~ s- v.p. break, fracture A
· lomljiv adj. fragile
lonac (lonc-) m pot
lopop m thief
· lopovski rel. adj.
lopta f ball
loš adj. bad
lov m hunt
lova f (slang) money
lovac (lovc-) m³ hunter
loviti ~ u- («) v.p. hunt, catch (A)
lud adj. (comp. ludı) crazy, insane
· ludost f crazyness, folly
luk m (pl. is rare) onion
luk m bow; arch
· lučni adj.
luka f port
· lučni adj.
lukav adj. sly, cunning

lupati ~ lupiti v.p. (po¨ / na¨ DL) hit (A),
bang (on DL) (violent hitting one
object against another)
lutati impf. roam, wander
lutalica m³/f wanderer
lutka f puppet

LJ
ljekovit adj. having curing properties
ljepilo n glue
ljepljiv adj. sticky
ljepota f beauty
ljestve f pl. ladder (colloq. NW: lojtre)
ljeto n summer {R: year; l: lito}
ljetni rel. adj.
ljetos adv. this summer
· ljetošnji rel. adj. this summer's
ljetovati (ljetuje) impf. spend summer
ljubav f (I also ljubavju) love
· ljubavnı rel. adj.
ljubazni adj. polite, gentle
· ljubavnost f gentleness
ljubica f adj. (no comp.) (Std) violet
· ljubica f (I also ljubavju) love
· ljubavni rel. adj.
ljubazni adj. polite, gentle
· ljubavnost f gentleness
ljubičast adj. (no comp.) (Std) violet
· ljubicast adj. (no comp.) (Std) violet
ljubljen f (I also ljubavju) love
· ljubavni rel. adj.
ljubljen f (I also ljubavju) love
· ljubavni rel. adj.
ljubljen f (I also ljubavju) love
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· ljubavni rel. adj.
ljubljen f (I also ljubavju) love
· ljubavni rel. adj.
ljubljen f (I also ljubavju) love
· ljubavni rel. adj.

M
mač m sword
mačić m³ kitten {B/S: mače (mačet-)}
mačka f cat
  m. mačak (mačk-) m²
t. mačji rel. adj.
   magarac (magarc-) m² donkey
   magarica f
   magarčić rel. adj.
   magla f fog, mist
   maglovit adj. foggy
   mahati (maše) impf. wave (to DL)
   majica f (T-)shirt
   majka f (DL majci) mother
   majmuni m² monkey, ape
   majmunski rel. adj.
   maknuti (makne) perf. → micati
   malen adj. (no comp.) small
   mali adj. (comp. manji) small
   malo adv. a bit, little (opposite: puno)
   mama f mom
   manje adv. comp. less (opposite: više)
   m. manjina f minority
   marena f (colloq. coast) small meal
     (na¨ act.) {colloq. inland: gablec; Std: užina}
   marka f (postal) stamp; mark
     (currency); brand
   maslac m butter {colloq./B/S: putar
     (putr-)}
   maslina f olive
   m. maslinov rel. adj.
   m. maslinast olive-colored
   mast f grease, fat
   mastan (masn-) adj. fatty
   m. masnoća f fat (e.g. in food)
   maziti ~ po- («) v.p. pet, gently stroke
     A; se² snuggle
   mazati (maže) ~ na- v.p. (na A1) spread
     A (on A1) (to "spread butter", "apply cream to skin", etc.; otherwise: širiti)
   med m honey
   medvjed m² bear
   m. medvjedica f
   m. medvjedi rel. adj.
   m. medvjeđa usluga disservice
   među prep. (+ l) among

međunarodni adj. (no comp.)
  international
   međutim adv. however
   mesnica f meat shop
   mese n meat
   m. mesni rel. adj.
   metla f broom
   mi (+) pron. 1st pers. pl., we § 22, 34
   micati (miče) ~ maknuti (makne) v.p.
     move A / se²
   m. maknut pass. adj. moved, removed
   mijenjati ~ izmijeniti («) / promijeniti
     («) v.p. change, exchange A/se²
   miješati ~ iz- («) / pro- («) v.p. mix, stir
     (A); se² (u¨ A) interfere (with A)
   m. miješan pass. adj. mixed, assorted
   minuta f minute [min.] {B/S: also
     minut}
   m. minutni rel. adj.
   mir m peace
   m. miran (mirn-) adj. peaceful
   miris m smell
   m. mirisan (mirisn-) adj. having pleasant
     scent
   m. mirisati (miriše) ~ za- v.p. (na¨ A)
     smells (of A); po¨ DL smell like DL
   mirovati (miruje) impf. rest, be still
   mirovina f (Std) pension; {colloq./B/S:
     penzija] (see also: umirovljenik)
   m. mirovinski rel. adj.
   masa f mass (Christian ritual)
   misao (mis-) f (I also mišlj) thought
   mislići impf. (o DL) think (about DL);
   da... think that...
   m. mišljenje n opinion
   miš m² mouse
   m. mišji rel. adj.
   m. mišić m muscle
   m. mišićni rel. adj.
   m. mišišav adj. muscular
   mjehurič m bubble
   mjenjačnica f exchange office
   mjera f measure
   m. mjerni rel. adj.
· mjeriti ~ iz- v.p. measure A
· mjesec m (G-pl mjeseci) moon; month [m.]· mjesečni rel. adj. monthly
· mjesečina f mixture
· mlad adj. (comp. mladi) young· mladost f youth
· mladi m pl. (adj.) young people
· mladić m³ young man, boyfriend {colloq. NW: dečko}· mlaz m (N-pl mlazovi / mlazevi) jet
· mlazni rel. adj.
· mljeko n milk· mlječni rel. adj.
· mljeti ~ s- v.p. wet A; se² wet, get wet (opposite: sušiti)
· moć f power· moćan (moćn-) adj. powerful
· moći (može, pres-1 mogu, pres-3pl mogu; mogao, mogla) impf. can, be able to INF § 38· moguć adj. possible
· mogućnost f possibility
· mokar (mokr-) adj. wet
· mola f plea; application
· moliti ~ za- («) v.p. (da...) kindly ask A (to...); se² (DL) (da...) pray (to DL) (to...); molin is used as please in communication
· molitva f prayer
· momak (momk-) m³ (G-pl momaka) young man; boyfriend {colloq. NW: dečko}· momčad f coll. team (of men) (see also: ekipa)
· momčadski adj.
· morati impf. must, have to INF § 38
· more f sea· (na”) at sea; at seaside
· morski rel. adj.
· mornar m³ sailor· mornarski rel. adj.
· mornarica f navy· mornarički rel. adj.
· most m bridge
· motor m engine; (colloq.) motorcycle· motorni rel. adj.
· mozak (mozg-) m (N-pl mozgovi) brain· moždani rel. adj.
· mračan (mračn-) adj. dark (unlit)
· mračen m darkness
· mrav m³ (N-pl mravi) ant· mravlji rel. adj.
· mreža f net, mesh {l: mreža}
· mrežni rel. adj.
· mrežast adj. net-like
· mražni f hate
· muda f fly {HL: muva}
· mudar (mudr-) adj. wise
· mudrost f wisdom
· muka f milk
· muha f fly {HL: muva}
· mukar f suffering
· muž m³/f client
· muož m³ husband

N
· nam prep. (+ DL) on, at § 15; (+ A) onto, at § 6, 42
· nacrtati perf. → crtati
· nacrtan pass. adj. drawn (figure, shape)
· način m way (of doing something)
· nad prep. (+ l) above
· nada f hope
· nadati se² impf. da... hope that... § 59; hope for DL
naginjati (naginje) ~ nagnuti (nagne) v.p. incline A; mediopass.
- nagnut pass adj. tilted, not horizontal or vertical
naglo adv. suddenly
nagroda f prize, award
- nagradni rel. adj.

nagrajivati (-uje «) ~ nagraditi («) v.p. award A; mediopass;
- nagrađen pass adj. awarded
nahrani («) perf. → hraniti
- nahranijen pass. adj. fed
naiv (naivn- ) adj. gullible, naive
- najvnoz f gullibility

nakon prep. (+ G) after
nalažiti ~ naći (nađe, našao, našla) v.p. find A; se² be located, be found (+ some place) § 42
- nađen pass. adj. found
namjera f intention
- namjeran (namjerne-) adj. intentional
namjeravati («) impf. intend to-INF
namještaj m (no pl.) furniture
nacionalni f pl. glasses {S: naočare f pl.}
- sunčane naočale sunglasses

napakako adv. upside down
napisati (napisci) perf. → pisati
- napisani pass. adj. written
napokon adv. finally, at last
napor m strain, effort
naporan (naporan-) adj. arduous, grueling, difficult

napuniti perf. → puniti
- napunjati perf. ~ napustiti («) v.p. abandon A
napušten pass. adj. abandoned
naranča f orange
narančast adj. orange
naravno adv. of course
narod m people, nation
- narodni rel. adj.
narucjivati (-uje «) ~ naručiti («) v.p. (od G) order (A) (from G) (eg. to order food, goods; for military orders:
- zapovijedati, naredjivati)
- naručen pass. adj. ordered
naruđba f commission, order
naselje n settlement, newly built part of a city
naslan (nasleln-) adj. violent
- naslje n violence
naslov m title

nastajati (nastaje) ~ nastati (nastane) v.p. come into being § 52
nastavljati ~ nastaviti v.p. continue (to-INF) § 60
- nastavak (nastavak-) m continuation, sequel

nastup m performance, act
nastupati («) ~ nastupiti («) v.p. act, come into effect
natičati (natiče) ~ nateći (nateče, pres-3pl nateku; natekao, natekla) v.p. swell
- natečen pass. adj. swollen
napis m inscription
naučiti («) perf. → učiti
- naučen pass. adj. learned

naziv m name (not of a person), term
nazivati ~ nazvati (nazove) v.p. call A (over phone); name A
- nazvan pass. adj. named; called over phone

nažalost adv. unfortunately § 42
ne " particle no, not § 4
nebo n (N-pl nebela / neb) sky (na" l/d)
- nebeski rel. adj.
nećak m nephew
- nećakina f niece
nedavni adj. recent
nedavno adv. recently
nedjelja f Sunday {B/S: also week}
- nedjeljni rel. adj.
nedostajati (nedostaje) impf. lack, miss
(who or what is missing is in N; one
who feels it is in DL) § 23
nedostatak (nedostatak) m lack, shortage; imperfection
negdje adv. somewhere § 41
nejasan (nejasni-) adj. unclear
neka particle used for permissions § 53
nekad(a) adv. some time ago; (colloq.)
sometimes
neki adj. some § 18
nekoliko adv. several
nemati impf. negative form of imati {I:
imati}
 nemoguć adj. impossible
nemoj verb having only imperative,
used for prohibitions § 53
neobičan (neobični-) adj. unusual
nepoznat adj. unknown
nepravda f injustice
nepravilan (nepraviln) adj. irregular
· nepravilnost f irregularity
neprestano adv. constantly
nepristojelj m³ enemy
· neprijeteljski rel. adj.
nered m mess, disarray, chaos
nesposoban (nesposobni-) adj.
· incompetent
· nesposobnost f incompetence
nesreća f accident {I: nesrća}
nesretan (nesretn-) adj. unhappy;
unlucky
nestajati (nestajem) ~ nestati
(nestane) v.p. disappear
nestrljiv adj. impatient
nešto (neč +) pron. something § 41
netko (nek +) pron. somebody
{ colloq./B/S: neko} § 41
neugodan (neugodni-) adj.
· inconvenient, unpleasant
· neugodnost f inconvenience, something unpleasant
nevidljiv adj. invisible

nezaboravan (nezaboravan-) adj.
· unforgettable
nezgoda adj. accident
ni’ / niti conj. neither (negation of i’)
nigdje adv. nowhere § 41
nijedan (nijedni-) adj. (no comp.) no
one, none
nikad(a) adv. never § 4
ništa (nič +) pron. nothing § 4, 41
nitko (nik +) pron. nobody
{ colloq./B/S: niko} § 41
niz prep. (+ A) down, along
nizak (nisk-) adj. (comp. niži) low; short
(for people) § 11
nizina f lowland
noć f night
· noćni rel. adj.
· noću adv. at night (also: po noći)
· noćas adv. tonight
· noćašnji rel. adj. tonight’s
noga f (G-pl nogu) foot, leg § 27
· nožni rel. adj.
nogomet m football (soccer) {B/S:
fudbal}
· nogometni rel. adj. {B/S: fudbalski}
nokt (nokt-) m (G-pl also noktiju) nail
(on finger, toe)
nos m (N-pl also nosevi) nose
· nosni rel. adj.
nositi impf. carry A (to DL); (colloq.)
· wear A
· nošen pass. adj. carried; worn § 65
nov adj. new
· novost f something new, news
novac (novc-) m money
novčanik m wallet
novinar m³ journalist
· novinarski rel. adj.
nož m knife
nuditi ~ po- v.p. offer A (to DL)
nužan (nužn-) adj. necessary
· nužnost f necessity
NJ
njega f care
njegov poss. adj. his § 19
njen / njezin poss. adj. her § 19
nježan (nježn-) adj. tender, soft, gentle
· nježnost f tenderness, gentleness
njihov poss. adj. their § 19
njihati (njiše) ~ za- («) v.p. sway, rock
· a A / se²
njuh m sense of smell
njušiti ~ po- v.p. sniff A
njuška f snout

O
o” prep. (+ DL) about § 42
obala f shore, coast (na” l/d)
· obalni rel. adj.
obadra number both § 30
obada number (colloq.) both § 30
obavijest f notice, information
obavijestavati («) ~ obavijestiti («) v.p. da... inform (A) that...; (o” DL) informs (A) (about L)
· obaviješten pass. adj. informed, notified
obećavati (« / often pres-3 obećaje) ~
obecati v.p. (da...) promise (DL) (to...)
· obećan pass. adj. promised
· obećanje n promise
običaj m tradition, custom
objavljava (u-uje «) ~ objaviti («) v.p. 
publish A (to DL); da... proclaim (to DL) (that...) (see also: izdavati)
· objavljena pass. adj. published
· objavljivanje n publishing
običan (običn-) adj. common, plain
obično adv. usually § 4
obilaziti ~ obići (obiđe, obišao, obišla)
visit A; (oko G) go around, bypass G § 42
obilazak (obilask-) m visit; detour
obitelj f family {R: familija; B/S: porodica}
· obiteljski adj. {B/S: porodični
objašnjavati («) ~ objasniti («) v.p. explain (to DL) A / CC § 59
· objašnjen pass. adj. explained
· objašnjenje n explanation
objesiti perf. → vješati
· obješen pass. adj. hanged
oblak m cloud
· oblačan (oblačn-) adj. cloudy
oblačiti («) ~ obući (obuče, pres-3pl
obuku; obukao, obukla) v.p. put on A
(clothes); dress A / se² (opposite: svlačiti) § 8
oblik (oblik-) m shape
oboji / obojiti perf. → bojati
· obojan / obojen pass. adj. colored
obožavati («) impf. adore, worship A
· obožavanje n adoration
obožavatelj m fan, someone who
adores somebody or something
· obožavateljica f
obrana f defense {B/S: odbrana}
obrazovan educated
· obrazovanje n education
obrok m meal; installment (of
payment)
obuća f (no pl.) footwear, shoes
obući perf. → oblačiti
· obučen pass. adj. dressed, trained
ocat (oct-) m vinegar {colloq. coast:
kvina; S: sirče n (sirčet-)}
ocjena f grade (in school), assessment
(in Croatia, grades are 1-5, where 5 is
the highest grade)
őčekjavati (u-uje «) impf. expect A / clause; mediopass; § 64, 69
· očekivan pass. adj. expected
očistiti perf. → čistiti
· očišćen pass. adj. cleaned
očito adv. obviously
od prep. (+ G) of, from; made of § 21
odabreti (odabere) perf. → birati
· odabran pass. adj. chosen
odakle adv. where from § 21
odbijati («) ~ odbiti (odbije) v.p. refuse
A; repel A (an attack)
- odbijen pass. adj. refused, not accepted

odgađati («) ~ odgoditi («) v.p.
postpone A; mediopass.
- odgoden pass. adj. postponed
- odgodiv adj. which can be postponed

odgovarati («) ~ odgovoriti («) v.p.
answer DL; suit, fit DL;
- odgovorajući pres. adj. suitable

odgovor m answer

dječa f (no pl.) clothes § 30

dječkom adv suddenly

dlažiti ~ otići (ode, otisao, otisla) v.p.
leave (from a place) § 42

doletjeti (odletim, odleto, doletjela)
perf. fly away

odlučivati (-uje «) ~ odlučiti («) v.p.
da... decide to...; decide to-INF

odluka f decision

odmah adv. immediately, at once

odmarati («) ~ odmoriti («) v.p. rest A / (se²)

odmor m rest, break (na~ on)

odnositi («) ~ odnijeti (odnese, odnio, odnijela) v.p. carry, take away A (to DL) § 65
- odnesen / odnijet pass. adj. carried away

odnos m relationship

drugst perf. → rasti
- odrastao (odraslı) adj. grown-up

drug (sječi)

odrug (sječen) pass. adj. cut off

odsvirati («) perf. → svirati

odvoditi («) ~ odvesti (odvede, odveo, odvela) v.p. take A § 65

odustajati (odustaje) ~ odustati (odustane) v.p. give up § 52

oduzimati ~ oduzeti (oduzme) v.p. (od G) seize, take away A (from G); subtract
- oduzet pass. adj. taken away; paralyzed

glas m ad

ograda f fence, barrier

ograničavati («) ~ ograničiti v.p. restrict
A
- ograničen pass adj. restricted, confined; narrow-minded

ogrebati perf. → grebati

ogrebati pass. adj. scratched

ogroman (ogromn-) adj. huge

oguliti («) perf. → gulić

oguljen pass. adj. peeled

ohladić («) perf. → hladiti

ohladen pass. adj. chilled

oko prep. (+ G) around; (+ A) about
(time)

oko n eye (as pl. oći f pl.) § 27
- očni rel. adj.

okolo prep. (+ G) around

okretati (okreće) ~ okrenuti (okrene)
v.p. turn A / se²
- okrenut pass adj. turned

okrutni (okrutn-) adj. cruel

okrutnost cruelty

okupati («) perf. → kupati

okvir m frame, framework

olovka f pencil

oluja f storm
- olujni rel. adj.

osam number 8

osjećaj m feeling, emotion

osjećati ~ osjetiti v.p. feel (A); da... feel that...

osjetljiv sensitive
- osjetljivost f sensitivity

oslobađati («) ~ osloboditi («) v.p. free
A / se²
- osloboden pass. adj. freed, set free

osnovati («) ~ osnovati (osnuje) v.p. set up, establish A (e.g. an organization)
- osnovan pass. adj. established

osnova f base, basis

osoba f person
- osobni adj. personal {B/S: lični}
- osobna (iskaznica) ID {B/S: lična karta}

osobića f characteristic
ostajati (ostaje) ~ ostati (ostane) v.p. remain, stay § 52
· ostali adj. (often as pron.) rest
osudjivati (-uje -) ~ osuditi («) v.p. (na A) sentence, judge (A) (to A1)
· osuđen pass. adj. sentenced, condemned
osvećivati (-uje -) se² ~ osvetiti se («) v.p. revenge (to DL)
osveta f revenge
osiježavati («) ~ osviježiti v.p. refresh, to refresh A / se²
· osiježen pass. adj. refreshed
· osiježenje n refreshment
oštari (oštr-) adj. sharp
· oštrina f sharpness
otac (oc-) m³ (N-pl očevi, sometimes oči) father
· očinski rel. adj.
otići perf. ~ odlaziti
otimati ~ oteti (otme) v.p. seize, hijack A
· otet pass. adj. hijacked, seized
otkrivati («) ~ otkriti (otkrije) v.p. discover A; uncover A / se²
· otkriven pass. adj. discovered; uncovered
otok m island (na I/d) {B/S: ostrvo}
· otočni rel. adj.
otpor m resistance
otporan (otporn-) adj. tough, resistant, sturdy
· otpornost f toughness, immunity
otvragati («) ~ otvoriti («) v.p. open A; mediopass.
· otvoren pass. adj. open
ovaj (ov-) adj. this (no comp.) § 18
ovamo adv. here (direction)
ovca f (G-pl ovaca) sheep
· ovan (ovn-) m³ (N-pl ovnovi)
· ovcji rel. adj.
ozibiljan (ozbiljn-) adj. serious
označavati («) ~ označiti («) v.p. mark, tag A
· označen pass. adj. marked, tagged
oznaka f mark, tag, highlight
oženiti («) perf. ~ ženiti
· oženjen pass. adj. married (man)
ožjak (ožjuk-) m (formal) March {B/S: mart} § 31

P
pa conj. and, then § 55
pad m fall
padati ~ pasti (padne, pao) v.p. fall
· + ispit fail exam
pakao (pakl-) m hell
· paklen adj.
palac (palc-) m (N-pl palci / palčevi) thumb
pametan (pamtn-) adj. smart
pamtiti ~ za- v.p. remember, memorize A / CC § 69
· pamćenje n memory
· pamtiv adj. memorable
pamuk m cotton
· pamučni rel. adj.
pandža f claw
papir m paper (but newspaper: novine)
· papirni rel. adj.
· papirnat adj.
apar m pair § 47
par adv. couple § 45
para f steam
· parni rel. adj.
parkiralište n parking lot
parkirati («) ~ s- v.p. park (vehicle) (A)
apas (ps-) m³ dog
· pseči adj.
· pasji rel. adj.
patiti ~ pro- («) v.p. suffer
· patnja f suffering
patka f duck
· patak (patk-) m³
· pačji rel. adj.
pauk m³ spider
paziti impf. take care, be careful
· pažnja f care, attention
· pažljiv adj. careful
pčela f bee
peć f stove, furnace
peći (peče, pres-3pl peku; pekao, pekla) ~ is- (») v.p. bake (A); mediopass.
  · pečen pass. adj. baked
pećnica f oven
penjati (penje) se² ~ popeti (popne) se² v.p. (na` A) climb (A)
pero n feather
  · perje n coll. feathers
pet number 5
peta f heel
petak f Friday
piće n (usually no pl.) drink
pijesak (pijesc-) m sand
  · pješčan rel. adj.
pile (pilet-) n (as pl. pilići) chicken
  · pileći rel. adj.
pisac (pisc-) m³ writer (used sometimes for fem. as well)
  · spisateljica f (formal)
pisati (piše) ~ na- («) v.p. write (A) (to DL)
pismo n (G-pl pisama) letter
pita f pie
pitati impf. ask (A-pers) (A-what / CC-question); § 59, 73
pitanje n question
piti (pije) ~ po- v.p. drink (A)
pivo n beer {colloq. NW piva}
  · pivski rel. adj.
pjena f foam
pjesma f (G-pl pjesama) song
pjesnik m³ poet
  · pjesnički rel. adj. poetic
pješće (also: pješke) adv. by foot, on foot
pjevač m³ singer
  · pjevačica f
  · pjevački rel. adj.
pjevati ~ ot- ~ za- v.t. sing (A) (to DL)
plahta f bed sheet {B/S: thin sheet: čaršav / čaršaf}
plakati (plače) ~ za- v.p. cry (with tears)
planina f mountain (na` l/d)
  · planinski adj.
plaćati ~ platiti v.p. pay (A) (to DL)
  · plaćen pass. adj. paid
plašiti ~ u- v.p. scare A; se² get scared (of G); se² da... get scared that...; § 69
plaví adj. blue § 11
plaža f beach (na` l/d)
ples m dance
  · plesni adj.
plesati ~ ot- ~ za- («) v.t. (na` A) dance (to A)
plima f tide
  · plimni rel. adj.
plivati ~ ot- ~ za- v.t. swim
ploviti ~ ot- («) ~ za- («) v.t. sail, navigate
pluća f pl. lung(s)
  · plućni rel. adj.
pljuštati (pljušti) impf. rain heavily
  (impers.)
pljusak (pljusk-) m rainshower
po prep. (+ DL) over surface of § 42;
  (with verbs of motion + A) to pick up § 50;
  (+ DL) according to § 42; (NOUN1
  po NOUN2) NOUN1 by NOUN2; (+ quantity) each (distributive)
pobjeda f victory
  · + nad` l victory over l
pobjednik m³ winner
  · pobjednica f
  · + nad` l over l
pobjedivati (-uje «) ~ pobijediti («) v.p.
  (u` DL) win (in DL); (u` DL) beat A (in DL)
  · pobijednik pass. adj. beaten (in a play)
pobjeđevati (pobjeđivatim) perf. → bježati
početak (početak-) m beginning (na` l/d)
počinjati (počinje) ~ početi (počne) v.p.
  begin, start; start to INF (opposite:
  prestajati, završavati) § 52
pod m walking surface, floor (story: kat)
pod’ prep. (+ I) under (location); (+ A) under (destination) § 37
podne (podnev-) n noon
• podnevni rel. adj.
podsjećati ~ podsjetiti v.p. (na A1) remind (A) (of A1); da... remind (A) to...
pogadati («) ~ pogoditi («) v.p. hit A; guess (A) (opposite: promašivati)
• pogoden pass. adj. hit, affected
pogled m look, view
pogledati perf. → gledati
pogodak (pogotk-) m hit (music hit: hit)
pogriješiti («) perf. → griješiti
pojesti (pojede, pojeo) perf. → jesti
• pojeden pass. adj. eaten
pokazivati (–uje «) ~ pokazati (pokaže)
v.p. show (A) (to DL); show (to DL) da... show (DL) that...
poklanjati ~ pokloniti («) v.p. donate, give gift A (to DL) (see also: darivati); (perf. only) se² bow to (DL)
• poklonjen pass. adj. given an a gift, donated
poklapati («) ~ poklopiti («) v.p. put lid on A; se² match, coincide
• poklopljen pass. adj. covered (pot)
poklon m gift (also: dar)
poklopač (poklopc-) m lid, hood
pokraj prep. (+ G) beside (also: pored)
pokretati (pokreće) ~ pokrenuti (pokrene) v.p. set A / se² to motion (opposite: zaustavljati)
• pokrenut pass. adj. started
• pokretljiv adj. mobile, unfixed
pokret m movement
pokrivač m blanket, covering
pokrivati («) ~ pokriti (potkrije) v.p. cover A / se²
• pokriven pass. adj. covered
pokušavati («) ~ pokušati v.p. try (to INF) (see also: probati) § 38
pokušaj m attempt
• + da... to ...
pola adv. half § 47
polovica / polovina f half § 47
pomak m shift, small movement
pomagati (pomaže) ~ pomogći (pomogne, pomogao, pomogla) v.p. help (DL) (to INF); (DL) da... to...
pomicati (pomiče) ~ pomaknuti (pomakne) v.p. move, shift A / se² (moving to another house, apartment: seliti) {B/S: pomjerati («) ~ pomjeriti)
• pomaknut pass. adj. shifted, out of place
pomoć f help, aid
• (+ DL) to DL
• pomoćni rel. adj. auxiliary, secondary
pomoćnik m² assistant, aid, helper
• pomoćnica f
pomorac (pomorc-) m² seaman
ponavljati («) ~ ponoviti («) v.p. repeat, do again A; mediopass;
• ponovljen pass. adj. done again
• ponovljiv adj. repeatable
ponijeti (poneze, ponio, ponijela) perf. take A (with oneself) § 65
ponoć f midnight
• ponoćni rel. adj.
ponas m pride
ponosan (ponosn-) adj. proud
popravak (popravk-) m repair
popis m list
popiti (popije) perf. → piti
• popijen pass. adj. drunk (intoxicated: pijan)
• popravljati ~ popraviti v.p. mend, fix, repair A; mediopass. improve § 79
• popravljjen pass. adj. repaired
posao (posl-) m (N-pl poslovi) job, business
• poslovn adj. business
poseban (posebn-) adj. special, extraordinary (opposite: običan)
posjećivati (-uje «) ~ posjetiti v.p. visit
A
poslati (posljaže) perf. → slati
· poslan pass. adj. sent
poslije adv. after, later § 49
postajati (postaje) ~ postati (postane)
v.p. become (N / adj-N) § 52
postavljati ~ postaviti v.p. set, install A § 60
· postavljen pass. adj. placed, set up
posuđivati (-uje «) ~ posuditi («) v.p.
(od G) borrow (A) (from G); lend (A) to
DL (colloq.) (for house or apartment:
iznajmljivati) § 73
· posuđen pass. adj. borrowed
pošta f post office, mail
· poštanski rel. adj.
poštar m² postman
· poštarica f
pošten adj. honest, fair
· poštenje n fairness, integrity
pošteno adv. fairly, justly; to great
extent, thoroughly
poštovati (poštujte) impf. respect A
· poštovan pass. adj. respected (used in
letters to address people) § 72
· poštovanje n respect (used also as
greeting)
potgonuti (potone) perf. → tonuti
potpis m signature
potpisivati (-uje «) ~ potpisati
(potpisje) v.p. sign A / se²
· potpisanj pass. adj. signed
potvrda f receipt, confirmation
potvrđivati (-uje «) ~ potvrđiti («) v.p.
confirm A
· potvrđen pass. adj. confirmed
povećalo n magnifying glass
povećavati («) ~ povećati v.p. enlarge,
increase, make bigger A; mediopass;
(opposite: smanjivati)
· povećan pass. adj. enlarged
povesti (poveze, povezao, povezla)
perf. take A (by driving) § 65
povijest f history {B/S: istorija}
· povijesni adj. historic {B/S: istorijski}
pozdrav m greeting
· (+ DL) to DL
pozdravljati ~ pozdraviti v.p. greet A
poznavati (poznaje) impf. know A, be
familiar with A (see also upoznavati)
· poznat adj. known, well-known
požar m uncontrolled fire (e.g. in a
building)
požurivati (-uje «) ~ požuriti («) v.p.
speed up, hurry (A) (see also: žuriti)
prag m threshold
prah m dust
praktičan (praktičn-) adj. handy, easy
to use
prašina f dust
prati (pere) ~ o- («) v.p. wash A / se²
pratiti impf. follow A
· praćen pass. adj. followed
pravda f justice
pravedan (pravedn-) adj. just, fair
pravi adj. (no comp.) true, right
pravilo n rule
praviti impf. make, create A
prazan (prazn-) adj. empty
· praznina f emptiness
praznik m public holiday
· praznici m pl. school vacation
predavati (predaje) ~ predati v.p. hand
over (A) (to DL); se² surrender (to DL);
(only impf.) give lectures (in A)
· predan pass. adj. handed over;
dedicated
predlagati (predlaže) ~ predložiti («)
v.p. propose, suggest (A) (to DL); da...
(DL) to INF
· predložen pass. adj. proposed
predmet m object
prednost f advantage
predsjednik m² president
· predsjednica f
· predsjednički rel. adj.
predstava f show, theatre play
predstavljati ~ predstaviti v.p.
represent A § 60
  · predstavljeno pass. adj. represented
pregled m inspection; (medical)
  examination
pregledavati («) ~ pregledati browse,
  examine A
  · pregledan pass. adj. examined
    (medically)
prehlada f cold (disease)
  · prehladene adj. having cold
predik m interruption, break
prekidati («) ~ prekinuti (prekine) v.p.
interrupt A / se²
  · prekinuti pass. adj. interrupted
prekidač m switch
preko adv. (+ G) across
prelaziti ~ preći (pređe, prešao, prešla)
  v.p. pass, go over (A) § 42
prenositi («) ~ prenijeti (prenese,
  prenio, prenijela) v.p. take, carry over,
transfer A (to DL) § 65
  · prenesen pass. adj. carried over;
    metaphorical
prepreka f obstacle
prestajati (prestaje) ~ prestati
  (prestane) v.p. cease, stop (INF) § 52
prestrašiti perf. → strašiti
  · prestrašen pass. adj. scared
pretpostavljati ~ pretpostaviti v.p. da...
  suppose, assume that... § 59
  · pretpostavljen pass. adj. supposed
pretpostavka f assumption
preuzimati ~ preuzeti (preuzme) v.p.
  (A (od G) take over (A) (from G)
  · preuzet pass. adj. taken over
prevoditi («) ~ prevesti (prevede,
  preveo) v.p. (s” G) (na” A1) translate
  (A) (from G) (to A1) § 65
  · preveden pass. adj. translated
prezime (prezimen-) n last, family
  name
pričati ~ is- («) v.p. tell A (to DL)
  prihvaćati ~ prihvatiti v.p. accept A;
mediopass. {B/S: prihvatati ~}
  · prihvaćen pass. adj. accepted
  · prihvatljiv adj. acceptable
prijatelj mª friend
  · prijateljica f
  · prijateljski adj.
  · prijateljstvo n friendship
prije adv. earlier; (+ G) before § 49
  · prijašnji rel. adj. former
prijedlog m proposal
prijeti impf. threaten (DL)
  · prijetnja f threat
prijevod m translation
prijeziv m transport
primjer m example
  · na primjer for example [npr.] § 42
princ mª (I princem, N-pl prinčevi)
  prince
  · princeza f princess
pripadati ~ pripastiti (pripadne, pripao)
  v.p. belong to DL
pripremati («) ~ pripremiti («) v.p.
prepare A / se²
  · pripremljen pass. adj. prepared
priprema f preparation (incl. food)
piriroma f nature
  · prirodan (prirodn-) adj. natural
prijatari (pristaje) ~ pristati (pristane)
  v.p. (da...) agree (to...); (na” A) agree
  (with A); dock (for ships) § 52
pritisak (pritisk) m pressure
prizemlje n ground floor § 31
prljav adj. dirty
proba f rehearsal
probati impf. try (A / INF)
prodavati (prodaje) ~ prodati v.p. sell
A; mediopass.
  · prodan pass. adj. sold
profesor mª professor
  · profesorica f
  · profesorski rel. adj.
prognoza f forecast
progutati perf. → gutati
  · progutan pass. adj. swallowed
proizvod n product
proizvoditi (κ) ~ proizvesti (proizvede, proizveo) v.p. produce A; mediopass. § 65
· proizveden past. adj. produced, made
· proizvodnja f production
prolaziti ~ proći (prođe, prošao, prošla) v.p. pass § 42
· prošao (prošli-) adj. (no comp.) past
· prošlost f past
proljeće n spring (season)
· proljetni rel. adj.
promijeniti («) perf. ~ mijenjati
· promijenjen pass. adj. changed
· promijenjiv adj. inconstant, variable
promašljati (-uje «) ~ promašiti v.p. miss (A)
· promašen pass. adj. missed, failed
promet m traffic {B/S: saobraćaj}
promjena f change
pronalaziti ~ pronaci (pronađe, pronašao, pronašla) v.p. find A (see also: naći) § 42
· pronađen pass. adj. found
propadati ~ propasti (propadne, propao) v.p. fall apart, collapse, fail
· propao (propal-) adj. (no comp.) failed
prorok m² prophet
prosinac (prosinc-) m (formal) December {B/S: decembar (decembar-)} § 31
· prosinački rel. adj.
proslava f celebration
prošli adj. past, former
prošlost f past
protiv adv. against (+ G)
protivnik m² adversary, rival
· protivnica f
· protivnički rel. adj. rival
provoditi («) ~ provesti (proveđe, proveo) v.p. spend A (a period of time); se² have time (usually fun) (spend money: trošiti) § 65
· provžen pass. adj. spent
prorok m² prophet
proza n pl. chest, breasts
· prsni rel. adj.
prst m (N-pl prsti) finger § 27
prst (prstap) m (N-pl prsteni / prstenovi) ring
prtžaga f (no pl.) luggage {S: prtljak m}
pružati ~ pružiti v.p. stretch out A; serve, offer A (to DL)
· pružen pass. adj. given (service), stretched out
prvi ord. adj. first § 31
pržiti ~ is- v.p. fry A; mediopass.
· pržen pass. adj. fried
ptica f bird
· ptliji rel. adj.
pucati impf. shoot (from a gun); crack
puhuti ~ puhnuti (puhne) v.p. blow
pun adj. full
puniti ~ na- v.p. fill A
· punjen pass. adj. filled
puno adv.q. a lot § 45, 63
pusa f (colloq. fam./children's) kiss
pust adj. empty, deserted
pustinja f desert, wasteland
· pustinjski rel. adj.
pustati ~ pustiti v.p. release, let go A
· pušten pass. adj. released
pušiti impf. smoke (A) (a cigar, cigarette)
· pušenje n smoking (cigarettes)
put m (I putem, N-pl putevi) way
· ordinal + put(a) time (e.g. third time)
· putni rel. adj.
putnik m² passenger, traveler
· putnica f
· putnički rel. adj.
putovati (putuje) ~ do- («) ~ ot- v.t. travel
putovnica f passport {B/S: pasoš}
puž m² snail
R
rabljjen adj. (no comp.) used
račun m bill, receipt
računalo n (formal) computer
računati ~ iz- v.p. compute, calculate
(A); se² count, have importance (impf. only); na" count on A (impf. only); (to count: brojati)
rad m work (na" act.)
· radni rel. adj.
radi i ~ napraviti v.p. work; do, function
radio (radij-) m radio (na" media)
· radijski rel. adj.
rado adv. used to express that some action is liked
· radost f joy
radnik m̊ worker
· radnica f
· radnički rel. adj.
radići ~ rodit v.p. give birth (to A); medipass.
· rođen pass. adj. born
· rođenje n birth
· rađanje n childbirth, parturition
rame (ramen-) m (pl ramen-) shoulder
ranj adj. early
raspoložen adj. in mood
· raspoloženje n mood
raspored m schedule, positioning
· na" + A/DL scheduled
raspravljati ~ raspraviti v.p. (o DL) discuss (DL)
rast m growth
rastajati (rastaje) se² ~ rastati (rastane)
se² v.p. (od G) divorce (from G)
rasti (raste, rastao, rasla) ~ od- («) v.p. grow (to grow something: uzgajati)
rat m war
· ratni rel. adj.
razgovarati («) impf. (s l) (preko G) (o DL) talk (to l) (over G) (about DL) (see also: govoriti)
razgovor m conversation (na" act.)
· razgovorni rel. adj. conversational, colloquial
razumjeti (razumije) impf. understand A; mutual se²
· razumijevanje n understanding
razmak m distance, gap
razmišljati («) ~ razmišliti v.p. (o DL) consider, ponder (DL); think deeply (about DL)
ravljati ~ razviti (razvije) v.p. develop A / se²
· razvijen pass. adj. developed
razvoj m development
· razvojni rel. adj.
reči (reče, pres-3 reku; rekao, rekla)
perf. → kazati
rečenica f sentence (in language)
· rečenični rel. adj.
red m order; queue
· u redu pred. OK
· (na") pred. used to indicate when it's someone's turn
· redni rel. adj. ordinal
rep m tail
· repni rel. adj.
rez m cut
rezati (reže) ~ iz- v.p. cut (A) (used for nice cuts, e.g. with a knife or saw; for others: sjecáti) {š: rizati}
riba f fish
· riblji rel. adj.
ribar m̊ fisherman
· ribarski rel. adj.
riječ f (I also riječju) word
rijedak (rijetk-) adj. (comp. rjeđi) rare, sparse
· rijetko adv. rarely, seldom
· rijetkost f rarity
rijeka f river
· riječni rel. adj.
riža f rice {š: pirinač}
rječnik m dictionary
rješavati («) ~ riješiti v.p. solve A; mediopass.
· riješen pass. adj. solved
· rješenje n solution
· rješiv adj. solvable
rob m² slave
· robinja f
· ropski rel. adj.
· ropstvo n slavery
rod m kin
· u rodu pred. related
roditelj m² parent
· roditeljski rel. adj.
· roditeljski sastanak parent-teacher meeting
rođendan m birthday; birthday party (na” act.)
· rođendanski rel. adj.
roniti impf. dive
roštilj m grill, barbecue (na” act.)
roza adj. indecl. (no comp.) (colloq.)
pink {Std: ružičast; S: roze}
rub m edge, margin (na” l/d)
· rubni rel. adj. marginal
ručak (ručk-) m main meal of the day, eaten at midday or early afternoon; dinner (na” act.)
ručati ~ po- v.p. have lunch
ručnik m towel {colloq. coast:
šugaman; B/S: peškir}
rugati se² ~ na- («) v.p. mock DL
rujan (rujnj-) m (formal) September
{B/S: septembar (septembr-)}
· rujanski rel. adj.
ruka f arm, hand
· ručni rel. adj. hand, manual
rukav m sleeve
rukavica f glove
rupa f hole
rušiti ~ s- v.p. demolish, tear down A;
mediopass.
ruža f rose
ružan (ružn-) adj. ugly
· ružnoca f ugliness
ružičast adj. pink

S
S” (sa” in certain positions) prep. (+ I)
with § 35; (+ G) off, from § 21
sačuvati («) perf. → čuvati
sad(a) adv. now
· sadašnji rel. adj. present, current § 76
· sadašnjost f present time, now
saditi ~ po- («) v.p. plant (A)
sadržaj m content; table of contents
saginjati (saginje) ~ sagnuti (sagne) v.p.
bow, duck, bend down A / se²
· sagnut pass. adj. bent (body)
sajam (sajm-) m (N-pl sajmovi) fair (na” act.)
salata f salad {Dalm. salata}
sam adj. (no comp.) alone
samljeti (samelje) perf. → mljeti
samo adv. just, only § 67
san (sn-) m dream
sanjati v.p. dream (A / CC); o DL
dream of DL
sapun m soap
sastajati (sastaje) se² ~ sastati
(sastane) se² v.p. (s” I) meet (I)
sastanak (sastank-) m meeting (na” act.)
sat m hour (N-pl sati); clock (N-pl
satovi)
· satni rel. adj.
savijati («) ~ savinuti (savine) v.p. bend
A / se²
sav (sv-) adj. (in Standard, gets e-endings) all, complete, total (mostly
used as a pronoun: neut. sing. as
everything, masc. plur. as everyone) §
41
savjet m advice; council, board
savršen adj. perfect
· savršenstvo n perfection
se² so-called reflexive particle § 8, 22,
25, 34, 64
sedam number 7
· sedmi ord. adj. seventh
selo n village
· na" + A/DL to/at countryside
· seoski rel. adj.
seljak m² villager
· seljanak f
· seljački rel. adj.
sestra f (G-pl sestara) sister
sestrična f female cousin (male: bratić)
shvaćati ~ shvatiti v.p. comprehend, realize (A/CC) {B/S: shvatati ~ } § 59
· shvaćen pass. adj. understood
· shvatljiv adj. understandable
siguran (sigurn-) adj. safe; assured, secure
· sigurno adv. for sure
· sigurnost f security, safety
sin m³ son
sinoć adv. last evening
· sinočnj i / sinočni rel. adj.
sir m (N-pl sirevi) cheese
· sirni rel. adj.
siromašan (siromašn-) poor (only for material poverty; for e.g. poor knowledge: slab, loš)
· siromaštvo n poverty
sirov adj. raw
svij adj. (comp. sivilji) gray (for hair: sijed)
siječanj (siječnj-) m (formal) January
{B/S: januar} § 31
· siječanski rel. adj.
sjeći (siječe, pres-3pl sijeku, sjecko, sjecla) ~ od- (») v.p. (na" A1) cut (A)
(to A1)
sijed adj. (no comp.) gray, white (hair)
silaziti ~ sći (siđe, sišao, sišla) v.p. climb down, descend
sječati se ~ sjetiti se v.p. remember (G/CC); § 20, 69
sjedati ~ sjesti (sjedne, sjeo) v.p. sit down, take a seat (this verb pair implies motion, while sjediti is static)
sjediti impf. sit (static)
sjedište n seat
sjena f shadow, shade
sjever m north (na" l/d)
· sjeverni adj. northern
skakati (skače) ~ skočiti v.p. jump
skidati ~ skinuti (skine) v.p. take off A (clothes, something hanging) / se²; (colloq.) download (A)
· skinut pass. adj. taken off
skok m jump
skoro adv. almost (also: quite rare, but Std. gotovo) § 9, 41
skretati (skreće) ~ skrenuti (skrene) v.p. (s G) deviate change direction (from G)
· skretanje n detour, intersection
skroman (skromn-) adj. modest, humble
skup adj. (comp. skupljii) expensive
· skupića f dearness, high prices
skupljati ~ skupiti v.p. collect A; se² shrink (for clothes)
slab adj. weak
· slabost f weakness
· slabiti ~ o- v.p. weaken
sladak (slatk-) adj. (comp. sladi) sweet
· slatkoća f sweetness
sladoled m ice-cream (na" act.)
slagati (slaže) ~ složiti v.p. arrange, put in order A; se² agree
slamati ~ slomiti v.p. (na" A1) break (A)
(to A1)
· slomljeni pass. adj. broken
slan adj. salty
· slanošt f salinity
slastičarnica f ice-cream & cakes shop (also: slastičarna)
slati (šalje) ~ po- v.p. send (A) (to DL)
slava f glory
· slavan (slavn-) adj. glorious, famous
slaviti ~ pro- v.p. celebrate (A)
· slavije n celebration, feast
sliečan (sliečn-) adj. similar, alike
· sliečnost f similarity
slijetiti impf. follow (A) (used literally; see also: pratiti)
slijep adj. (no comp.) blind
  · sljepeća f blindness
slika f painting, picture, photograph (na~l/d)
slikati ~ na- v.p. paint (A) (a painting);
  · impf. verb also means take photos
slina f saliva {S: pljuvačka}
sloboda f freedom
slobodan (slobodn-) adj. free,
  · uninhibited
slon m³ elephant
  · slonica f
služiti perf. → slagati
  · služen adj. assembled; complex
slučaj m (N-pl slučajevi) accident; case
  (in law, medicine)
  · slučajan ( slučajn-) adj. accidental
  · slučajnost f chance, randomness
sluga m³ (domestic) servant
  · sluškinja f
slušati ~ po- v.p. listen (to A)
služiti impf. serve DL; se² I use I
sljedeći adj. (no comp.) next
smeće n (no pl.) trash, waste
smedjedjeli adj. (no comp.) brown
smeštati ~ za- (~) v.p. obstruct,
  · discomfort (DL)
  · smetnja f disturbance, interference
smijati (smije) se² impf. (DL) laugh (at DL)
smijeh m laughter
smiješan (smiješn-) adj. (comp.
  · smiješniji) funny
smišljati v.p. contrive, devise, make a plan
  · smišljeni pass. adj. premeditated, devised
smjer m direction
smočiti perf. → močiti
smrt f death
  · smrti rel. adj.
  · smrtonosan (smrtonosn-) adj. deadly
snaga f force, strength
snalaziti se² ~ snači (snađe, snašao,
  · snašla) se² v.p. manage, find a way §
  · 42
snažan (snažn-) adj. strong (also: jak)
snijeg m (N-pl snijegovi) snow
  · snijegi rel. adj.
snimati ~ snimiti v.p. record (A) (to
  · record sounds and film/video)
soba f room
  · sobni rel. adj.
sok m juice
sol f salt {B/S: so (sol-) f}
soliti ~ po- (~) v.p. salt (A)
spajati ~ spojiti v.p. connect, join (A);
  · se² (na~ A) connect (to A), plug (into A)
spasati («) ~ spasiti v.p. rescue, save
  · A
  · spašen pass. adj. rescued, saved
spavati ~ zaspati (zaspi) {R/B/S: (zaspe)} v.p. sleep
spoj m junction, connection
spojiti perf. → spajati
  · spojen pass. adj. connected
spremati ~ spremiti v.p. prepare A;
  · store A; tidy A; se² get ready
  · spremljen pass. adj. stored, prepared
spremnik (spremn-) adj. ready, prepared
spustati ~ spustiti v.p. lower, take
down A; se² descend
  · + slušalicu hang up the phone
  · spušten pass. adj. lowered
srce n (G-pl srca / srdaca) heart
sreća f luck; happiness {I: srića}
  · sva sreća da... fortunately §
  · 59
sredina f middle
srednji adj. (no comp.) middle
sreten (sretn-) adj. happy; lucky {I:
  · sritan, B/S: srećan}
sresti (sreće) ~ sresti (sretna, sreo)
  · v.p. encounter, come across A; se²
  · mutual
srijeda f Wednesday

srpanj (srpnj-) m (formal) July {B/S: jun / juni} § 31
• srpanjski adj.
stablo n (G-pl tabala) tree

stado n herd

stajati (staje) ~ stati (stane) v.p. halt, come to stand (dynamic); fit (perf.) § 52

stajati (stoji) impf. stand (static) § 52

staklo n glass (material)
• staklen adj.

stalan adj.
• stalno adv. (no comp.) constantly, all the time

stan m apartment

stanica f station (na` l/d); cell (in body)

stanje n situation, condition

star adj. old
• starost f age, old age

stavljeti ~ staviti v.p. put A (dest) § 60

stizati (stiči) ~ stići (stigne, stigao), stigla v.p. arrive (INF) (in time)

sto number 100 § 46

stol m table, desk {B/S: sto (stol-)}

stolac (stolc-) m chair

stolica f chair

stolječe n century {B: vijek; S: vek}
• stoljetni adj. centennial

stotina f hundred § 46

strah m fear
• strah je2 A (G / da...) = A is afraid (of G / that...) (one who is afraid is in A) § 69

stran adj. unfamiliar, foreign

strana f side, face (of an object); page (na` l/d)

stranac (stranc-) mª foreigner
• strankinja f

stranica f page (na` l/d)

strast f passion

strašan (strašn-) adj. terrible

strašiti ~ pre- («) v.p. scare A; se2 get scared

stric mª father’s brother; paternal uncle
• strina f wife of stric

strog adj. (comp. stroži / strožiji) strict

stroj m machine {B/S: mašina}
• strojni adj.

strop m ceiling (na` l/d)
• stropni adj.

strpljiv adj. patient

stručnjak mª expert

struja f current; electricity
• stružni adj. electric

stup svjetla} n (adj., adv. indecl. (no comp.)
stvrti v.p. (») in (time)

stvar m thing

stvaran (stvarn-) adj. real, in existence
• stvarnost f reality

stvarati ~ stvoriti v.p. create (A)

sudjelovati (sudjeluje) impf. (u` DL) participate (in DL)

sude n (no pl.) dishes

suh adj. (comp. suši) dry {Š: suv}
• suhoča f dryness

suknja f skirt {colloq. inland/S: šos (N-pl šosevi)}

sukob m conflict

sumnjaj f suspicion

sumnjati ~ po- («) v.p. (da...) suspect (that...)

sumnjiv adj. suspicious

sumrak m dusk

suncu n sun (na` met.)
• sunčan adj. sunny

sunčati ~ o- v.p. sunbathe A / se2

super adj., adv. indecl. (no comp.)
(colloq.) great, awesome

suprotna (suprotna) mª opposite
• suprotnost f opposite

suprug mª spouse
• supruga f
susjed m² neighbor {R/B/S: komšija m³}
- susjeda f {R/B/S: komšinica}
- susjedstvo n neighborhood {R/B/S: komšiluk}
susret m encounter
suša f drought
sutra adv. tomorrow {M: sjutra}
- sutrašnji rel. adj. § 76
suza f tear (drop)
svadb f wedding (na¨ act.)
svadati se² ~ po- v.p. quarrel (the perf. verb can be also used with A instead of se²)
svada f quarrel
svaki (spec. forms) adj. (no comp.) any, each
sve pron. all, everything; → sav
svi pron. everyone; → sav
svibanj (svibnj-) m (formal) May {C/B/S: maj} § 31
- svibanjski rel. adj.
svidati se² ~ svidjeti (svidi, svidio, svidjela) se² v.p. like (uses an inverted case assignment: one who likes is in DL, what is liked is in N, similar to German gefallen and Spanish gustar) § 32
svijat ~ svinuti (svine) v.p. bend A / se²
- svinut pass. adj. bent
svijet m (N-pl svjetovi) world (na¨ l/d)
- svjetski rel. adj.
svijetao (svijetli-) adj. (comp. svjetliji) bright
svila f silk
- svilen rel. adj.
svinja f pig
- svinjski adj.
- svinjetina f pork
svirati ~ od- («) ~ za- («) v.t. play (A) (only to play music, otherwise: igrati)
svjetlo n light (na¨ l/d)
svjetlost f light (abstract)

svjež adj. fresh
- svježina f freshness
svlačiti ~ suvući (svuče, svukao, svukla) v.p. undress, take off A / se²
svojstvo n characteristic
svrha f purpose
šlag m (colloq.) whipped cream
tako adv. like that, so § 18
šminka f make-up
također conj. as well § 67
šminkati ~ na- v.p. put make-up on A /
tama f darkness
se²
taman (tamn-) adj. dark
šofer m³ (colloq.) driver (esp. bus

tamo adv. there, that way
driver) (Std: vožač)
tanak (tank-) adj. (comp. tanji) thin
šoferski rel. adj.
(used for things)
tanjur m plate {colloq. coast: pšat /
tata m³ dad
pšat; B/S: tanjir}
tava f pan
tavan m attic (na¨ I/d)
štapić m stick
tavanski rel. adj.
šteta f damage, harm
tečaj m (N-pl tečajevi) course;
tetiti ~ za- («) v.p. (u¨ DL) saves
exchange rate {B/S: kurs}
(money) (A) (in DL)
tečajni rel. adj.
šteta (štetn-) adj. harmful
teči (teče, pres-3pl teku, tekao, tekla)
tetnost f harmfulness
impf. flow
tetiti ~ za- («) v.p. (od G) protect (A)
tecni rel. adj.
(from G)
difficult
sto (č- +) pron. what § 28
tek adv. no earlier than § 9
šuma f forest
tekuić adj. (no comp.) liquid, flowing
šumski rel. adj.
tekućina f liquid
šunka f (G-pl šunki) ham
telefon m phone (na¨ act.)
šupalj (šuplj-) adj. (no comp.) hollow
telefonski rel. adj.
šupljina f cavity
telefonirati («) impf. phone (DL)
šutjeli (also šutjiti) (šuti, šutio, šutjela)
televizija f television (na¨ media)
~~ za- («) v.p. (o DL) be silent (about

televizor m TV (set)
DL)
šutnja f silence
tenisica f sneaker shoe (usually pl.)
šutjiti (also šutjiti) (šuti, šutio, šutjela)
{R/B/S: patika}
~~ za- («) v.p. (o DL) be silent (about

teta f mother's sister, aunt; (children's)
DL)
any non-related woman

tezak (tešk-) adj. (comp. teži) heavy;
difficult
tezoja f difficulty
tetkojca f difficulty
tezina f weight
tetkajca f difficulty
ti (+) pron. you (2nd pers. sg.) § 12, 22,
tijelo n body
34
tih adj. (comp. tiši) quiet, silent

tijelo n body

tišina f silence
tijelesni rel. adj.
tijesan (tijesn-) adj. very narrow, not
fitting
tijesto n pastry
tipka f control button, key (on keyboard)
tipkati ~ o- v.p. type (A) (to DL) (similar: kucati)
  · tipkan pass. adj typed (opp. to handwritten)
tisuća f thousand {R/B/S: hiljada} § 47
tjedan (tjedn-) m week {R/B/S: nedjelja / sedmica)
  · tjedni rel. adj.
tjerati ~ po- / o- v.p. (od G) chase away A (from G); (da...) force A (to...)
tko (k- +) pron. who {R/B/S: ko} § 28
tlo n soil, ground {B/S: tle}
to n pron. that § 18, 59
topao (topl-) adj. warm
  · toplina f warmth, heat
točiti ~ na- («) v.p. pour (A)
točan (točn-) adj. exact, accurate, on time {B/S: tačan (tačn-)}
  · točnost f accuracy {B/S: tačnost}
točka f dot, point, end-of-sentence mark () {B/S: tačka}
točno adv. exactly {B/S: tačno}
tok m flow
tolik adj. (no comp.) that big
toliko adv. that many, so many, so much
tonuti (tone) ~ po- («) v.p. sink (to sink something: potapljati)
topiti ~ o- v.p. melt A; mediopass;
torba f purse, bag
torta f big, usually round cake
trag m trail, marks left
trajan (trajn-) adj. lasting, permanent
trajekt m ferry
  · trajektni rel. adj.
trajati (traje) impf. last § 49
  · trajanje n duration; running time of movie, song
traka f band, stripe
trava f grass
travanj (travnj-) m (formal) April {B/S: april} § 31
  · tražiti impf. look for A; mediopass.
  · tražen pass. adj. wanted, demanded
trbuh m belly {R/B/S: stomak} § 27
  · trbušni rel. adj.
trčati (trči) ~ o- is- / ~ po- v.t. run
  · trebati ~ za- v.p. need A; should INF;
  · also used with inverted cases: one who needs is in DL, what is needed in N § 23, 38
treći adj. (no comp.) third § 31
trenirka f tracksuit {R/B/S: trenerka}
trenutak (trenutk-) m moment
trenutno adv. at the moment
tresti (trese, tresao, tresla) ~ s- ~ za- (») v.t. shake A / se²
  · trg m square (in city) (na² l/d)
trgati ~ po- («) / s- v.p. tear A
trgovina f shop; commerce
trgovac (trgovc-) mª shopkeeper
  · trgovkinja f
  · trgovčki rel. adj.
tri number 3
trka f race (competition)
trljati ~ pro- («) v.p. rub A
trn m thorn
  · trnovit adj. thorny
  · trnje n coll. thorns
trošak (trošk-) m (N-pl/ troškovi) expense
  · trošiti ~ po- («) v.p. spend (A) (money, things; to spend time, holidays:
  · provoditi)
trud m effort, hard work
trudan (trudn-) adj. (no comp.) pregnant
  · trudnoća f pregnancy
truditi se² ~ po- («) v.p. work hard (to-INF)
truo (trul-) / trul adj. rotten
  · trulež f rot
tržnica f farmers’ market (na² l/d)
  · colloq. NW: plac; colloq. coast: pjaca;
  · B/S: pijaca
tu adv. there, here
tući (tuče, pres-3pl tuku; tukao, tukla) 
~ is- (») v.p. beat A; se fight one another, fight others (used for physical fights; to win: pobjeđivati)
tuga f sadness, sorrow
tulum m (colloq./slang) house party
(na" act.)

wuš m shower (to wash body)
tuširati («) ~ o- v.p. shower A / se² (to wash; for heavy rain: pljuštati)
tužan (tužni-) adj. sad
tvoj (+) poss. adj. your § 19
tvornica f factory {B/S: fabrika}
· tvornički rel. adj. {B/S: fabrički}
tvrd adj. (comp. tvrdi) hard (difficult: težak)
· tvrdoća f hardness

tvrditi impf. da... assert, claim (to DL) that...

U

u" prep. (+ A) to § 6; (+ DL) in, at § 15;
used to tell time § 9

ubijati («) ~ ubiti (ubije) v.p. kill (A)
· ubijen pass. adj. killed
ubojica m²/f murderer
ubojstvo n murder
učenik m² pupil, student (at university: student)
· učenica f
· učenički rel. adj.
učitelj m³ teacher (at university: profesor)
· učiteljica f
· učiteljski rel. adj.
učiti ~ na- («) v.p. (od G) learn (A) (from G); teach A (A) (two accusatives: if one is a person, it means teach) § 73; se²
na" A get used to A

udarac (udarc-) m blow, kick
udarati ~ udariti v.p. smack, kick (A)
udavati (udaje) se² ~ udati se² v.p. (za" A) marry (A) (only when woman is the subject; for men: ženiti)
· udan pass. adj. married (for women!)

udoban (udobn-) adj. comfortable, cosy
· udobnost f coziness
udžbenik m schoolbook, textbook
· udžbenički rel. adj.
ugasiti («) perf. → gasiti
· ugašen pass. adj. extinguished

uvo n (as pl. uši f pl.) ear § 27
· ušni rel. adj.
uhvatiti perf. → hvatati
· uhvaćen pass. adj. caught
ujak m³ mother's brother
· ujna f wife of ujak
uključivati (u-je «) ~ uključiti («) v.p.
include A; switch A on; (opposite: isključivati)
· uključen pass. adj. turned on; included

ukrasti (ukrade, ukrao) perf. → kраsti
· ukraden pass. adj. stolen
ulaz m entrance
· ulazni rel. adj.
ulaziti ~ ući (uđe, ušao, ušla) v.p. (u" A)
enter (A) (opposite: izlaziti) § 42

ulica f street
· ulični rel. adj.
uloga f role

uloviti («) perf. → loviti
· ulovljen pass. adj. caught

ulje n oil (not petrol)
· uljni rel. adj.

umaratì («) ~ umoriti («) v.p. tire, exhaust A; se² get tired; (opposite: odmarati)

umirati (umire) ~ umrijeti (umre, umro, umrla) v.p. die

umirovljenik m³ (formal) pensioner
{colloq./B/S: penzioner}
· umirovljenica f

umirovljenički rel. adj.

umijati («) ~ umiti (umije) v.p. se² wash face; A wash A's face

umjesto conj./prep. instead of § 67

umjetan (umjetn-) adj. artificial {B/S: vještački}
umjetnik m³ artist
  · umjetnica f
  · umjetnički rel. adj.
umjetnost f art
umor m fatigue
umoran (umor-) adj. tired
uništavati («) ~ uništit v.p. destroy (A);
  mediopass; (opposite: stvarati)
  · uništen pass. adj. destroyed
unuk m³ grandson § 75
  · unuka f granddaughter
unutar prep. (+ G) within, inside
unutrašnji rel. adj. inner
  · unutrašnjost f interior
upitnik m questionaire; question
  mark
uplašiti perf. → plašiti
  · uplašen pass. adj. scared
uporan (uporn-) adj. persistent
  · upornost f perseverance, persistence
upotrebljavati («) ~ upotrijebiti («) v.p.
  use A; mediopass; (also: koristiti,
  rabiti)
  · upotrijebljen pass. adj. used
urat m³ watchmaker {B/S: časovničar}
ured m office
  · uredski rel. adj.
uredan (uredn-) adj. tidy
  · urednost f neatness, tidiness
uredaj m device
uredi (urediti) m put
  to order, tidy A / se²; mediopass;
  · ureden pass. adj.
usko adv. soon
Uskrs m Easter
  · uskrsni / uskršnji rel. adj.
uspjeh m success
uspešan (uspješn-) adj. successful
usput adv. by the way
usred prep. (+ G) in the middle of {I:
  usrid}
usta n pl. mouth
  · usni rel. adj.
ustajati (ustaje) ~ ustatiti (ustane) v.p.
  (se²) stand up § 52
usuditi v.p. («) se² ~ usuditi («) se²
  v.p. dare (to INF)
usvajati («) ~ usvojiti («) v.p. adopt A
  · usvojen pass. adj. adopted
uštedjeti / uštediti perf. → štedjeti
  · ušteden pass. adj. saved (money)
utakmica f match (in sports)
utjecaj m influence
  · utjecajman (utjecajn-) adj. influential
utorak m Tuesday
utroba f bowels, intestine
uvjet m condition, requisite {B/S:
  uslov}
uvjeravati («) ~ uvjeriti v.p. (da...)
  convince A / se² (that...)
  · uvjeriti pass. adj. confident,
  convinced
uz" prep. (+ G) by, close to
uzak (usk-) adj. (comp. uži) narrow
uzad adv. in vain
uzaludan (uzaludn-) adj. futile
uzbuđivati (-uje «) ~ uzbuđiti («) v.p.
  excite A; se² get excited
  · uzbuđen pass. adj. excited
  · uzbuđenje n excitement
uzduž prep. (+ G) along
uzgajati («) ~ uzgojiti («) v.p. cultivate,
  breed A
  · uzgojen pass. adj. bred
uzgoj m breeding
uzimati ~ uzeti (uzme) v.p. (od G) take
  (A) (from G); mediopass.
uzrok m (N-pl uzroci) cause (of
  something)
užasan (užasn-) adj. terrible
uže (užet-) n (as pl. užad) rope
užitak (užitk-) m pleasure
uživati («) impf. (u" DA) enjoy (DL)
V
vaditi  ~ iz- v.p. (iz G) pull out, extract A
(from G)
vaga f scale, device for weighting
vagati (važe)  ~ iz- (-) v.p. weigh (A)
val m wave {B/S: talas}
· valni rel. adj.
valjda adv. probably, hopefully
van adv. out (direction) {R/B/S:
napole}· vanjski rel. adj. outer {R/B/S: spoljni} § 76
vani adv. out (location) {R/B/S:
napolu}
varati  ~ prevariti v.p. cheat (A)
vatra f fire
· vatren adj. fiery, zealous
važan (važn-) adj. important
· važnost f importance, relevance
večer f evening
· večeras adv. this evening § 18
· večernji rel. adj. evening § 57
· večerašnji rel. adj. this evening § 76
večera f evening meal, supper (na act.)
večerati impf. have supper
već adv. already § 2, 9
većina f majority
· večinski rel. adj.
veličina f size
velik adj. (comp. već) big
veljača f (formal) February {B/S: februar} § 31
veseliti se 2  ~ raz- (-) v.p. look forward
(to DL); da... looks forward to...
veza f link, connection
vezati (veže)  ~ za- (-) v.p. tie A
· vezan pass. adj. bound, connected
vi (+) pron. you (2nd pers. sg.)
vid m sense of vision
vidik m view, sight
vidjeti (vidi,vido,vidjela) impf./perf. see A (see also: gledati); mediopass.
· viden pass. adj. seen
vijest f news, announcement
vika f shouting
vikati (viče)  ~ po- (-) v.p. (da...) shout, yell (to DL) (that...)
vilica f fork; mandible
vino n wine
· vinski rel. adj.
vinograd m vineyard
visjeti (also visiti) (visi, visio, visjela)
impf. hang (to hang something: vješati)
visinja f height
· visinski rel. adj.
visok adj. (comp. viši) tall
višak (višk-) m (N-pl viškovi) excess, surplus
više adv. more
vječan (vječn-) adj. eternal
· vječnost f eternity
vjera f faith
vjeran (vjeran) adj. faithful
· vjernost f fidelity, loyalty
vjernik m² believer
· vjernica f
· vjernički rel. adj.
vjerovati (vjeruje)  ~ po- v.p. believe
(to DL); u` A believe in A; da... believe that...
vješati  ~ objesiti v.p. hang A
vješt adj. skilled
· vještina f skill
vjeter (vjetr-) m (N-pl vjetrovi) wind
· vjetrovi adj. windy
vlada f government
vladati  ~ za- (-) v.p. rule (over I); se² behave
vlaga f moisture
vlak m train {B/S: voz}
vlast f rule (na² act.)
vlažan (vlažn-) adj. moist
· vlaznost f humidity
voće n (no pl.) fruit, fruits
· vočni rel. adj.
voćka f fruit-tree
voda f water
vodnić m² guide; m conductor (of electricity)
voditi impf. lead (A)
vodopad m waterfall
voda m³ leader
vojnički rel. adj.
· vojnički rel. adj.
vojska f army, military
· vojni rel. adj.
volan m steering wheel (za" act.) (Std. upravljač)
voljeti (voli, volio, voljela) ~ za- («) love, like A / INF § 32, 81
· voljen pass. adj. loved
voziti impf. drive A (steer!); se² drive (or ride, someone else could be steering)
vraćati ~ vratiti v.p. return A / se²
· vraćen pass. adj. returned
vrag m³ devil
· vražji adj.
vrat m neck
· vratni rel. adj.
vrata n pl. door (na" l/d)
vreća f bag, sack {l: vrića}
vrećica f shopping bag {R/B/S: kesa}
vrh m top, highest point (na" l/d)
· vrhunski adj. top-performing, best
vrt m garden
· vrtni adj.
vrijedan (vrijedn- ) adj. valuable
· vrijednost f value, worth
vrijediti impf. be worth A; be valid
vrijeme (vremen-) n (pl vremen-) time; weather
· na vrijeme pred./adv. on time
· vremenski adj.
vrlo adv. very (more formal; less formal: jako) (cannot be used to intensify verbs)
vrsta f kind; (biological) species
vruc adj. (no comp.) hot
· vrucića f heat
vući (vuče, pres-3pl vuku; vukao, vukla)
~ po- («) v.p. pull A (opposite: gurati);
se² trudge
vuk m³ wolf
· vučica f
· vučji rel. adj.
vuna f wool
· vunen rel. adj. of wool, woolen

Z
za" prep. (+ A) for A; (+ l) behind, around l (mostly in set expressions such as za stolom sitting around the table)
zabava f party, entertainment, fun (na" act.)
zabavan (zabavn-) adj. entertaining, funny
zabavljati ~ zabaviti v.p. entertain A;
· se² have fun
zabijati («) ~ zabit (abije) v.p. hammer in A
· + gol strike a goal
· zabijen pass. adj. hammered in
zaboravljati ~ zaboraviti v.p. forget A / INF / CC; § 69
· zaboravljjen pass. adj. forgotten
zabrana f ban
zabranjivati (-uje «) ~ zabraniti («) v.p. da... forbid DL (to...); forbid DL to INF; ban A
· zabranjen pass. adj. banned
začas adv. in little time, soon
začin m spice
· začinski adj.
zadnji adj. (no comp.) last (also: posljednji; opposite: prvi)
zadovoljan (zadovoljn-) adj. content, satisfied
· zadovoljstvo n satisfaction
zadržavati («) ~ zadržati (zadrži) v.p. keep A; se² spend time at some place
zagrada f bracket (in writing, math)
zagrliti v. perf. → glrli
· zagrljene pass. adj. hugged
zagrljaj m hug
zahod m toilet (na` act.) [WC]
· zahodski rel. adj.
zajtijevati (έ) impf. (od` G) demand
(A) (from G); (od` G) da... demand
(from G) that...
zahujev m demand
zahvalan (zahvaln-) adj. thankful, grateful
zahvaljivati (-uje ) ~ zahvaliti (έ) v.p.
· (za` A) thank (DL) (for A)
zaista adv. really (similar: stvarno)
zajednik adj. shared, common, not private
zajedno adv. together (also: skupa)
zaključuvati (έ) ~ zaključati v.p. lock (A)
· zatvoričkan pass. adj. locked
zaključak (zaključk-) m conclusion
zaključivati (-uje ) ~ zaključiti (έ) v.p.
· da... conclude that...; conclude (A)
zakon m law
· zakonit adj. lawful
zaljev m bay
zamatati (έ) ~ zamatati v.p. wrap, bind
· (A) (opposite: odmatati)
· zamatan pass. adj. wrapped
zamrziti (έ) inch. → mrziti
zanjmati (έ) impf. be interesting to A;
· se` za A show interest in A
zanijmljiv adj. interesting
zao (zl-) adj. (no comp.) evil
zapad m west (na` l/d)
· zapadni adj. western
zapovijed f command
zapovijediti (έ) ~ zapovijedati v.p. (da...)
· order (A) (to...) (used in military context only)
zapravo adv. contrary to expectations,
· actually (opposite: naravno, dakako)
zar particle used to emphasize questions
zarađ f profit
zarađivati (-uje «) ~ zaraditi (έ) v.p.
· earn (A)
· zaradjen pass. adj. earned
zastava f flag
zašto adv. why § 50
zato adv. therefore, for that reason § 50
zatvarati (έ) ~ zatvoriti (έ) v.p. close A;
· mediopass; (opposite: otvarati)
· zatvoren pass. adj. closed, locked up
zatvor m prison; constipation
· zatvorski rel. adj.
zatvorenik m φ prisoner
· zatvorenička f
· zatvorenički rel. adj.
zastavljati ~ zastaviti v.p. stop A /
· se` (opposite: pokretati)
· zastavljeno pass. adj. stopped
zauzimati ~ zauzeti (zauzme) v.p.
· occupy A; se` za` A promote A
· zauzet pass. adj. occupied
zavoljeti (έ) inch. → voljeti
završavati (έ) ~ završiti (έ) v.p.
· complete (A)
· završen pass. adj. completed, finished
zbog prep. (+ G) because of G, due to G
· § 50
zdrav adj. healthy
· zdravlj e n health
zec m rabbit
· zečica f
· zečji rel. adj.
zelen adj. green
zemlja f (G-pl zemalja) ground; earth;
· country
· zemljan adj. earth
zet mφ daughter’s husband
zgrada f building
zid m wall
· zidni rel. adj.
zidar mφ bricklayer, mason
· zidarski rel. adj.
zima f winter
· zima je² DL = DL is cold (colloq.)
· zimski rel. adj.
· zimi adv. in wintertime
· zimus adv. this winter
zlato n gold
· zlatan (zlatn-) adj. golden
zlo n evil
· zlo je² DL = DL feels sick
zločest adj. (children’s) naughty
značajan (značajn-) adj. significant
značiti impf. mean, signify A (to DL)
· značenje n meaning
znak m sign
znati impf. know (how to INF); da...
· know, be aware that...; know A (a skill); (to know people: poznavati)
znanje n knowledge
znanost f science {B/S: nauka}
· znanstven adj. {B/S: naučni}
znanstvenik m³ scientist {B/S: naučnik}
· znanstvenica f {B/S: naučnica}
zmija f snake
· zmijski rel. adj.
zora f dawn
zrak m air (na– in fresh air) {B/S: vazduh}
· zračni adj. {B/S: vazdušni}
zraka f ray (e.g. of light) {B/S: zrak}
zrcalo n mirror (also: ogledalo)
· zrcalni rel. adj.
zreo (zrel-) adj. ripe
· zrelost f maturity
zub m (N-pl zubi, G-pl zubi / zuba)
· tooth
· zubni rel. adj.
zubar m³ dentist
· zubarica f {B/S: zubarka}
· zubariski rel. adj.

zvati (zove) ~ po- («) v.p. call (A); se² N stating name of the subject, be called N (very similar to Spanish llamarse); (see also poziv)

zvijezda f star
· zvijezdan rel. adj. starry
zvoniti ~ po- («) v.p. ring
zvono n bell, ring (on door)
zuvučati (zuvuči) ~ za- («) v.p. (kao...)
· sound (like...)
zuuk m sound
· zuvučni adj.

Ž
žaba f frog
· žablj rel. adj.
žaliti impf. (za– A) be sorry (about A);
· se² (da...) complain (that...)
žao je² DL (da...) = DL is sorry (that...)
žarulja f light bulb {R/B/S: sijalica}
žedan (žedn-) adj. thirsty
· žed f thirst
želudac (želudc-, želuć-) m stomach
· želučan rel. adj.
žela f wish
željeti (želi, želio, željela) ~ za- v.p.
· wish, desire A; wish to INF
· željen pass. adj. desired
željeznica f railway
· željezički adj.
željezo n iron {R/B/S: gvožđe}
· željezni adj. of iron {R/B/S: gvozden}
žena f woman; wife
ženiti ~ o- («) v.p. marry A (a woman);
· se² (za– A) marry (A) (a woman); se² get married (see also: udati)
ženski adj. female, feminine
· ženska f (adj.) (slang) girlfriend,
woman
žeta f harvest
žica f wire
židov m³ Jew {B/S: Jevrej}
· židovka f {B/S: Jevrejka}
· židovski adj. {B/S: jevrejski}
žito n corn, grain
živ adj. (comp. življi) alive (opposite: mrtav)
živac (živc-) m nerve {B/S: nerv (N-pl nervi)}
· živčan rel. adj. {B/S: nervni}
živjeti (živi, živio, živjela) impf. live, reside
život (život-) m life
· životni rel. adj.
životinja f animal
· životinski rel. adj.
žlica f spoon {B/S: kašika}
· žličica f teaspoon {B/S: kašičica}
županija f county, territorial unit in Croatia
žurba f hurry
žuriti impf. hurry, be in a hurry (see also: požurivati)
žut adj. (comp. žući, žutiji) yellow
žvakati (žvače) ~ sa- («) v.p. chew (A)
Symbols & Abbreviations

The following symbols and abbreviations are used in the text (additional abbreviations appear in the Core Dictionary):

- a point of difference vs. Bosnian, Serbian or Montenegrin
- second-position word (also called *enclitic*)
- word pronounced with the following word (also called *proclitic*)
- verb aspect pair (or triplet)
- verb aspect pair, with a perf. inchoative verb
- verb aspect pair, with a perf. semelfactive ('atomic') verb
- impersonal verb in the present tense
- stress moves one syllable to the left (in the Standard scheme)
- stress moves one syllable to the right
- stressed vowel
- accusative case (the object case)
- accusative case in plural
- adjective
- dative/locative case
- dative/locative/instrumental case in plural
- feminine (gender)
- genitive case
- genitive case in plural
- instrumental case
- imperative form of a verb, 2nd pers. singular
- imperative form of a verb, xth person (x = 1, 2), plural
- imperf. imperfective (verb)
- infinitive (dictionary form of a verb)
- masculine (gender)
- nominative case (the default case)
- nominative case in plural
- neuter (gender)
- past participle of a verb, gender y (y = m, f, n)
- perfective (verb)
- plural
- present form of a verb, xth person (x = 1, 2, 3)
- present form of a verb, xth person (x = 1, 2, 3), plural
- singular
- vocative case
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Keys to Exercises

Where more than one answer is possible, they are listed separated with slashes (e.g. stvarno / zaista).

02. a) zijeva b) Plaćem c) već d) sjedi e) Još f) spavam g) Ona h) trči i) On j) već k) čeka
03. a) bananu b) poruku c) Ines d) knjigu e) pizzu f) kavgu g) jabuku h) Ona i) čita j) knjigu k) ima l) sestru m) Slušam n) pjesmu o) Čitam p) poruku q) Čekam r) večeru s) Pijem t) vodu
04. a) Ne b) spavam c) televiziju d) Opet / ponovo / ponovno e) kavu f) Nemam g) čašu h) sigurno i) gleda j) Ponekad k) kavu
05. a) čaj b) Damira c) nož d) Ne e) Darija f) magarca g) Krunu h) opet / ponovo / ponovno i) pismo j) knjigu k) pije l) pivo m) Što n) čita o) Što p) radi
06. a) kino b) plažu c) Sutra d) Dubrovnik e) Sutra f) ne g) posao h) na i) pivo j) u k) l) na m) sjever n) na o) rođendan p) na q) ručak r) u s) park
07. a) nogomet b) se c) hladi d) Zovem e) se f) Ne g) zabavljam h) se i) se j) brije k) Gram l) se
08. a) je b) jako / vrlo c) oblačno d) pada e) kiša f) Tamo g) je h) Strašno / užasno i) vruće j) Jako k) pada
09. a) u b) četiri c) za d) u e) jedan f) u g) sedam h) dvanaest i) Skoro / gotovo j) je k) podne
10. a) velika b) pun c) slabo d) stvarno / zaista e) skup f) poznata g) duboko h) duga i) puna j) jako / vrlo k) lijepa l) gotov m) duga n) jeftino
11. a) je b) siva c) dobra d) sretan e) je f) sretna g) hladno h) dosta / prilično i) kratak j) je k) teška l) jako / vrlo m) slatka n) Lubenica o) je p) kao q) med
12. a) ju / je b) čujem c) Vas d) Ona e) me f) ga g) poznam h) ga i) ga j) ne k) Čekamo l) te m) vas n) na o) more p) Ona q) profesorica r) Nisi s) žedna t) Mi u) smo v) mladi
13. a) moju b) sestru c) na d) veliku e) plažu f) hladno g) pivo h) malog i) brata j) crnu k) mačku l) vozi m) moj n) u o) maj p) stan q) hladnu r) pizzu
14. a) na b) moru c) u d) kuhinji e) smo f) na g) plaži h) Gdje i) je j) na k) radiju l) je m) na n) jugo o) na p) ručku
15. a) baki b) baku c) frizeru / frizerki d) kući / doma e) Ani f) Anu g) poruku h) poruku i) Ani j) Marku k) razglednici
17. a) živi b) Škotskoj c) u d) Francusku e) smo f) Americi g) na h) engleskom i) u j) Bosni k) u l) njemačkoj m) na n) velikoj o) plaži p) je q) moj o) sobi s) mom / mojem
18. a) onoj / toj b) kući c) takav d) jednu e) je f) tako g) skupo h) smo i) mi j) još k) jedan
19. a) njegovu b) Hrvojeva c) sestra d) Aninog / Aninoga e) brata f) mom / mojem / mome / mojemu g) sinu h) svoj i) u j) tvom / tvojem
20. a) je b) kod c) mame d) se e) boji f) vode g) ključ h) ormara i) Knjiga j) Ane k) na
l) visoke m) planine n) crnog o) psa p) se q) te r) noći s) kod t) kuće
21. a) iz b) Zagreba c) od d) osam e) do f) dva g) sa h) sastanka i) iz j) škole k) s l)
konzerta m) iz n) parka o) s p) Krka q) moru r) do s) nedjelje
22. a) ih b) Evo c) nas d) joj e) mu f) Ane g) Nema h) je i) Evo j) ih
23. a) nam b) mi c) Goranu d) Drago e) nam f) Osjećam g) se
24. a) je b) spačala c) je d) bilo e) Bilo f) im g) je h) je i) kuhao j) Bilo k) je l) Čekali m)
smo n) te o) Padala p) je q) Bila r) je
25. a) su b) crne c) ptice d) smo e) pisma f) Oni g) su h) To i) su j) razumiju /
shvaćaju k) nas l) Peku
26. a) Jesi b) li c) gledala d) Jeste e) li f) gledali
27. a) Svrbe b) me c) me d) koljeno e) su f) mi g) usta h) Boljelo i) te j) je k) Svrbe /
svrbjele l) su m) me n) mi o) je p) prljava
28. a) Koga b) Što c) Tko d) Tko e) pisao f) Što g) radila
29. a) Ljudi b) su c) labudove d) nokte e) goste f) ključeva g) Psi h) Putnici i) Noževi
j) moji k) početci / počeci l) Uspjesi
30. a) tri b) velike c) čaše d) čovjeka e) pjevala
31. a) Naš b) je c) na d) trećem e) katu f) u g) četvrtom h) u i) podrumu j) u k)
prvom l) redu
32. a) voli b) Sviđaju c) mi d) se e) ne f) voli g) sviđa h) mi i) se j) Volim k) gledati l)
filmove
33. a) školskom b) morskoj c) vočni d) ratni
34. a) nije b) kod c) tebe d) smo e) kod f) nje g) se h) njega i) Kolači j) su k) ras
35. a) oštrim b) nožem c) njegovim d) autom e) sa f) šunkom g) autobusom h) je /
sjedi i) stolom j) za k) pticom l) kućom m) sa n) sirom
36. a) ispred b) lijepim c) plažama d) sa e) sendvičima
37. a) Ne b) namjeravamo c) jesti d) Želim / Hoću e) tražiti f) pokušava g) raditi h)
nije i) mogao j) spavati k) Ne l) smiješ m) trčati n) Pokušavam o) spavati
38. a) Čitao b) bih c) bi d) se e) igrao
40. a) Pit b) čemo c) Gledat d) ću e) ću f) čitati g) Kupit h) ću i) auto
41. a) Nitko b) ne c) ništa d) negdje
42. a) Prešli b) smo c) je d) otišla e) iz f) sam g) u h) kuću
43. a) a b) i c) gleda d) a e) meni f) je g) dosadno h) Ne i) znam j) ni k) ni l) ruski
44. a) dokumenata b) mojih c) sestara d) velikih e) ptica f) palmi g) bez h) kosti /
kostiju i) Nema j) zvijezda k) na l) tajni m) čaša
47. a) je b) voće c) Djeca d) su e) svoju f) djecu g) tvojom h) braćom i) se j) igraju
49. a) tri b) godine c) šest d) godina e) na f) tri g) tjedna h) za i) šest j) tjedana k)
prije l) tri m) dana n) za o) dva p) mjeseca
50. a) zbog b) snijega c) jer d) je e) bilo f) da g) ne h) da i) te j) vidim k) vrata l) za m)
svaki n) slučaj o) po p) kaput
51. a) godinama b) tjednima c) Petkom d) Dugo
52. a) Postalo b) nam c) je d) Ostajem e) počela f) čitati g) prestao h) padati i) sve j)
ostalo k) ne l) stane m) frižider n) stoji o) pred p) Stalo q) nam r) je s) tebe
54. a) kad / kada b) je c) hladno d) Ne e) pijem f) dok g) Pada h) otkad / otkada i)
smo j) došli k) ćemo l) kad / kada m) bude
56. a) da b) dođeš c) da d) nas e) nazoveš f) ih g) otvore h) da i) je j) ljeto k) bih l) otići / ići m) na n) more
57. a) Koju b) jabuku c) Čiji d) su e) ključevi f) Kakav g) sendvič
59. a) znamo b) gdje c) je d) Znala e) je f) da g) će h) biti i) Osjećam j) da k) će l) se m) dogoditi / desiti n) Mislim o) da p) neće q) biti
60. a) Dodaj b) mi c) Nastavljam d) Prodao e) sam
61. a) otvorena b) popijeno c) zatvorena d) poslan e) bačena f) priljena g) u h) zatvorenoj i) nisu j) plaćeni
63. a) toplije b) sporije c) hladnije d) niži e) Ane f) brži g) broda h) malo i) teža j) što / čim k) veću
64. a) se b) otopio c) Vrtilo / Vrtjelo d) se e) se f) promijenilo g) se h) pokvario i) se j) govori k) u l) Malo m) se
71. a) Nije b) mi c) se d) dalo e) Opustite f) Nagоворila g) nas h) je i) gledamo / pogledamo j) Propustili