

Easy Croatian

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(without case annotations)

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for Sandra, as she was very patient

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Contents

Introduction	6
01 Alphabet and Pronunciation	9
02 Simplest Sentences	14
03 Objects	19
04 No, Often, Probably and Again	24
05 Accusative Case	28
06 Destinations	34
07 Verbs with Obligatory Objects	41
08 Weather and General Statements	48
09 Numbers and Time	52
10 Gender	57
11 Colors, More Adjectives and Adverbs	64
12 Simple Conversations	71
13 She Loves Me: Pronouns and Properties	76
14 My and Adjectives in Accusative	82
15 Locations	89
16 Giving to Someone, Going to Someone	94
17 Adjectives in Dative/Locative	100
18 This and That	105
19 Your, Ana's: Possessives	111
20 At My Friend's: Genitive	116
21 Origins	121
22 Here I am: More Pronouns	126
23 I'm Cold: Basic Impressions	132
24 Past Tense	138
25 Plural	145
26 Yes or No?	152
27 Body	157
28 Asking Who and What	163
29 Plural of Masculine Nouns and Adjectives	168
30 Three Beers: Less than 5 Things	174
31 First, Second: Ordinals	178
32 Love and Like	184
33 School Yard and Bunk Bed: Relations	189
34 Stressed Pronouns	196
35 Tools and Means, With and Without	202
36 Dative/Locative and Instrumental Plural	208
37 Complete Reading: Perfective Verbs	213
38 Needs, Wishes and Intentions	220
39 Would, Could: Conditionals	229
40 Future Tense	233

<u>41 Somewhere, Nobody, Everything...</u>	238
<u>42 Come In, Come Out, Go</u>	243
<u>43 And, Or, But: Basic Conjunctions</u>	250
<u>44 Genitive Plural</u>	256
<u>45 Quantities and Existence</u>	262
<u>46 More than Four Things</u>	268
<u>47 Of Flowers, Thorns and Counting Children</u>	273
<u>48 Wholes, Parts, Heaps and Pairs</u>	278
<u>49 For 7 Hours: Definite Periods</u>	284
<u>50 Because, In Order To, Why: Reasons</u>	290
<u>51 For Days: Approximate Periods, Repetitions and References</u>	295
<u>52 Stand, Become, Exist, Cease</u>	299
<u>53 Giving Orders</u>	306
<u>54 When, While, Until, Before, After</u>	313
<u>55 More Prepositions</u>	320
<u>56 Desires and Demands</u>	324
<u>57 Whose, What Thing and What Like</u>	331
<u>58 Colloquial and Formal</u>	335
<u>59 Knowing and Telling: Content and Noun Clauses</u>	342
<u>60 More Useful Verbs and Verbal Patterns</u>	350
<u>61 Cake is Eaten: Passive Adjectives</u>	356
<u>62 The Friend I Saw: Relative Clauses</u>	361
<u>63 Bigger and Better: Comparatives</u>	366
<u>64 The Door Opens: Fun with se²</u>	372
<u>65 Carry, Bring, Drive: Transport Verbs</u>	379
<u>66 Smoking is Dangerous: Verbal Nouns</u>	385
<u>67 Only, Except, Too: Inclusion and Exclusion</u>	391
<u>68 Three Men: Group Numbers</u>	397
<u>69 Memories, Expectations and Fear</u>	399
<u>70 If I Were: Conditional Sentences</u>	405
<u>71 Suggestions, Permissions and More Verbs</u>	409
<u>72 Addressing and Vocative Case</u>	415
<u>73 Learning and Renting: Verbs Shifting</u>	418
<u>74 It Just Happened to Me</u>	421
<u>75 Friends and Family</u>	424
<u>76 Inner, Outer, Step by Step: More on Space and Time</u>	428
<u>77 As If: Advanced Clauses</u>	431
<u>78 Dijete vs. Dite</u>	437
<u>79 You're Wrong and Other Phrases</u>	444
<u>80 Present Adverbs and Adjectives</u>	449
<u>81 Sneeze Once and Start Blooming</u>	453
<u>82 Visible and Unreadable: Potential Adjectives</u>	459
<u>83 Depth and Distance: Abstract Nouns</u>	462

84 Western Urban Speech	467
85 Small and Cute: Diminutives	468
86 More Verbs and Standing Outcomes	472
87 Player, Playroom and Playground: Common Derivations	477
88 Weird Words and Constructions	484
89 Customs and Traditions	488
90 Number-like Words	491
91 Taboo Words and Expressions	494
93 Fine Points of Verb Aspect	496
99 Aorist Tense and Other Marginal Features	497
A1 Nouns and Adjectives	501
A3 Verbs	504
A5 Word Order	516
A7 Stress	520
A8 Dialects	524
A9 Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin	531
L1 Common Names	545
L2 Countries and Nationalities	547
L3 Cities and Towns	551
Core Dictionary	554
Symbols & Abbreviations	596
Index	597
Keys to Exercises	598

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.

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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:

Specific letters in Croatian

c	as <i>tz</i> in <i>tzar</i>
č	as <i>ch</i> in <i>child</i>
ć	similar to č , a bit 'softer'
đ	as <i>j</i> in <i>joke</i>
j	as <i>y</i> in <i>you</i>
š	as <i>sh</i> in <i>ship</i>
ž	as <i>s</i> in <i>pleasure</i>

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

Specific two-letter sequences

dž	similar to đ , a bit 'harder'
lj	like an l fused with a j as Italian <i>gl</i> (e.g. in <i>figlia</i>) or like English <i>million</i>
nj	like an n fused with a j like Spanish <i>ñ</i> (e.g. in <i>señor</i>) or Italian <i>gn</i> (e.g. in <i>bagno</i>) or like English <i>onion</i>

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 **ć** the same as **č**, and **dž** the same as **đ**. This feature includes most cities.

In the Standard pronunciation of **č** and **dž**, 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 **ə** (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 **ə** (at least by some Croatian speakers) as **čvərst** and **kərv**. 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-kəl** (*three* syllables).
3. when talking about letters, Croatians often talk about the letter "**b**", and pronounce its 'name' as **bə**.

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 **lje-po**

prije *before* is pronounced as written (**pri-je**), since the **ije** comes at the very end

Some people pronounce **lijepo** as **l-j-e-p-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 **prije**, 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:



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):

word	standard	'western'
ponekad	ponekad	ponekad
kolač	kolač	kolač

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

ponekad

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** = **dalekozor**^{w1}
 'western': **dalekozor**

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 <i>read</i>	plivati <i>swim</i>
kuhati <i>cook</i> ®	spavati <i>sleep</i>
pjevati <i>sing</i> ®	učiti <i>learn, study</i>
raditi <i>work</i>	voziti <i>drive</i>

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.*

trčati

Marko leži. *Marko is lying.*

ležati

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 **pije**, **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.*

jesti

Marko piše. *Marko is writing.*

pisati

Ivana pleše. *Ivana is dancing.*

plesati

Goran plače. *Goran is crying.*

plakati

Instead of names, you can use the following *pronouns*:

on *he* **ona** *she*

For example:

Ona jede. *She's eating.*

jesti

On plače. *He's crying.*

plakati

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

Plače. *He/she is crying.*

plakati

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.*

jesti
pisati
plesati
piti

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.*

plakati

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.*

plesati

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 / *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](#).

03 Objects

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:

baka <i>grandmother</i>	riba <i>fish</i>
jabuka <i>apple</i>	sestra <i>sister</i>
juha <i>soup</i> ®	tata <i>Dad</i>
kava <i>coffee</i> ®	teta <i>aunt</i>
knjiga <i>book</i>	televizija <i>TV</i> ®
mama <i>Mom</i>	večera <i>supper, late dinner</i>
pjesma <i>song</i>	voda <i>water</i>

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 juhu. *I'm cooking soup.*

Ivan pije kavu. *Ivan is drinking coffee.*

Jedem večeru. *I'm eating supper.*

Pijem vodu. *I'm drinking water.*

piti
jesti
piti

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	slušati listen
gledati watch	tražiti search, look for
imati have, possess	trebati need

Let's put them to use:

Ana gleda televiziju. *Ana is watching TV.*

Trebam kavu. *I need coffee.* ®

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.*

jesti

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 *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) _____. *She's reading a book.*

Ana _____ (k) _____. *Ana has a sister.*

_____ (m) _____. *I'm listening to a song.*

_____ (o) _____. *I'm reading a message.*

_____ (q) _____. *I'm waiting for the supper.*

_____ (s) _____. *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:

Standard stress when **ne** is before a verb

ne + gleda	the stress moves to ne
ne + čita	<i>no shift</i> : the stress stays on či
ne + razgovara	<i>no shift</i> : the stress stays on go

In the 'western' scheme, which is much simpler, the stress doesn't even move from **gleda**. In 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:

nikad(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 **nikad** or **nikada**, 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 nikad ne gleda televiziju. *Ana never watches TV.*

Nikad ne pijem kavu. *I never drink coffee.*

piti

There are more words like **nikad(a)** 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.*

Futhermore, 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.*

piti

(It's *not obligatory* to put the words **nikad(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:

često *often*

stalno *all the time*

obično *usually*

svaki dan *every day*

ponekad *sometimes*

uvijek *always*

rijetko *not very often*

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 pijem kavu. *I drink coffee sometimes.*

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

piti

piti

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 pijem kavu. *I almost never drink coffee.*

piti

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* **sigurno** *for sure*

očito *obviously* **vjerojatno** *probably* ®

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

Goran **možda** spava. *Goran is maybe sleeping.*

Ivan **sigurno** pijе 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 <i>car</i>	more <i>sea</i>
jutro <i>morning</i>	pismo <i>letter</i>
meso <i>meat</i>	pivo <i>beer</i>
mljeko <i>milk</i>	vino <i>wine</i>
nebo <i>sky, skies</i>	voće <i>fruit, fruits</i>

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 mljeko. *Ivan is drinking milk.*

Pišem pismo. *I'm writing a letter.*

Ivana vozi auto. *Ivana is driving a car.*

piti

piti

jesti

piti

pisati

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 <i>ship</i>	ručak <i>lunch, dinner</i>
film <i>movie</i>	sok <i>juice</i>
kruh <i>bread</i> ®	vlak <i>train</i> ®

Let's introduce two more useful verbs:

poznavati (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.* ®

rezati
piti

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:

brat brother	konj horse
čovjek man/human	muž husband
galeb (sea)gull	sin son

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 galeba. *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.*

poznavati

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 (**vrabc-**) *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** (Dar**ij**-)

Hrvoje (Hrvoj-) **Mario** (Mar**ij**-)

Marko (Mark-) **Silvio** (Silv**ij**-)

For example:

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

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

[poznajati](#)

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 poznajem Krunu. *I don't know Kruno.* ®

poznavati

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

noun type (N)	A (object)
nouns in -a	-a → -u
nouns in -o or -e	no change
nouns in a consonant (not <i>people</i> or <i>animals</i>)	no change
nouns in a consonant (<i>people</i> or <i>animals</i>)	add -a

(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!)

piti

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 poznajem 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 **n** + special ‘softening’ character **ь**). In the accusative case, they get the same ending, **-a**, since they belong to people and animals.

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

It’s not all: the stress in the Russian word for *horse* shifts to the added **-a**, making the first **о** unstressed and pronounced similar to **a**, 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 *I'm travelling and I'm not thinking*
na tebe *about you*

putovati

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* **kino** *cinema* ®
bolnica *hospital* **park** *park*
hotel *hotel* **Split** (a city)
Hrvatska *Croatia* **restoran** *restaurant*
grad *city* **škola** *school*
kafić *cafe bar* **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.*

putovati
ići
ići

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.*

ići

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.*

putovati

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.*

putovati

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.*

ići

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.*

putovati

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.*

ići

ići

(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 <i>to have a tea</i>	na pivo <i>to have a beer</i>
na kavu <i>to have a coffee</i> ®	na ples <i>to dance</i>
na koncert <i>to a concert</i>	na ručak <i>to lunch</i>
na nogomet <i>to football game</i> ®	na sastanak <i>to a meeting</i>
na odmor <i>to vacation/break</i>	na večeru <i>to supper</i>

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 <i>to a local feast/party</i>
na rođendan <i>to a birthday party</i>
na zabavu <i>to a party</i>

For instance:

Idem na kavu. *I’m going to have a coffee.*

ići

Idemo na sastanak. *We’re going to a meeting.*

ići

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

not true places	true places
<i>concert</i>	<i>concert hall</i>
<i>dinner</i>	<i>restaurant</i>
<i>football</i>	<i>playground</i>
<i>meeting</i>	<i>meeting room</i>
<i>movie premiere</i>	<i>cinema</i>

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, = a *destination*
just want to get there.)

I'm running in the gym.

(You are in the gym, = a *location*
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) <i>now</i>	prekosutra <i>day after tomorrow</i>
danas <i>today</i>	sljedeće godine <i>next year</i>
sutra <i>tomorrow</i> ®	sljedeći mjesec <i>next month</i>
uskoro <i>soon</i>	sljedeći tjedan <i>next week</i> ®

(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.*

ići

Danas idemo u kino. *We're going to cinema today.*

ići

Sljedeće godine putujemo na Hvar. *We're traveling to the island of Hvar next year.*

putovati

Finally, there are the following often used *generic directions*:

blizu <i>close, near</i>	ovamo <i>here</i>
daleko <i>far away</i>	natrag / nazad <i>back</i>
dalje <i>further, away</i>	van <i>outside</i> ®
unutra <i>inside</i>	tamo / onamo <i>there</i>

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?*

ići

— **Na posao.** *To work.*

— **Ide na posao.** *She's going to work.*

ići

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**

otok → **ostrvo**

kino → **bioskop**

van → **napolje**

nogomet → **fudbal**

zrak → **vazduh**

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) **kafić**. *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) <i>shave</i>	prati (pere) <i>wash</i>
buditi <i>waken</i>	svlačiti <i>take off (clothes)</i>
oblačiti <i>put on (clothes)</i>	vraćati <i>return</i>

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.*

prati

Ana pere lice. *Ana is washing her face.*

prati

(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'.*

prati

Brijem se. *I'm shaving.*

brijati

Instead of gender specific *himself* and *herself*, Croatian has only one word: **se**. However, the word is 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. **se**²). 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 **se**² 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 brijem¹ 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 nikad¹ 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):

Skoro¹ se² nikad ne brijem. (seen sometimes in writing)

brijati

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

Ana oblači 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 oblači 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 oblači. *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:

zabavljati entertain **zvati (zove)** call

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.*

zvati

But with a **se²**, their meaning changes:

Ana se zabavlja. *Ana is having fun.*

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

zvati

The second sentence, **zvati (zove) + se²** 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)	<i>Il s'<u>appelle</u> Goran.</i>	} lit. 'He calls himself Goran.'
(Italian)	<i>Lui <u>si</u> chiama Goran.</i>	
(Spanish)	<i>Él <u>se</u> llama Goran.</i>	
	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 **zabavljati**.) Unfortunately, English doesn't use this pattern at all.

We can list these meanings in a nice table:

verb	used with	meaning
čitati	(A)	<i>read</i>
prati (pere)	A	<i>wash</i>
zabavljati	A	<i>entertain</i>
	se²	<i>have fun</i>
zvati (zove)	A	<i>call</i>
	se² + N	<i>... name is ...</i>

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 **se²** 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 **se²** is mandatory:

Ana kuha juhu. [®]

Juha se kuha, meso se peče.

peći

(After a comma in Croatian, word-counting restarts: both **se²**’s are in the second position.)

This use of **se²** 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 **se²** 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 **se²**.*

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* **se²**.

The second difference is that **se²** 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 **se²** is *always* a *separate word in Croatian*.

These are the basics of **se²**. I’ll explain details a bit later, in 64 [The Door Opens: Fun with se²](#).

Finally, there’s a rather strange verb that must use an object or a **se²**:

igrati play

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

košarka *basketball* **šah** *chess*
nogomet *football (soccer)* **tenis** *tennis*

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 **se**²:

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 **se**². Some of them, like **nadati** *hope* have always a **se**² with them, so they are usually listed as **nadati se**². Another such verb is **smijati** (**smije**) **se**² *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**) **se**² has the unexpected form **smejati** (**smeje**) **se**²; 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 **se**² 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](#)) 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 **se**² – 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 / *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 *And when I fly, when I dream*

Kad se dižem, kada padam *When I get up, when I fall*

dizati

The verb **dizati** (**diže**) means *lift, raise* (something), but when you *lift, raise yourself*, i.e. *get up*, you have to use a **se**², 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 just laugh and you laugh*

smijati se

i sve je isto kao prije *and everything is the same as before*

zamišljam [da ničega se *I imagine [I don't*

više ne sjećam] *remember anything anymore]*

(Gordan Muratović)

We see again **se**², but in the first line we have actually two statements joined by *and*, 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 **se**² 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 se**² *remember* 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 (**je**² +) *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 **je**² in such expressions:

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

There's another important point: as you can probably see from the mark ², the word **je**² behaves like **se**² 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 **se**² and **je**² 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 <i>a bit</i>	dosta <i>quite</i>
jako <i>very</i> (not formal) ®	stvarno <i>really</i>
vrlo <i>very</i> (more formal)	pre- <i>too</i>
prilično <i>considerably</i>	

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)

Prevrūće 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 **prevrūće**. 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	} terribly
užasno	

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 **je**². 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	tu here
svugdje everywhere	unutra inside
tamo there	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)

puhati
puhati

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.*

puhati

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.*

puhati

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.*

puhati

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 **sniježiti**. 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:

0 nula	5 pet
1 jedan	6 šest
2 dva	7 sedam
3 tri	8 osam
4 četiri	9 devet

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

10 deset	15 petnaest
11 jedanaest	16 šesnaest
12 dvanaest	17 sedamnaest
13 trinaest	18 osamnaest
14 četnaest	19 devetnaest

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):

20 dvadeset	60 šezdeset
30 trideset	70 sedamdeset
40 četrideset	80 osamdeset
50 pedeset	90 devedeset

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:

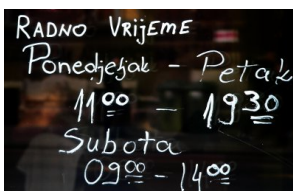
Vlak za Rijeku odlazi u pet. *The train to Rijeka leaves at five o'clock.*

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^{w1} 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**² 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 minu<u>tu</u> 1 minute	jedan sat 1 hour
dvije minu<u>te</u> 2 minutes	dva sa<u>ta</u> 2 hours
tri minu<u>te</u> 3 minutes	tri sa<u>ta</u> 3 hours
pet minu<u>ta</u> 5 minutes	pet sa<u>ti</u> 5 hours
deset minu<u>ta</u> 10 minutes	pola sa<u>ta</u> half an hour

Please don't draw too many generalizations from these examples, as you'll see later that the word **sat** *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:

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

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:

bol *f pain* [®]

noć *f night*

bolest *f disease*

obitelj *f (close) family* [®]

jesen *f fall, autumn*

ponoć *f midnight*

kost *f bone*

riječ *f word*

krv *f blood*

sol *f salt* [®]

ljubav *f love*

večer *f evening* [®]

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 than one hint appears on the right margin, they will be separated with a vertical line.) For example:

Vidim krv. *I see blood.*

Vozim auto. *I'm driving a car.*

f
m

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):

	male	female
English	<i>friend</i>	
French	<i>ami</i>	<i>amie</i>
Spanish	<i>amigo</i>	<i>amiga</i>
Croatian	prijatelj	prijateljica

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:

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

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

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.*

jesti

Sunce nije jako. *The sun isn't strong.*

Jezero je duboko. *The lake is deep.*

Ana je zdrava. *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.*

rasti

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 je dosta 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):

Tata je zdrav. *Dad is healthy.*

m

Noć je duga. *The night is long.*

f

® 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 **ново 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 *vúξ 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](#)).

• 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 <i>white</i>	plavi <i>blue</i>
crn <i>black</i>	siv <i>gray</i>
crven <i>red</i>	smeđ <i>brown</i> ®
ljubičast <i>violet</i>	zelen <i>green</i>
narančast <i>orange</i> ®	žut <i>yellow</i>

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 <i>pale violet</i>] colloquial & indeclinable
roza <i>pink</i> ®	

(The colloquial 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 sasvim] completely, fully

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-) <i>good</i>	sladak (slatk-) <i>sweet</i>
gladan (gladn-) <i>hungry</i>	sretan (sretn-) <i>happy</i> ®
hladan (hladn-) <i>cold</i>	strašan (strašn-) <i>terrible</i>
mokar (mokr-) <i>wet</i>	taman (tamn-) <i>dark</i>
mračan (mračn-) <i>dark</i>	tužan (tužn-) <i>sad</i>
opasan (opasn-) <i>dangerous</i>	umoran (umorn-) <i>tired</i>
prazan (prazn-) <i>empty</i>	važan (važn-) <i>important</i>

ružan (ružn-) *ugly***žedan (žedn-)** *thirsty*

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:

bolestan (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:

debeo (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 **dosta** is here just to practice adverbs a bit):

Knjiga je dosta 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*:

Knjiga je debela. *The book is 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:

adjective	adverb
jak <i>strong</i>	jako <i>very / very much</i>
pun <i>full</i>	puno <i>a lot</i> ®

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)

m

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:

super (colloq.) $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{adj. indecl. } \textit{great, excellent, superb} \\ \text{adv. } \textit{super, very} \end{array} \right.$

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.*

m

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

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* [®]

f

The noun **večer** *evening* 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 **dobro 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** (**je**² +) are listed as well:

	<i>pres-2</i>	<i>pres-2pl</i>
<i>regular verbs</i>	-š	-te
biti (je ² +) <i>be</i>	si ²	ste ²

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 – **se**² is always used:

(French)	<i>Comment t'appelles-tu?</i>] lit. 'How do you call yourself?'
(Italian)	<i>Come ti chiami?</i>	
(Spanish)	<i>¿Cómo te llamas?</i>	
	Kako se zoveš?	

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.** zvati

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

instead of **izgledati (izgleda)**

I'll write just **izgledati («)**

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.) **Izvolite.** (resp./group)

The word **izvolite** 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 **dovidjenja** – 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)

adio (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*):

	singular		plural	
pers.	N	A	N	A
1st	ja	me ²	mi	nas ²
2nd	ti	te ²	vi	vas ²

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 A = 2nd person, accusative, 2pl A = 2nd person plural, accusative, 3f A = 3rd person, feminine gender, accusative).

Like the word **se**², personal pronouns in accusative *must* be put to the second position in a sentence (check 7 [Verbs with Obligatory Objects](#).) For example:

Ana¹ **me**² **čeka**. *Ana is waiting for me.*

1 A

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 **te**² **čeka**. *My friend is waiting for you.*

2 A

(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 **te**² **prijatelj čeka**. (the same meaning, very formal, in writing)

2 A

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

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

2 A

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).*

2pl A

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

2pl A

(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*):

3rd person		
	N	A
fem.	ona	je² / ju²
neut.	ono	
masc.	on	ga²

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)

3m/n A

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

3m/n A | **poznavati**

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’)

3f A

Čitam **ju**. (the same meaning)

3f A

(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):

	male	female
<i>singer</i>	pjevač	pjevačica
<i>professor</i>	profesor	profesorica ®
<i>(univ.) student</i>	student	studentica ®
<i>teacher</i>	učitelj	učiteljica

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* **sam**²

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):

Spanish	Croatian
<i>Soy estudiante.</i>	Ja sam student.
<i>Estoy cansado.</i>	Gladan sam.

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:

biti (**je**² +) *be* → *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**² is used only if there's the *pres-3* form **je**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:

pers.	A (sg.)	A (pl.)
1st	<i>mē</i>	<i>nōs</i>
2nd	<i>tē</i>	<i>vōs</i>

(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 **se**² 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.*

jesti

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.*

jesti

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.*

f

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'):

gender	adj. A	example
fem.	-u	veliku ribu <i>big fish</i>
neut.	same as nominative	veliko jezero <i>big lake</i>
masc. (not p/a)	same as nominative	velik(i) zid <i>big wall</i>
masc. (p/a)	-og (some -eg)	velikog konja <i>big horse</i>

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.*

m

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 smeđeg 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

‘same as nominative’, or ‘no change’, I wrote just ‘= N’):

noun type (N)		A
nouns in -a (≈ fem.)		-a → -u
neuter nouns (≈ in -o , -e)		= N
masculine	(not p/a)	= N
not in -a	(p/a)	add -a
fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)		= N

(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:

gender	N	A
fem.	moja	moju
neut.	moje	= N
masc. (not p/a)	moj	= N
masc. (p/a)		mog mojeg

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.*

poznavati

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:

gender	example	N	A
fem.	<i>big fish</i>	velika riba	veliku ribu
neut.	<i>big lake</i>	veliko jezero	no change
	<i>big sea</i>	veliko more	
m. inan.	<i>big wall</i>	velik(i) zid	no change
m. anim.	<i>big brother</i>	velik(i) brat	velikog brata

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:

pron.	adjectives	nouns	noun endings
ona	N -a , A -u 'feminine'	noć <i>night</i>	pattern α (<i>'i-nouns'</i>)
		voda <i>water</i>	pattern β (<i>'a-nouns'</i>)
on	N (-i) , A -og 'masc. animate'	tata <i>dad</i>	
		konj <i>horse</i>	pattern γ
	N = A (-i) "'masc.'" inanimate'	zid <i>wall</i>	pattern δ
ono, to	N = A -o , -e 'neuter'	jezero <i>lake</i>	pattern ε

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	<i>My name is Davorin Bogović</i>
a ovo sve oko mene	<i>and all this around me</i>
to je crno-bijeli svijet...	<i>it's a black-and-white world...</i>
Crno-bijeli televizori	<i>Black-and-white TV's</i>
rijetki noćni tramvaji	<i>rare night trams</i>
moja bijela djevojka	<i>my white girlfriend</i>
uvozni ekskluzivni program	<i>imported exclusive shows</i>
mama, tata, pas i kravata...	<i>Mom, Dad, a dog and a tie...</i>

(Jasenka Houra)

See how *moj* *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:

noun type (N)	DL
nouns in -a (≈ fem.)	-a → -i
neuter nouns (≈ in -o , -e)	-o or -e → -u
masc. nouns not in -a	add -u
fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)	add -i

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 <i>cake</i>	ormar <i>closet, wardrobe</i> [®]
kuća <i>house</i>	peć <i>f oven, furnace</i>
kuhinja <i>kitchen</i>	soba <i>room</i>
ladica <i>drawer</i> [®]	stan <i>apartment</i>

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:

N	+ DL ending
kolač	kolaču
fakultet	fakultetu
telefon	telefonu
koncert	koncertu

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 nozi. *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 **đe** *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):

Case	Function	Class							
		Class I (Masc)		Class I (Neut)		Class II (Fem-a)		Class III (Fem.)	
		Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	Subject	~i	–	~a	–	~e	–	–	~i
Genitive	Reflexive Poss.	~a	~a	~a	~a	~e	~a	~i	~i
Accusative	Direct Object	–	~e	–	~a	~u	~e	–	~i
Dative	Indirect Object	~u	~ima	~u	~ima	~u	~ama	~i	~ima
Instrumental	Means of Action	~om	~ima	~om	~ima	~om	~ama	~i./ju	~ima
Locative	Location of Noun	~u	~ima	~u	~ima	~i	~ama	~i	~ima
Vocative	Direct Address	~e	~i	~o	~a	~o	~e	~i	~i

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 piše pismo Ivanu. *Ana is writing a letter to Ivan.*

pisati

Ana piše pismo Ivani. *Ana is writing a letter to Ivana.*

pisati

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 piše pismo Ivanu. *Ana is writing a letter to Ivan.*

pisati

Ana piše Ivanu pismo. *Ana is writing Ivan a letter.* (a bit less common order)

pisati

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 (prodaje) *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*

razglednica (picture) *postcard*

poklon *gift*

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 šalje čestitku Ivanu. *Ana is sending a greeting card to Ivan.*

slati

Ana daje poklon Goranu. *Ana is giving a gift to Goran.*

davati

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 poklanja knjigu Goranu. *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:

<i>I'm writing</i>	<i>Ana</i>	<i>a letter.</i>
<i>He told</i>	<i>Ivan</i>	<i>the truth.</i>
<i>She will buy</i>	<i>Goran</i>	<i>a new bike.</i>
<i>I wish</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>a nice day.</i>
In Croatian:	DL	A

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 (pomāže) *help*

pripadati *belong*

For example:

Ana pomāže Goranu. *Ana is helping Goran.*

pomagati

Auto pripada Ani. *The car belongs to Ana.*

(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** usually corresponds to English *for*, but not in this phrase. For example, you could say:

Hvala na... *Thanks for the...*

... **čestitci.** ...*greeting card.*

... **poruci.** ...*message.*

... **poklonu.** ...*gift.*

... **pomoći.** ...*help.*

f

Here we've used another feminine noun that doesn't end in **-a**: **pomoć** *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:

Ana pere kosu. '*Ana is washing hair.*' (= *her hair*)

prati

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:

Ana pere Goranu kosu. *Ana is washing hair 'to Goran'.* (= *Goran's hair*)

prati

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 *the same structure as* with the verb *send* or *write* – Goran will 'get' his hair washed, in the same way as he will get a message, letter or gift.

Pay attention that in the sentence above, **kosu** is in A – it is the object, after all – while **Goranu** is in DL. These two words are *not* attached to each other, don't depend on each other: this is just the most common word order in such sentences.

Croatian *has* possessive adjectives – I've already shown **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 *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.

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 *case-base* as well, not shortened (like masculine ones) but *lengthened*:

dijete (djetet-) *child* **pile** (pilet-) *chicken*

Pay attention how **i**je in **dijete** changes to **je** in its *case-base* (such alternations are a cause of misspellings for many native speakers).

The next two verbs have a obligatory **se**² always with them (as explained already, it must be the second word, if possible):

diviti se² *marvel, admire*

smijati (smije) se² *laugh*®

For example:

Goran se divi Ivanu. *Goran marvels at Ivan.*

Ana se smije Goranu. *Ana is laughing at Goran.*

smijati se

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. *Ana is going to Ivan.* (where he is)

Trčim mami. *I’m running to my Mum.*

ići
trčati

(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. *Ivan is going to the dentist tomorrow.*

ići

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. *Ana is going home today.*

ići

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 trešnji. *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) se**² has the unexpected form **smejati (smeje) se**².

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:



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:

gender	adj. DL	example
fem.	-oj	velikoj ribi <i>big fish</i>
neut.	-om	velikom jezeru <i>big lake</i>
masc.	(some -em)	velikom zidu <i>big wall</i>

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 živi u maloj kući. *Ivan lives in a small house.*

Ana živi u velikom stanu. *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®¹ adj. *bus*® **kolodvor** *station, terminal*®
željeznički adj. *train* **stanica** *stop*

They are always used with the preposition **na**®. For instance:

Čekamo na **autobusnom**^{w1} **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:

Češka <i>Czech Republic</i>	Nizozemska <i>Netherlands</i> ®
Engleska <i>England</i>	Njemačka <i>Germany</i>
Francuska <i>France</i>	Poljska <i>Poland</i>
Grčka <i>Greece</i>	Španjolska <i>Spain</i> ®
Irska <i>Ireland</i>	Švedska <i>Sweden</i>
Mađarska <i>Hungary</i>	Švicarska <i>Switzerland</i> ®

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:

Bosna <i>Bosnia</i>	Italija <i>Italy</i>	Rusija <i>Russia</i>
Brazil <i>Brazil</i>	Kina <i>China</i>	Srbija <i>Serbia</i>

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^{w1} **jezik** *the Italian language*

They are very often shortened just to adjectives (e.g. **engleski**, **talijanski**^{w1}) which keep the gender of the noun **jezik** – *masculine inanimate*. Such adjectives that stand for countries of origin and languages are:

češki <i>Czech</i>	ruski <i>Russian</i>
engleski <i>English</i>	srpski <i>Serbian</i>
francuski <i>French</i>	španjolski <i>Spanish</i> ®
hrvatski <i>Croatian</i>	švedski <i>Swedish</i>
njemački <i>German</i>	talijanski ^{w1} <i>Italian</i>

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 je na njemačkom. *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.:

Amélie je francuski film. *Amélie is a French movie.*

Adjectives like **njemački** are often used with the preposition **na**, to mean *language lessons*: either as *directions* (going to) or *locations* (attending):

Goran je na engleskom. *Goran is in the English class/lesson.*

Sutra idem na engleski. *I'm going to the English class/lesson tomorrow.*

ići

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:

	male	female
<i>Croat</i>	Hrvat	Hrvatica
<i>Bosnian</i>	Bosanc (Bosanc-)	Bosanka
<i>Serb</i>	Srbin	Srpkinja

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 **autobusni**^{w1}, 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 **studen** for the month of *November* is used only in Croatia (rarely in Bosnia).

Instead of **Nizozemska**, **Španjolska** and **Švicarska**, words **Holandija**, **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:

Croatian	English	Spanish
ovaj (ov-)	<i>this</i>	<i>este/esta</i>
taj (t-)	<i>that</i>	<i>ese/esa</i>
onaj (on-)	<i>that over there (yonder)</i>	<i>aquel/aquella</i>
drugi	<i>other</i>	<i>otro/otra</i>

They can be used as normal adjectives:

Ona kuća je velika. *That house is big.*

Marko živi u ovom stanu. *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*:

To je mačka. *It's a cat.*

Ovo je pas. *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:

To sam ja. *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:

Ovo je teško. *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 je moje. *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 se zove džep. *This is called a pocket.*

zvati

To *ask what* is something called, use **kako** *how* (again, as in Spanish or Italian):

Kako se to zove (na hrvatskom)? *What is that called (in Croatian)?*

zvati

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. *I'm waiting for that train.*

Ona žena 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 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. *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. *You know a good friend of mine.* (lit. 'one my good friend')

poznavati

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* **željati (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'.) f

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, but 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:

manner	quantity
ovako <i>in this way, like this</i>	ovoliko <i>this much/many</i>
tako <i>in that way, so</i>	toliko <i>so much/many</i>
onako <i>in that way, like that</i>	onoliko <i>that much/many</i>

Out of them, **ovako**, **tako** and **toliko** are most often used. For example:

Ovaj auto je tako brz. *This car is so fast.*

m

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:

danas *today* **ju**tro**s** *this morning*
noćas *tonight* **ve**će**ra**s *this evening*

For example:

Većeras idemo u restora**n**. *We’re going to the restaurant this evening.*

ići

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):

phrase	abbreviated
to jest <i>that is</i>	tj. <i>i.e.</i>
i tako dalje <i>and so on</i>	itd. <i>etc.</i>

® 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:

pronoun	possessive
ja /	moj <i>my</i>
ti <i>you</i> (sg.)	tvoj <i>your</i>
—	svoj

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:

alt. endings for moj , tvoj , svoj	
masc. / neut. DL:	-ojem = -om
masc. p/a A:	-ojeg = -og

You can use them as any adjective:

Čekamo **tvog** brata. *We're waiting for your brother.*

Čekamo **tvojeg** brata. (the same meaning)

Pišem poruku **tvojoj** sestri. *I'm writing a message to your sister.*

pisati

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):

pronoun	possessive
mi <i>we</i>	naš <i>our</i>
vi <i>you</i> (pl./resp.)	vaš <i>your</i> (i.e. <i>y'all's</i>)

The last set contains the 3rd person pronouns. Here Croatian does not distinguish neuter from masculine possessive:

pronoun	possessive
ona <i>she</i>	njen <i>her</i> njezin <i>her</i> ®
ono <i>it</i>	njegov <i>its/his</i>
on <i>he</i>	
one <i>they</i> (f)	njihov <i>their</i>
ona <i>they</i> (n)	
oni <i>they</i> (m)	

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.* pisati

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.* pisati

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, Everything...](#))

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)* → **prijateljčin**

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)* → **prijateljjev**

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 je **Anin**. *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 pere Goranu kosu.** *Ana is washing Goran's hair.* (lit. 'washing the hair to Goran') prati
- (2) **Ana pere Goranovu kosu.** (lit. 'washing Goran's hair' – the same meaning?) prati

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**):

Ivan živi u Branimirovoj ulici. *Ivan lives on 'Branimirova' street.*

Ivan živi u Branimirovoj. (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:

noun type (N)	G
nouns in -a (≈ fem.)	-a → -e
neuter nouns (≈ in -o , -e)	-o or -e → -a
masc. nouns not in -a	add -a
fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)	add -i

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 je na kraju filma. *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 **se**². For example:

Goran se boji mraka. *Goran is afraid of dark.*

bojati se

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 Anu kod mosta. *I'm waiting for Ana by the bridge.*

Ana je kod zubara. *Ana is at the dentist's.*

Goran je kod tete. *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*:

Ključ je kod Ane. (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 je kod Ane. (roughly) *Ana has (= is using) your car.*

m

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. *I'm not at home.*

We must not forget adjectives in G; they get quite different endings:

gender	adj. G	example
fem.	-e	velike ribe <i>big fish</i>
neut.	-og	velikog jezera <i>big lake</i>
masc.	(some -eg)	velikog konja <i>big horse</i>

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:

gender	N	G
neut.	moje	mog
masc.	moj	mojeg

This example combines a preposition, possessive adjective and a noun:

Ana je kod moje sestre. *'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 je stan tvoje sestre. *'This is an apartment of your sister' (= your sister's apartment)*

Ivan je u stanu tvoje sestre. *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 je sestra [moje žene]. *Ivana is [my wife]'s sister.*

Čekam sestru [moje žene]. *I'm waiting for [my wife]'s sister.*

Pišem poruku sestri [moje žene]. *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 a few meters away from it:



There's one more issue: with possessives (e.g. **Anin**), you could say:

Auto je Anin. *The car 'is Ana's'.* (= belongs to Ana)

m

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 pripada mojoj sestri. *The car belongs to my sister.*

m

Auto pripada Ani. *The car belongs to Ana.*

m

Another universal way – but *very colloquial* – is to use the verb **biti** (je² +) *be* with the preposition **od** + G:

Auto je od moje sestre. (colloq.!) *The car 'is of my sister'.*

m

Auto je od Ane. (colloq.!) *The car 'is of Ana'.*

m

• 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** + G for possession is kind of opposite of using DL (or possessive adjectives), and it's really *a different kind of possession*: **kod** + 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 školu. *Goran is going to school.*

ići

Goran dolazi iz škole. *Goran is coming from school.*

This preposition is often used to express someone's *origins*:

Josip je iz Rijeke. *'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 posao. *I'm going to work.*

ići

Idem s posla. *I'm going from work.*

ići

Odlazimo na plažu. *We're leaving for the beach.*

Vraćamo se s plaže. *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 poslu. *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:

Ana odlazi **od zubara.** *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 Rijeke.** *From Rijeka.*

Odakle dolazi ta buka? *Where is that noise coming from?*

— **S plaže.** *From the beach.*

This table nicely summarizes three types of destinations, locations and origins, and the various question-words:

u + A	u + DL	iz + G
u sobu	u sobi	iz sobe
<i>to the room</i>	<i>in the room</i>	<i>from the room</i>
na + A	na + DL	s / sa + G
na plažu	na plaži	s plaže
<i>to the beach</i>	<i>at the beach</i>	<i>from the beach</i>
DL	kod + G	od + G
zub<u>a</u>ru	kod zub<u>a</u>ra	od zub<u>a</u>ra
<i>to dentist's</i>	<i>at dentist's</i>	<i>from dentist's</i>
kamo ...?	gdje ...?	<u>od</u>akle ...?
<i>where... to?</i>	<i>where... ?</i>	<u>ot</u>kud(a) ...?
		<i>where... from?</i>

You will hear quite often **kod** + G used colloquially ® for destinations as well instead of just DL:

Ana ide **kod zubara.** (colloq.) *Ana going to the dentist's.*

ići

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*

od sad(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'.*

jesti

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):

word	+ G	on its own
------	-----	------------

prije	before	earlier
-------	--------	---------

poslije	after	later
---------	-------	-------

The word **poslije** is an exception from the usual pronunciation rules: many people pronounce it **pos-lje**. Both words are very common:

Poslije plaže idemo na večeru. *After the beach, we're going to supper.*

ići

Jedem doručak prije posla. *I eat breakfast before work.*

jesti

Instead of **poslije**, the word **nakon** can be used, but it's always used with a noun in G, while **poslije** can be used on its own:

Poslije idemo na večeru. *Later, we're going to supper.*

ići

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':

kuda	gd'e	otkuda
where... to	where	where... from

v + A	v + L	iz + G
-------	-------	--------

na + A	na + L	so + G
--------	--------	--------

k + D	u + G	ot + G
-------	-------	--------

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) ____ (s). *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:

pronouns in singular

person	N	A, G	DL
1st	(ja)	me ²	mi ²
2nd	(ti)	te ²	ti ²

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:

pronouns in plural

person	N	A, G	DL
1st	(mi)	nas ²	nam ²
2nd	(vi)	vas ²	vam ²

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 ti pismo. *I'm writing a letter to you.*

pisati | 2 DL

Ana nas čeka. *Ana is waiting for us.*

1pl A

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. ???

pisati

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:

3rd person pronouns

gender	N	A, G	A	DL
f	ona	je²	ju²	joj²
n	(ono)	ga²		mu²
m	on			
f pl.	one			
n pl.	(ona)	ih²		im²
m pl.	oni			

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 ti ga. *I'm sending it to you.*

slati | 2 DL | 3m/n A

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.*

razumjeti | 2 A

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)

2 DL

Hvala Vam. *Thank you.* (to someone you're not close with)

2pl DL

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!*

1 G

Evo ga. *Here he/it is!*

3m/n G

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.*

f

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 Ane. lit. *'There's no Ana.'*

Nema moje knjige. lit. *'There's no my book.'* = *My book isn't here.*

Nema ga. lit. *'There's no him.'* = *He's not here.* (or *it*, depending on the context)

3m/n G

Nema ih. lit. *'There's no them.'* = *They're not here.*

3pl G

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:

nema veze $\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{never mind} \\ \text{it doesn't matter} \end{array} \right.$

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 always love you

2 A

I kad se budiš

Even when you're waking up

I kad na licu šminke nemaš

Even when you don't wear any makeup

I kad si ljuta

Even when you're angry

I kad se čudiš

Even when you're wondering

(Luko Paljetak)

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](#).

Uvijek <u>te</u> volim	<i>Always I love you</i>	2 A
hoću da znaš	<i>I want you to know</i>	
Volim <u>te</u>	<i>I love you</i>	2 A
ne znam kako da <u>odolim</u>	<i>I'm unable to resist</i>	
U svakom slučaju <u>te</u> volim	<i>In any case, I love you</i>	2 A

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 **te**² 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 **mi**²:

Volim <u>te</u> uvijek	<i>I always love you</i>	2 A
I kada sanjaš	<i>Even when you're dreaming</i>	
Kad ne pišeš <u>mi</u>	<i>When you don't write to me</i>	pisati 1 DL
Kad <u>te</u> nema	<i>When you're not here</i>	2 G

The word **mi**² 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](#).

23 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 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 je. *'It's cold to me.'* = *I'm cold.*

1 DL

If you pay attention, you might have noticed that we again have *two* words trying to get to the second position: **mi**² and **je**² (the *pres-3* form of the verb **biti**). If something like that happens, **je**² always comes after any pronouns.

Such words with fixed second-place position always come in a 'block' and cannot be rearranged:

Često mi je hladno. *'It's often cold to me.'* = *I'm often cold.*

1 DL

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 **je**² doesn't change, regardless of who feels cold:

Hladno nam je. *'It's cold to us.'* = *We're cold.*

1pl DL

This use of impersonal **je**² with DL is frequently seen with the following adverbs:

bučno noisy	loše bad (see below)
dosadno boring	toplo warm
hladno cold	vruće hot
lijepo nice	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 je. *'It's boring to me.'* = *I'm bored.*

1 DL

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 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:

<i>Mir ist kalt.</i> <i>Mir ist langweilig.</i> <i>Mir ist schlecht.</i>	}	(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-**:

Prevruće nam je. *It's too hot 'to us'. (= for us)*

1pl DL

Jako mi je dosadno. *I'm very bored.*

1 DL

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**² and an adverb, it describes *how someone feels*:

Ana se osjeća odlično. *Ana feels great.*

Osjećam se grozno. *I feel terrible.*

This verb with **se**² 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**²:

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?'*

Kako ide? lit. *'How is it going?'*

ići

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? *How is it going at work?*

Kako ide na poslu? (more or less the same meaning)

ići

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 je na poslu? *How are you doing at work?*

2 DL

Kako ide Ani na poslu? *How is Ana doing at work?*

ići

It seems to me there's a subtle difference in these two questions: ones with **ići** (**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 ide na poslu? *How are they doing at work?*

3pl DL | ići

There are two often used expressions that cannot be used without someone in DL:

Drago mi je. *I'm glad.*

1 DL

Žao mi je. *I'm sorry.*

1 DL

Of course, instead of **mi**², other pronouns and nouns in DL can be used:

Ani 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 je važna. *The family is important.*

f

Knjiga je dosadna. *The book is boring.*

Majica je lijepa. *The shirt is nice.*

And convert them into *personal opinions*, using DL in the exactly same way:

Obitelj mi je važna. *The family is important to me.*

f | 1 DL

Ani je knjiga dosadna. *The book is boring 'to Ana'. = Ana finds the book boring.*

Majica mi je lijepa. (colloq.) *The shirt is nice 'to me'. = I find the shirt nice.*

1 DL

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 je omiljena knjiga. *This a beloved book.*

Ovo mi je omiljena knjiga. *This is my favorite book. ('beloved to me')*

1 DL

Ani je ovo omiljena pjesma. *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 je Anina omiljena knjiga. *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 mi je najdraža pjesma. *This is my most favorite song.*

1 DL

(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) *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 čaša. (N) (the same meaning!)

1 DL

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.)	}	<i>lack/miss</i>
---	---	------------------

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 nedostaje. *A part is missing.*

nedostajati

Both are very often used with experiencers in DL, one *who feels something is missing, or is affected by it*:

Jedan dio ti nedostaje. *You're missing a part.*

2 DL | nedostajati

Nedostaje mi Igor. *I miss Igor.*

nedostajati | 1 DL

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. *I miss you. (you = one person)*

nedostajati | 1 DL

Fališ mi. (the same, but colloquial)

1 DL

Nedostajete joj. *She misses you. (you = group/formal to one person)*

nedostajati | 3f DL

Falite joj. (the same, but colloquial)

3f DL

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 je² + G *there's enough G*

previše je² + G *there's too much G*

premalo je² + 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 je dosta Damira. *Ana had enough of Damir.*

Dosta mi ga je. *I had enough of him.*

1 DL | 3m/n G

Pay attention how words **mi²** (DL), **ga²** (G) and **je²** (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 daje šalicu Goranu.** *Ana is giving a cup to Goran.* [®]

davati

(2) **Ana pere Goranu kosu.** *Ana is washing Goran's hair.*

prati

(3) **Goranu 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](#).

24 Past Tense

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** (**je**² +) *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 *I-participle*) are not too complicated:

gender	past	past pl.
fem.	-la	-le
neut.	-lo	-la
masc.	-o ®	-li

For example, here are the past forms the verb **čitati** *read*:

gender	past	past pl.
fem.	čitala	čitale
neut.	čitalo	čitala
masc.	čitao ®	čitali

(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** (**je**² +) *be*:

verb	<i>past-f</i>	<i>past-m</i>
biti (je ² +) <i>be</i>	bila	bio
pisati (piše) <i>write</i>	pisala	pisao
piti (pije) <i>drink</i>	pila	pio
plesati (pleše) <i>dance</i>	plesala	plesao
slati (šalje) <i>send</i>	slala	slao
trčati (trči) <i>run</i>	trčala	trčao

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** (**je**² +) *be* (keeping in mind that it should go to the second position):

Ana je plesala. *Ana was dancing.*

Ivan 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** (**je**² +) *be* in the past – its past is formed as for any other verb:

Ana 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** (**je**² +) *be* that require the same position. The rule is that present forms of the verb **biti** come first, *except* in the 3rd person, where **je**² comes last in the chain of second-position contenders:

Čekao sam ga. *I was waiting for him.* (I = male)

3m/n A

Čekala si ga. *You were waiting for him.* (you = female)

3m/n A

Čekala ga je. *She was waiting for him.*

3m/n A

If there's a particle **se**², it behaves like other pronouns in A (**me**², **ga**², etc.). There's a *special rule*: if **je**² (*pres-3* of **biti**) would come after **se**², it's almost always left out:

Bojao sam se. *I was afraid.*

Goran se je bojao. *Goran was afraid.*

Goran se bojao. (this form is usually used)

The verb **je**² – 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*:

Goran je jednog hladnog zimskog dana čuo... *On a cold winter day, Goran heard...*

(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 mi je°. *I'm cold.* (lit. 'It's cold to me.')

Drago nam je°. *We're glad.* (lit. 'It's dear to us.')

Dosta mu je°. *He had enough.*

1 DL

1pl DL

3m/n DL

All such sentences in the past tense always use *neuter singular* past forms:

Bilo je hladno. *It was cold.*

Bilo mi je hladno. *I was cold.* (lit. 'It was cold to me.')

Bilo nam je drago. *We were glad.* (lit. 'It was dear to us.')

Bilo mu je dosta. *He has had enough.*

1 DL

1pl DL

3m/n DL

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:

Ponoć je. *It's midnight.* (lit. 'Midnight is.')

Jutro je. *It's morning.* (lit. 'Morning is.')

f

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 ponoć. *It was midnight.* (lit. 'Midnight was.')

Bilo je jutro. *It was morning.* (lit. 'Morning was.')

f

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:

To je mačka. *It's a cat.*

→ **To je bila mačka.** *It was a cat.*

To je problem. *That's a problem.*

→ **To je bio problem.** *That was a problem.*

To *negate* sentences in the past tense, just use the negative forms of present tense of **biti** (that is, **nisam**, **nisi**, **nije**, etc.):

Ana nije bila gladna. *Ana wasn't hungry.*

Nisam spavao. *I wasn't sleeping.* (I = male)

Nije nam bilo dosadno. *We weren't bored.*

1pl DL

As usual, forms **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 **nema** in the present tense, in the past tense, impersonal **nije bilo** is used:

Nema° piva. *There's no beer.*

→ **Nije bilo piva.** *There was no beer.*

Nema° ih. *They aren't here/there.*

→ **Nije ih bilo.** *They weren't here/there.*

3pl G

3pl G

There are useful *adverbs of time* often used with verbs in the past tense:

davno *a long time ago* **nedavno** *recently*

jučer *yesterday* ® **nekad(a)** *some time ago*

malo prije *moments ago* **ranije** *earlier*

The adverb **nedavno** means that some action or state happened at a recent period; the adverb **odnedavno** means start something started at a recent moment (and might still be ongoing).

For example:

Ivan je jučer bio u kinu. *Ivan was at the cinema yesterday.* ®

Sadly, some verbs are irregular even in the past tense; this includes all verbs having infinitives ending in **-ći** and most with inf. in **-sti**. Therefore, when such verbs are listed, they will have *past-m forms* listed as well after their *pres-3*:

jesti (**jede**, **jeo**) *eat*

plesti (**plete**, **pleo**) *knit*

(I will list the *past-m* and not e.g. *past-f* simply due to tradition of listing verb forms, and because you will find *past-m*'s listed in printed and online dictionaries.) The *past-f* is listed if it cannot be regularly obtained from the *past-m*; luckily, all other past forms can *always* be deduced from the *past-f*. That's how most verbs in **-ći** are listed:

ići (**ide**, **išao**, **išla**) *go*
pečí (**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: ®

	<i>inf</i>	<i>past-m</i>	<i>past-f</i>
<i>see</i>	vidjeti	vidio	vidjela
<i>understand</i>	razumjeti	razumio	razumjela

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.*

3m/n A
3pl A

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, **ček**, **iš**, 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 **osobit** *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 lijepa	<i>She wasn't particularly beautiful</i>
ali nije bila kao druge	<i>but she wasn't like other women</i>
pa je ljubav, kao uvijek slijepa	<i>so love, blind as always</i>
zbog nje razne prelazila pruge	<i>crossed various tracks because of her</i>

f

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

pruge means *stripe*, but also *track* (e.g. railroad). This verse has also **zbog nje** *because of her*, where a *stressed* form of the pronoun is used. Stressed pronouns will be explained in the following chapters.

In the chorus, the word **rupica** means *small hole* (while **rupa** is just *hole*): Croatian has many words for small versions of things. They will be described in 85 [Small and Cute: Diminutives](#).

Imala je lijepu rupicu na bradi	<i>She had a nice little hole on her chin</i>
znala je da grebe, znala je da gladi	<i>she used to scratch, she used to stroke</i>
imala je lijepu rupicu na bradi	<i>she had a nice little hole on her chin</i>
drhtali smo složno, smeteni i mladi	<i>we shivered in unison, confused and young</i>

(Momčilo Popadić)

The phrase **znala je da grebe** is a bit ambiguous; it would be more common to say **znala je grebati**, which is still ambiguous; the intended meaning is likely *she used to scratch*; this will be explained in 32 [Love and Like](#).

You can find various performances on YouTube™.

• 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* ®

kliješta n pl. *pliers*

leđa n pl. *back(s)*

pluća n pl. *lung(s)*

vrata n pl. *door(s)*

usta n pl. *mouth(s)*

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.*

jesti

pisati

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 (vremen-) *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*:

<i>pres-3</i>	<i>pres-3pl</i>	example
-a	-aju	pjevati <i>sing</i> → pjevaju
-i	-e	voziti <i>drive</i> → voze ®
-e	-u ®	jesti (jede) <i>eat</i> → 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.*

jesti

There's a common way to express *mutual action*, corresponding to English *each other* – just use **se**²:

Ana i Ivan se vole. *Ana and Ivan love each other.*

As you can see, here **se**² 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 **se**², 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 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 i Ivan vole jednog 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. *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. *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:

gender	adj. NA-pl	example
fem.	-e	velike ribe <i>big fishes</i>
neut.	-a	velika jezera <i>big lakes</i>

Then, we need the *pres-3pl* form of the verb *to be*:

biti (je² +) *be* → **su**²

So now we can say:

Ptice su lijepe. *Birds are beautiful.*

Pisma su duga. *The letters are long.*

And we are able to say:

To su ptice. *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 *-će*, but the *pres-3pl* in *-ku*. Common ones are:

peći (peće) bake → peku

teći (teće) flow → teku

tući (tuće) beat, smack → tuku

vući (vuće) pull → vuku

If a verb has *pres-3* in *-će*, but its infinitive ends in *-ti*, there's no such complication: the *pres-3pl* is completely regular:

vikati (viće) 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:

Noći su duge. *Nights are long.*

f

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:

	feminine	masculine
cow	krava	bik <i>bull</i> vol <i>ox</i>
fox	lisica	lisac (<i>lisc-</i>)
cat	mačka	mačak (<i>mačk-</i>)
duck	patka	patak (<i>patk-</i>)

(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:

noun type (N)	NA-pl
nouns in -a (≈ fem.)	-a → -e
neuter nouns (≈ in -o , -e)	-o or -e → -a
fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)	add -i

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:

pres-3 **razume** → *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:

Mirno teku rijeke	<i>Rivers flow peacefully</i>	teći
mirno žita šume	<i>wheat hisses peacefully</i>	
svjetlo njiše misli	<i>the light sways thoughts</i>	njihati f
misli njišu šume	<i>thoughts sway forests</i>	f njihati

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 **misлити** *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:

Ptica let šara svod	<i>Flight of birds scrawls the vault</i>	
pršti pjev u jasni vedri dan	<i>singing frizzles on a bright clear day</i>	prštati
jasni dan, vedri smijeh	<i>clear day, cheerful laughter</i>	
vedar čovjek nikad nije sam	<i>a cheerful man is never alone</i>	

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*):

Maštom takneš	<i>With imagination, you touch</i>	taknuti
svaku travku, cvijet	<i>each blade of grass, each flower</i>	
tu si velik ti, i tvoj je svijet	<i>you're big here, and the world is yours</i>	
Onda mir, samo mir	<i>Then peace, only peace</i>	
rijeka, šuma, plavi svod i ti	<i>the river, the forest, the blue vault and you</i>	
(Drago Britvić)		

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 **li**² to the second position (before all other second-position words):

Ideš u školu. *You're going to school.*

Ideš li u školu? *Are you going to the school?*

— **Da.** *Yes.* / — **Idem.** *I'm going.*

— **Ne.** *No.* / — **Ne idem.** *I'm not going.*

ići

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ići

If the verb in a sentence is present form of the verb **biti** *be* (that is, **je**², **sam**², 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** (**je**² +), used when the verb must be the first word in a sentence. The forms are:

	pers.	sing.	plur.
1st		jesam	jesmo
2nd		jesi	jeste
3rd		je	jesu

They are quite simple: just add **je-** to the beginning of usual forms, and you have the forms you need! Again, **je**² is an exception – it looks exactly the same in its normal and extended form. We can then ask:

Gladni ste. *You're hungry.* (to a group/someone you respect)

Jeste li gladni? *Are you hungry?*

— **Da.** *Yes.* / — **Jesmo.** *We are.*

— **Ne.** *No.* / — **Nismo.** *We aren't.*

Je li žedna? *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** (**je**² +) 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** (**je**² +) *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* (**je**², **sam**², and so on):

Gledala si film. *You watched the movie.* (to a female)

Jesi li gledala film? *Did you watch the movie?*

— **Da.** *Yes.* / — **Jesam.** *I did.*

— **Ne.** *No.* / — **Nisam.** *I didn't.*

If **je**² is left out due to **se**², 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** (**je**² +) don't get extended, etc:

Da li ideš u školu? (colloq.) *Are you going to the school?*

ići

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:



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?*

ići

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:

Ideš u školu? (colloq.)

ići

Gledala si film? (colloq.)**Bojao se?** (colloq.)

However, with just the present forms of **biti** (**je**² +), 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:

form	hits
jesi li gledala	3280
da li si gledala	1420
jesi gledala	11800

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** (**je**² +) *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	<i>And do you still play</i>	
noću pored rijeke	<i>at night by the river</i>	
Sad je došlo lijepo vrijeme	<i>Now nice weather has come</i>	doći past-n
Pjevate li	<i>Do you sing</i>	
one naše pjesme	<i>those songs of ours</i>	
Da li ponekad	<i>Do you sometimes</i>	
sretnoš moju dragu	<i>come across my darling</i>	sresti
Jel još uvijek onako lijepa	<i>Is she still so beautiful</i>	
Pita li za mene	<i>Does she ask about me</i>	
i dal me čeka	<i>and is she waiting for me</i>	1 A

(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 <i>head</i>	peta <i>heel</i>
jezik <i>tongue</i>	prst <i>finger, toe</i>
koljeno <i>knee</i>	rame (ramen-) <i>shoulder</i>
kost <i>bone</i>	ruka <i>hand/arm</i>
lakat (lakt-) <i>elbow</i>	trbuh <i>stomach (belly)</i> ®
leđa <i>n pl. back</i>	usta <i>n pl. mouth</i>
noga <i>leg/foot</i>	vrat <i>neck</i>
nos <i>nose</i>	zub <i>tooth</i>

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:

boljeti (boli,...) *hurt* **svrbiti / svrbjeti** *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, **svrbjeti** – 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:

Svrbi me noga. 'The leg is itching me.' = *My leg itches.*

1 A

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 svrbi noga. *'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 je bilo dosadno. (DL) *Ana was bored.*

Pain is expressed in *exactly the same way*:

Boli me zub. *'The tooth is hurting me.'* = *My tooth hurts.*

1 A

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 **leđa** and **usta** are always in plural, despite everyone having just one. Since they are *subjects*, verbs must be put into plural as well:

Leđa me bole. *'The backs are hurting me.'* = *My back hurts.*

1 A

Usta me svrbe. *'The mouths are itching me.'* = *My mouth itches.*

1 A

We haven't learned plural of masculine nouns yet, but for both **prst** and **zub**, it's simply made by adding an -i:

Gorana bole zubi. *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 je svrbila noga. *Ana's leg itched.*

Leđa su me boljela. *My back has hurt.*

1 A

Gorana su boljeli zubi. *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*:

noun	plural noun
oko eye	oči f pl.
uho ear	uši f pl.

For example:

Anu boli oko. *Ana's eye hurts.*

Anu bole oči. *Ana's eyes hurt.*

f

The gender switch is visible in the past tense:

Anu je boljelo oko. *Ana's eye has hurt.*

Anu su boljele oči. *Ana's eyes have hurt.*

f

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:

Boli me. *It hurts.*

1 A

Boljelo me je. *It has hurt.*

1 A

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:

Ana pere Goranu kosu. *Ana is washing Goran's hair.*

prati

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:

Kosa je čista. *The hair is clean.*

Noge su prljave. *The feet are dirty.*

Lice je prljavo. *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) **Goranu je kosa čista.** *Goran's hair is clean.*

Goranu su noge prljave. *Goran's feet are dirty.*

Lice ti je prljavo. *Your face is dirty.*

2 DL

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) **Goran ima čistu kosu.** *Goran has clean hair.*

Goran ima prljave noge. *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)* 2 DL
Prljava ti je majica. (the same meaning, emphasis on **prljav** dirty) 2 DL

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):

Ways to say <i>my hair is dirty</i>		is it common?
Kosa mi je prljava.	DL	yes (for temporary prop.)
Prljava mi je kosa.		
Imam prljavu kosu.	verb <i>have</i>	yes (esp. western areas)
Moja kosa je prljava.	possessive	not really

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 Slabinac, 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 <u>oči</u> dobro vide	<i>Black eyes see well</i>	f
Di u mraku dvoje side	<i>Where two people are sitting in the dark</i>	

Jedno drugom progov<u>ara</u>	<i>One starts speaking to another</i>	
Di je naša ljubav stara	<i>Where is our old love</i>	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*:

people	N	A, G	DL
(<i>who</i>)	tko	kog(a)	kom(e)

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 je vozio. *Ivan was driving (Ivan N)*

Tko je vozio? *Who was driving?*

For the accusative case (contrasted with the question about the subject in N):

Goran čeka Anu. *Goran is waiting for Ana. (Anu A)*

Koga Goran čeka? *Who is Goran waiting for? (A)*

Tko čeka Anu? *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 je pisala Ivanu. *Ana was writing to Ivan. (Ivanu = DL)*

Kome je Ana pisala? *Who was Ana writing to?*

Knjiga pripada Ani. *The book belongs to Ana. (Ani = DL)*

Kome pripada knjiga? *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):

things	N, A	DL	G
(<i>what</i>)	što	čemu	čega

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 je pisala pismo. *Ana was writing a letter. (pismo = A)*

Što je Ana pisala? *What was Ana writing? (što = A)*

Ivan se boji mraka. *Ivan is afraid of dark. (mraka = G)*

bojati se

Čega se boji Ivan? *What is Ivan afraid of? (čega = G)*

bojati se

When answering such questions, you can answer with just one word, but in the right case:

Kome je Ana pisala? *Who was Ana writing to?*

— **Ivanu.** *To Ivan. (DL)*

Što je Ana pisala? *What was Ana writing?*

— **Pismo.** *A letter. (A)*

Koga Goran čeka? *Who is Goran waiting for?*

— **Anu.** *Ana. (A)*

Čega se boji Ivan? *What is Ivan afraid of?*

bojati se

— **Mraka.** *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. *We were at Ana's house/home. (kod + G)*

Kod koga smo bili?

— **Kod Ane.** *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 je bio ovdje? *Who was here?*

Tko je gladan? *Who is hungry?*

For things:

Što 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 boli? lit. 'What hurts you?' = *Where does it hurt you?*

2 A

— **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)[®]:

dešavati («) se ² događati («) se ²	}	<i>go on, happen</i>
--	---	----------------------

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 to pišeš? *Who are you writing to? (I see you're typing a message)*

pisati

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 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 da pišem? *What should I write?*

pisati

Koga da čekamo? *Who should we wait for?*

Što 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 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 *plate (to eat from)* → **tanjuri** *plates* ®

What about the *accusative case*? It has just an **-e** instead of **-i**:

Goran pere zube. *Goran is 'washing' his teeth.*

prati

(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*):

N	N-pl	A-pl
putnik <i>traveler</i>	putnici	putnike
razlog <i>reason</i>	razlozi	razloge
uspjeh <i>success</i>	uspjesi	uspjehe
prozor <i>window</i>	prozori	prozore

However, most *one-syllable* nouns (that is, nouns that have only one vowel) get a longer ending; most of them **-ovi**:

brod *ship* → **brodovi** **sin** *son* → **sinovi**

grad *city* → **gradovi** **vrt** *garden* → **vrtovi** ®

lijek *cure* → **lijekovi** **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:

crv *worm* **gost** *guest* **konj** *horse*
đak *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 **đak** gets the same alternation as **putnik**, so its N-*pl* is **đaci**.

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 (**lanc-**) *pot* → **lonci**

nokat (**nokt-**) *finger nail/toe nail* → **nokti**

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 (**bubnj-**) *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** *pidgeon* **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 (**retk-**) *line of text*

početak (**početk-**) *beginning*

From everything you have learned so far, you would expect the forms:

N	DL	N- <i>pl</i>	A- <i>pl</i>
redak	retku	retci	retke
početak	početku	početci	početke

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®:

N	DL	N-pl	A-pl
redak	retku	reci retci redci	retke
početak	početku	počeci početci	početke

The most recent Croatian orthography manual allows also **c**-only forms for some frequent nouns, such as:

gubitak (gubitk-) <i>loss</i>	predak (pretk-) <i>ancestor</i>
ostatak (ostatk-) <i>remainder</i>	trenutak (trenutk-) <i>moment</i>
početak (početk-) <i>beginning</i>	zadatak (zadatk-) <i>task</i>

But the noun **redak** (**retk-**) 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:

adjectives	N-pl	A-pl
masculine	-i	-e

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 **pjat** or **pijat** 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**.

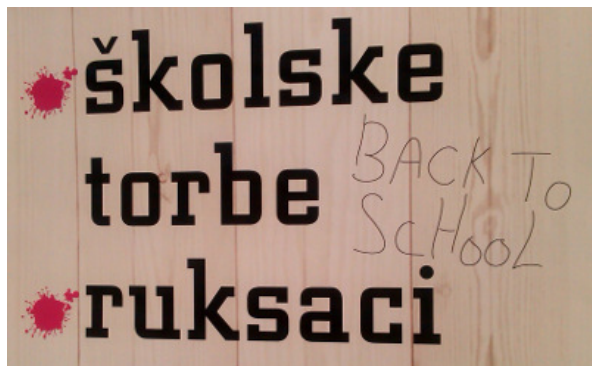
The masculine singular form **bol** *m pain* is much more frequent in Serbia.

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**:



(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:

	fem.	neut./masc.
<i>both</i>	obje	oba
	obadvije	obadva (colloq.)
2	dvije	dva
3	tri	
4	četiri	

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 jabuke. *I have two apples.*

Vidim dva broda. *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*:

gender	adjectives (2-4)
fem.	-e
neut./masc.	-a

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 riječi. *These are two long words.*

f

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 me čekaju. *Two friends are waiting for me.*

1 A

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.*

1 A

Dvije prijateljice su me čekale. *Two (female) friends were waiting for me.*

1 A

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. *I have two or three beers.*

Imam dvije-tri jabuke. *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 <i>two friends</i>
(both female)	dvije prijateljice <i>two friends</i>
(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. *I want two apples.*

Želim još dvije jabuke. *I want two apples more.*

Don't forget, if you place it before a verb, it has another meaning – *still*:

Još želim dvije jabuke. *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. *I need at least two glasses.*

Imam čak tri tanjura. *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 (A) ? *Do you have...?*

— **Imamo.** *We have.* / — **Nemamo.** *We don't.*

Što imate? *What do you have?*

Molim Vas (A) *I'd like...*

2pl

For example, the last line could be:

Molim Vas dvije kave. *Two coffees, please.*

2pl A

Molim Vas tri mala piva. *Three small beers, please.*

2pl A

Molim Vas jedan hamburger. *One hamburger, please.*

2pl A

Molim Vas dva čaja. *Two cups of tea, please. (lit. two teas)*

2pl A

Molim Vas tri velike pizze. *Three large pizzas, please.*

2pl A

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 (jednu) porciju piletine. *One serving of chicken, please.*

2pl A

Molim Vas dvije porcije piletine. *Two servings of chicken, please.*

2pl A

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 (jednu) čašu vina. *A glass of wine, please.*

2pl A

Of course, you can always order more:

Molim Vas još dva piva. *Two more beers, please.*

2pl A

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 <i>first</i>	5 peti <i>fifth</i>
2 drugi <i>second</i>	6 šesti <i>sixth</i>
3 treći <i>third</i>	7 sedmi <i>seventh</i>
4 četvrti <i>fourth</i>	8 osmi <i>eighth</i>

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 to trideset i druge (godine). 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:

Rođen sam petog osmog. '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 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 sam u osmom mjesecu. *I'm born in August.*

The word **mjesec** is sometimes abbreviated as **mj.**; colloquially, even **mjesec** *month* can be left out:®

Idemo na more u sedmom. *We're going to seaside in July.* ®

ići

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 **studen** (**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 sam petog kolovoza. (formal) *I am born on the fifth of August.*

Rođen sam u kolovozu. (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:

Peti kolovoza je bio vruć. (formal) *The fifth of August was hot.*

Again, the expression above is actually about **peti dan** *the fifth day* – therefore, the *past* form is in masculine.

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).

Sedamdesete su bile davno. *The seventies were long ago.*

If a decade is the subject, as above, the verb goes into plural, and past forms and adjectives are feminine, as expected. Decades are often written as a combination of a number and a case ending, connected by a hyphen:

70-e su bile davno. *The 70's 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*:

tavan	<i>attic</i>
potkrovlje	
...	
drugi kat	<i>the second floor</i> ®
prvi kat	<i>the first floor</i>
prizemlje	<i>the ground floor</i>
podrum	<i>basement</i>

The word **kat** ® means only *storey, level in a bulding*, 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:

Kupaonica je na katu. *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:

Kutija je u podrumu. *The box is in the basement.*

Ured je na drugom katu. *The office is on the second floor.* ®

Igračke su na tavanu. *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:

prvi red *front row* (lit. 'first row')

prva crta *front line* (lit. 'first line')

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** *first* 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** *first* are:

posljednji] <i>last</i>
zadnji	

(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:

1 januar <i>January</i>	7 jul / juli <i>July</i>
2 februar <i>February</i>	8 avgust <i>August</i>
3 mart <i>March</i>	9 septembar (septembr-) <i>September</i>
4 april <i>April</i>	10 oktobar (oktoobr-) <i>October</i>
5 maj <i>May</i>	11 novembar (novembr-) <i>November</i>
6 jun / juni <i>June</i>	12 decembar (decembr-) <i>December</i>

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 → kupatilo
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:

Djevojke u ljetnim haljinama volim	<i>Girls in summer dresses I like</i>	
Ljubim ih u leđa	<i>I kiss them in their back</i>	
mirišu na smolu	<i>they smell of resin</i>	
moj je grad večeras dobio luku	<i>my town got a port this evening</i>	
Ulje je na vodi	<i>There's oil on the water</i>	
to je, to je...	<i>that's, that's...</i>	
moja prva ljubav	<i>my first love</i>	
(Srđan Sacher)		

3pl A
mirisati

f

The first verse contains a case yet unexplained: DL in plural. The verb **mirisati**

(**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 **je**².

The verb **dobiti** (**dobije**) *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) svidati se²	}	<i>love/like</i>
--	---	------------------

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:

Goran voli Anu. *Goran loves Ana.*

Ana voli sladoled. *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:

Svida mi se juha. *I like the soup.* [®]

1 DL

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:

Ani se svida Ivan. *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 plait.

(German) Das Buch gefällt mir.

Knjiga mi se svida.

1 DL

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 **svidati se²** – 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.*

1 DL

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.*

1 DL

Sviđale su mi se cipele. *I liked the shoes.*

1 DL

Of course, you can also say:

Sviđaš mi se. *I like you.*

1 DL

Sviđaš se Ani. *Ana likes you.*

Sviđala si mi se. *I liked you. (you = female)*

1 DL

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 ne sviđa°. *Ana doesn't like it here.*

Sviđa° mi se na moru. *I like being at the seaside.*

1 DL

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.*

1 DL

Liking places and times is also often expressed with the adverb **lijepo** *nice* + DL + **je**²:

Lijepo mi je° na moru. *I like being at the seaside.*

1 DL

Bilo mi je lijepo na moru. *I liked being at the seaside.*

1 DL

Bilo mi je lijepo jučer. *I liked it yesterday.*

1 DL

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 voli trčanje. *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):

Jako mi se sviđa juha. *I like the soup very much.*

1 DL

Bilo mi je jako lijepo na moru. *I liked being at the seaside very much.*

1 DL

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:

zanimati («) *be interesting to*

This verb is used in a similar way; however, the person who feels interest is expressed in A:

Gorana zanima nogomet. *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):

Ne zanima me. *I'm not interested.*

1 A

Another verb is very similar to **voljeti** (**voli**,...) but stands for an even stronger feeling:

obožavati («) *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.:

Igor obožava kavu. *Igor 'adores' coffee.*

Ana obožava plivati. *Ana 'adores' swimming.*

The verb with the meaning opposite to *love* and *like* is:

mrziti *hate* ®

It's used in the same ways as **voljeti** (**voli**,...):

Ana mrzi te cipele. *Ana hates these shoes.*

Goran mrzi čistiti kuću. *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 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 zna padati i u desetom mjesecu. (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 voli da trči. *Ana loves to run.*

Ana voli da vozi bicikl. *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 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 se**². 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!):

brod *ship* → **brodski** **more** *sea* → **morski**
grad *city* → **gradski** **škola** *school* → **školski**

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 je školsko dvorište. *This is a school yard.*

Bili smo u školskom 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 **-čki**, or other irregularities:

pošta *post* → **poštanski** *postal*
putnik *passenger* → **putnički**

Adjectives for cities, regions and countries are often irregular (and they are not uppercase):

Bosna → **bosanski** **Slavonija** → **slavonski**
Dalmacija → **dalmatinski** **Zagreb** → **zagrebački**
Istra → **istarski** **Zagorje** → **zagorski**

For countries, islands and cities that end in **-s** or **-z**, the final consonant is usually assimilated into **-ški**:

Pariž *Paris* → **pariški** ® **Tunis** *Tunisia* → **tuniški** ®
Teksas *Texas* → **tekšaški** ® **Vis** (an island) → **viški**

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 *autumn* → **jesenski** **proljeće** *spring* → **proljetni**®
zima *winter* → **zimski** **ljet** *summer* → **ljetni**

Common adjectives that are derived with **-ni** are:

cvijet <i>flower</i> → cvjetni	rat <i>war</i> → ratni
kiša <i>rain</i> → kišni	soba <i>room</i> → sobni
kuća <i>house</i> → kućni	stol <i>table, desk</i> → stolni ®
ljubav <i>love</i> → ljubavni	voće <i>fruit(s)</i> → voćni
osoba <i>person</i> → osobni ®	vrt <i>garden</i> → vrtni
rad <i>work</i> → radni	zid <i>wall</i> → 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 <i>marriage</i> → bračni	noga <i>leg</i> → nožni
krug <i>circle</i> → kružni	oko <i>eye</i> → očni
mlijeko <i>milk</i> → mliječni	trbuh <i>belly</i> → trbušni
ruka <i>hand</i> → ručni	ulica <i>street</i> → 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 <i>day</i> → dnevni	večer f <i>evening</i> ® → večernji
noć f <i>night</i> → noćni	mjesec <i>month</i> → mjesečni
jutro <i>morning</i> → jutarnji	godina <i>year</i> → godišnji

For the nouns **tjedan** (**tjedn-**) *week*, **ponoć** f *midnight* and **podne** (**podnev-**) *noon*, adjectives are derived regularly by adding the **-ni**. For example:

Ovo je moj mjesečni prihod. *This is my monthly income.*

Kupi neke dnevne novine. *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):

Ivan je na godišnjem. *Ivan is on (paid) vacation.*

Sutra idem na godišnji. *I'm going on (paid) vacation tomorrow.*

ići

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. <i>children</i> → dječji ®	ptica <i>bird</i> → ptičji
mačka <i>cat</i> → mačji	riba <i>fish</i> → riblji
miš <i>mouse</i> → mišji	zec <i>rabbit</i> → zečji

There are frequently used adjectives to indicate what kind of meat something is made of:

goveđi adj. <i>beef</i>	pileći adj. <i>chicken</i>
janjeći adj. <i>lamb</i>	teleći adj. <i>beef (veal)</i>

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 kolutić**, which is a type of tea biscuit (some 80% of appearances of **čajni** on the Internet are followed by **kolutić**: 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

f

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 **peč od drva** (*made of wood*) from **peč na drva** (*running on wood*).

It can be also used with the verb **raditi** *work, do* describing *how* something works:

Fen radi na struju. *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 *bunk bed* (lit. 'bed on floor/story')

kupus na salatu *cabbage salad* (lit. 'cabbage on salad')

plaćanje na rate *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 it has a standard abbreviation (the period is mandatory):

npr. = *e.g.*

This table summarizes various ways to express English 'noun attributes' in Croatian:

expression	Croatian	example
generic	rel. adj. +	školsko dvorište <i>school yard</i>
x of y	+ G	ključevi auta <i>car keys</i> ključevi od auta (colloq.!) <i>car keys</i>
material	+ od + G	sok od jabuke <i>apple juice</i>
purpose	+ za + A	četka za kosu <i>hair brush</i>
mode, power	+ na + A	peč na drva <i>wood stove</i>

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 za čitanje su² na stolu. *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 **proljetni**, a more regular adjective **proljećni** is used in Serbia and Montenegro, and sometimes in Bosnia; instead of **osoba** → **osobni**, **lice** → **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 **šalice**, 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**^{w1} there's **autobuski** there, while there's **autobusni**^{w1} 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** → **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:

1st & 2nd pers. pronouns in singular

person	N	A, G	DL
1st	ja	mene	meni
2nd	ti	tebe	tebi
refl.	—	sebe	sebi

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 čeka mene. *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 i Anu. *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. *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.*

brijati

(2) **Oni se vole.** *They love each other.*

(3) **Juha se kuha.** *The soup is cooking.* [®]

(4) **Vraćam se.** *I'm coming back.*

(5) **Zovem se Igor.** *My name is Igor.*

zvati

(6) **Igram se.** *I'm playing.*

(7) **Bojim se.** *I'm afraid.*

bojati se

You can emphasize only the **se**² in the sentence #1, not in others:

(1) **Brijem sebe.** *I'm shaving myself.*

brijati

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 **se**² as **sebe** only if someone is *really doing something to themselves* – e.g. *shaving, washing* and so on. Such use of **se**² is sometimes called *true reflexive*.

In other words, **sebe** never shifts the meaning, where **se**² 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** (**je**² +) *be* are sometimes called *predicatives*, abbreviated as pred.

Like other stressed forms, **sebe** must be used when you 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 **se**² 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 **si**²:

Pišem si poruku. *I'm writing a message to myself.* ®

pisati

Unlike **svoj**, this form is never replaced colloquially by **mi**² 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 **si**² – which is exactly the same construction as in German:

Perem **si ruke.** (colloq.!, western parts) } *I'm washing my hands.*
*Ich wasche **mir** die Hände.* (German)

(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:

1st & 2nd pers. pronouns in plural

person	N	A, G	DL
1st	mi	nas	nama
2nd	vi	vas	vama

Finally, here are the 3rd person forms. They are mostly like unstressed forms with added **n-** or **nje-**:

3rd person pronouns

gender	N	A	G	DL
f	ona	nju	nje	njoj
n	(ono)	njega	= A	njemu
m	on			
f pl.	one	njih	= A	njima
n pl.	ona			
m pl.	oni			

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:

Sendvič je **za Anu.** *The sandwich is for Ana.*

Kolač je **za njih.** *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 je **kod mene.** *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 pada kiša. *It rains ‘at our place’. (or here, etc.)*

Goran je bio kod nas. *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 je dosadan... *This movie is boring...*

— **Meni nije.** lit. ‘*Not to me.*’

— **I meni.** 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**“, where someone is understood as either a destination or location, meaning what he or she is *wearing*:

Goran ima samo majicu na sebi. ‘*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**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)...

	N	A	G	D	L	I
1	jaz	mene	=A	meni	=D	mano / menoj
2	ti	tebe	=A	tebi	=D	tabo / teboj
	f ona	njo	nje	njej / nji	=D	njo
3	n ono	njega	=A	njemu	njem	njim
	m on					
<i>refl.</i>	—	sebe	=A	sebi	=D	sabo / seboj
1-du	f medve	naju	=A	nama	=A	=D
	m midva					
2-du	f vedve	vaju	=A	vama	=A	=D
	m vidva					
3-du	f onidve	njiju	=A	njima	=A	=D
	m onadva					
1-pl	f me	nas	=A	nam	=A	nami
	m mi					
2-pl	f ve	vas	=A	vam	=A	vami
	m vi					
3-pl	f ona	njih / nje		njim	=G	njimi
	n one					
	m oni					

This table includes the instrumental case (I) which we haven't covered yet. The interesting thing 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 zbog mene ,	<i>You because of me</i>
ja zbog sebe	<i>me because of myself</i>
Pitam se	<i>I ask myself</i>
ima li <u>te</u> uopće	<i>are you there at all</i>

2 G

Ima li tu	<i>Is there</i>
mjesto za mene	<i>a place for me</i>
Sasvim mala rupa je	<i>A really small hole is</i>
dovoljna	<i>enough</i>
Da se <u>ušuljam</u>	<i>To sneak</i>
u tebe	<i>into you</i>

(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** **mjesto** 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**¹:

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:

noun type (N)	I
nouns in -a (≈ fem.)	-a → -om
neuter nouns (≈ in -o , -e)	add -m
masc. nouns not in -a	add -om (some -em)
fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)	add -i

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* → **care**m**** **put** *way* → **put**m****

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* → **oc**m**** **stric** *uncle* → **stric**m****

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 **olovkom**. *I'm writing with a pen.*

Putujem **vlakom**. *I'm traveling by train.* ®

pisati
putovati

These are often used nouns for *means of transportation*:

auto (aut-) <i>m car</i>	brod <i>ship</i>
autobus ^{w1} <i>bus</i>	taksi (taksij-) <i>m taxi</i>
avion <i>airplane</i>	tramvaj <i>tram</i>
bicikl <i>bicycle</i>	vlak <i>train</i> ®

For example:

Na posao idem **biciklom**. *I go to work by bicycle.*

ići

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:

pomoću + G using

Certain verbs use objects in the instrumental case. One of them is:

baviti se² 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 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):

pers. (N)	I
1st (ja)	mnom
2nd (ti)	tobom
refl. (self)	sobom
3rd f (ona)	njom
3rd n (ono)	njim
3rd m (on)	

The instrumental case of nouns and pronouns is often used with several prepositions. Often used ones are:

pred + I *in front of* **s** / **sa** + I *with*

This is the same **s** / **sa** as used with G, it just has a different meaning with I. It's often used with the following verbs:

igrati se² play

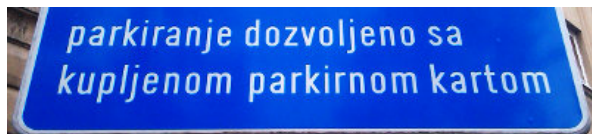
razgovarati («) *talk, discuss*

For example:

Ivan razgovara s Marijom. *Ivan is talking to Marija.*

Goran se igrao sa mnom. *Goran was playing with me.*

With the I of the pers. pronoun **ja** – **mnom** – the longer **sa** is always used, and both words are pronounced together, with the stress on the preposition: "**samnom**". Otherwise, normal rules for **s** vs. **sa** apply; the rules are often violated in real life in favor of **sa**, as on this (officially installed) parking sign in Zagreb:



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):

gender	adj. I	example
fem.	-om	velikom ribom <i>big fish</i>
neut.	-im	velikim jezerom <i>big lake</i>
masc.		velikim konjem <i>big horse</i>

When you compare adjectives in DL, G and I, you see there are only two different endings in singular:

gender	adj. DL	adj. G	adj. I
fem.	-oj	-e	-om
neut.	-om	-og	-im
masc.	(-em)	(-eg)	

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):

	N	I
<i>who</i>	tko	kim(e)
<i>what</i>	što	čim(e)

To *ask* about means, you can use either **kako** *how* or **čim(e)**:

Kako idete na more? *How do you go to the seaside?*

ići

— **Autom.** *By car.*

With verbs of motion, such as **trčati** (**trči**) *run*, **šetati** (**šeće/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** (**je**² +) *be* and **sjediti** *sit*:

za stolom *at the table*

za volanom] behind the
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 njom. *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.

® 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>I'm now sailing a distant sea</i>
Zaboravljam naše zore	<i>I'm forgetting our dawns</i>
Ostaje mi samo more	<i>Only the sea remains to me</i>
I vjetar što tuče u lice i dušu	<i>And the wind beating my face and soul</i>

(Jasminka Ursić & Šime Gržan)

1 DL

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:

noun type (N)	DLI- <i>pl</i>
nouns in -a (≈ fem.)	-a → -ama
neuter nouns (≈ in -o , -e)	-o , -e → -ima
masc. nouns not in -a	N- <i>pl</i> + ma
fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)	N- <i>pl</i> + ma

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 rođacima. *We're traveling to our relatives.*

putovati

Ptice sjede na granama. *Birds are sitting on branches.*

Stojim pred vratima. *I'm standing in front the door.*

stajati

(Recall that the noun **vrata** *door* exists in plural only.) In the following example you'll see how DL = I in plural:

Pišem poruku prijateljima. *I'm writing a message to my friends.*

pisati

U kinu 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:

gender	adj. DLI- <i>pl</i>	example
fem.		velikim ribama <i>big fishes</i>
neut.	-im	velikim jezerima <i>big lakes</i>
masc.		velikim stolovima <i>big tables</i>

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*:

Na mladim ljudima svijet ostaje. *The world is left to the young people.*

[ostajati](#)

Na mladima svijet ostaje. (the same meaning)

[ostajati](#)

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:

Beatlesi su bili popularni u šezdesetim. *The Beatles were popular in the sixties.*

U 80-im sam bio u vrtiću. *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:

Ptica se skriva među lišćem. *The bird is hiding ‘among’ the leaves.*

Tražim pismo 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:

prepositions using I or A

pred	nad	(za)
<i>in front of</i>	među	
	pod	
		<i>behind</i>

With these prepositions, you have to use I for *locations*, and A for *destinations*:

Idem pred publiku. (A = dest.) *‘I’m going in front of the audience.’*

[ići](#)

Plešem pred publikom. (I = loc.) *I'm dancing in front of the audience.*

plesati

However, **za** + A usually means *for*, so **za** + A 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*:

Trčim za tebe. (A) *I'm running for you. (not behind you)*

trčati

Trčim za tobom. (I) *I'm running after you. (i.e. following)*

trčati

These 5 prepositions are similar to **u** – 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 I case for the 5 prepositions above coincide then:

preposition	loc.	dest.
u in, into	DL	A
na on, at, to		
nad above	I	A
pred in front of		
među among		
pod under		
(za behind)		

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):

longer prepositions (always use G)		
ispred	iznad above	iza behind
in front of	između between	
	ispod under	

For example:

Auto je iza kuće. *The car is behind the house.*

m

However, there is an important difference between **ispred** + G and **pred** + I/A: the latter combination includes *temporal and metaphoric 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

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:



The first specialty has **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:

imperfective verb	perfective
jesti (<i>jede</i>) <i>eat</i>	pojesti (po <i>jede</i>)
piti (<i>pije</i>) <i>drink</i>	popiti (po <i>pije</i>)
slati (<i>šalje</i>) <i>send</i>	poslati (po <i>šalje</i>)

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 (~):

impf.	perf.	
↓	↓	
čitati	~ pročitati	<i>read</i>
piti (<i>pije</i>)	~ popiti (po <i>pije</i>)	<i>drink</i>

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 **nahraniti**, **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 **nahranī**, **napīše** and **naūči**. 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:

plaćati ~ **platiti** pay
prihvaćati ~ **prihvatiti** accept ®
vraćati ~ **vratiti** 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**:

odgađati («) ~ **odgodi** («) postpone
otvarati («) ~ **otvori** («) 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*

uspoređivati (uspoređuje) ~ uspoređiti («) *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 **uspoređivati (uspoređuje)**

I'll write just **uspoređivati (-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 i ne pošaljem ga. *Sometimes I* **napišati | poslati | 3m/n A**
write a letter and don't send it.

Why have I used perf. verbs, e.g. **poslati (pošalje)**? 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 noć. *The night fell.*

pasti past-f | f

Kiša je dugo padala. *'The rain was falling' for a long time.*

Kiša je pala. *'The rain fell'.*

pasti past-f

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. *I paid for the drink. (done)*

Plaćam piće. *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:

Čitao sam. *I was reading (something).*

Pročitao sam knjigu. *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.** *I drink wine sometimes.*

(2) **Ponekad popijem malo vina** *I drink little wine sometimes.*

piti

popiti

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.*

3f A

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:

čiti (čuje) <i>hear</i> razumjeti (razumije ,...) <i>understand</i> vidjeti (vidi ,...) <i>see</i>	}	<i>perf-like</i> <i>verbs</i>
--	---	----------------------------------

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

tense:

Vidio sam te. / saw you.

2 A

Vidim te. / (can) see you.

2 A

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 **uči** 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 Boga pala si

From the palm of God you fell

pasti *past-f*

I anđelu si krala mir

And were stealing peace from an angel

krasti *past-f*

Kao kiša rasula kapi sve

Like rain, you scattered all the drops

f

U pehar skupljam tvoje riječi

Into a chalice I'm collecting your words

f

i pogled i tvoj prah

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 **si**² 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 <i>must</i>	pokušavati («) <i>try</i>
namjeravati («) <i>intend</i>	trebati <i>need/should</i>
planirati («) <i>plan</i>	željeti (želi , želio , željela) <i>wish</i>

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:

misлити (+ *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.* (!)

2 A

Here the pronoun **te**² (**ti** in A) is the object of the verb **vidjeti** *see*, and *not* of the verb **željati** *want*! (Verbs in *inf* cannot have subjects, so **te**² 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.* (!)

2 A

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.*

jesti

Želim da te vidim. *I want to see you.*

2 A

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 be 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

should.

There are two verbs that are not listed above, since they are irregular and need an additional explanation. They are:

verb	<i>pres-3</i>	<i>pres-1</i>	<i>pres-1pl</i>	<i>pres-3pl</i>
htjeti <i>want</i>	hoće	hoću	hoćemo	hoće
moći <i>can</i>	može	mogu	možemo	mogu

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. (I=female)*

htjeti *pres-1*

moći *pres-1*

moći *pres-1pl*

moći *past-f*

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:

Vidim te! *I see you! = I can see you!*

2 A

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?’)

moći *pres-3*

— **Može.** (colloq.) *Yes.* (lit. ‘OK.’)

moći *pres-3*

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*** $\left[\begin{array}{l} \textit{Want some coffee?} \\ \textit{Can I/we get some coffee?} \end{array} \right.$

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.*

htjeti *neg. pres-1*

(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.*

moći *pres-1*

Ne smijem jesti jabuku. *I’m not allowed to eat an apple.*

smjeti

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:

<i>must</i>	<i>I must eat.</i>
<i>have to</i>	<i>I have to eat.</i>
morati	Moram jesti.
<i>should</i>	<i>I should eat.</i>
trebati	Trebam jesti. ®
<i>must not</i>	<i>I must not eat.</i>
<i>should not</i>	<i>I should not eat.</i>
ne + smjeti ®	Ne smijem jesti.
<i>don't have to</i>	<i>I don't have to eat.</i>
ne + morati	Ne moram jesti.

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 kolač. *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:

+ <i>inf</i>	+ A / <i>inf</i>
moći (...) can	htjeti (...) want
morati must	planirati («) plan
namjeravati («) intend	probati perf. try
pokušavati («) try	trebati need/should
smjeti (...) may	željeti (...) wish

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.*

moći pres-1

However, it's common to use the verb **raditi** besides **to**, in its generic sense (*do*):

Ne mogu to raditi. (the same meaning)

moći pres-1

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 **se**²? You still must use the **se**², and place it at the second place in the sentence:

Goran 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?*

htjeti pres-2

Što želiš jesti? *What do you want to eat?*

— **Pizzu.** *A pizza.*

You can ask about desired actions using **što** – 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 <i>intention</i>	potreba <i>need</i>
obaveza <i>obligation</i>	pravo <i>right</i>
plan <i>plan</i>	želja <i>wish</i>

They are used as verbs above, what you wish/intend/need is expressed with a verb in infinitive following the noun:

Ana ima potrebu spavati. *Ana has a need to sleep.*

If the verb in infinitive has a **se**², it usually follows the verb, but can be also placed elsewhere, *usual placement rules don't hold*:

Goran 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.

jesti

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*:



The song **Odjednom ti** *Suddenly You*, performed by **Massimo** and **Merita's** (again two non-Croatian names!) contains a *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>I can say it with silence</i>
Mogu prstima	<i>I can with fingers</i>
I u pijesku stopama	<i>And with footprints in sand</i>
I u mraku usnama	<i>And with lips in the dark</i>

[moći pres-1](#)

[moći pres-1](#)

Mogu čuti srcem	<i>I can hear it with my heart</i>
Mogu očima	<i>I can with eyes</i>
Nekim novim mirisom	<i>With a new scent</i>
Nekim novim okusom	<i>With a new taste</i>

[moći pres-1](#)

[moći pres-1](#)

(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:

person	sing.	plur.
1st	bih ²	bismo ²
2nd	bi ²	biste ²
3rd		bi ²

In everyday speech of many people, just **bi**² is used in all persons and numbers, but it's not standard. Just **bi**² is also quite frequent in casual writing – these are results by Google™ on the .hr domain:

form	hits
"mi bismo"	46800
"mi bi"	71000

Let's compare the following sentences in present:

Jedem. *I am eating.*

jesti

Mogu jesti. *I can eat.* [®]

moći pres-1

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.*

jesti past-m

Mogla bih jesti. *I could eat. (female speaking)* [®]

moći past-f

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)

moći past-f

Mogla sam jesti. (past)

moći past-f

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. *I want to eat. (not polite)*

htjeti pres-1

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...] I'd like...
Htio bih...	
Želio bih...	

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 **me**², **se**², etc.):

Ivan bi me trebao zvati. *Ivan should call me.*

1 A

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.*

moći past-f

Ivan me ne bi trebao zvati. *Ivan shouldn't call me.*

1 A

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?* [®]

htjeti pres-2

— **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](#).)

[®] In Serbian grammars, the conditional is often called *potential*. The forms are the same.

Instead of infinitives, in Serbia, especially in speech, **da** + present prevails, so examples would usually look like:

Mogu da jedem. *I can eat.*

Mogla bih da jedem. *I could eat.* (female speaking)

moći pres-1 | jesti

moći past-f | jesti

Standard Serbian insists that the verb **trebati** *need/should* must be used impersonally with another verb, so the standard option in Serbia is only:

Trebalo 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:

pers.	sing.	plur.
1st	ću ²	ćemo ²
2nd	ćeš ²	ćete ²
3rd	će ²	će ²

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.*

2 DL

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.*

1 A

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 ići u školu. *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 ići u školu? *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:

Ja ću pizzu. (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 piva. *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 zube. *I'll 'wash' my teeth right now. (= brush)*

ići

(In Croatian, teeth are '*washed*', not '*brushed*'.) Such expressions can *only* be used if somebody is willingly and immediately intending to take an action: the very next thing that person intends to do is grabbing a toothbrush.

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 kiša. *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 pivo. *Let's have beer now.*

ići

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 <i>one day</i>	kasnije] <i>later</i>
jednom <i>once</i>	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.*

2 DL

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** (**je**² +) *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 je*² 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 **je**² in the past tense with the forms of **bude** and create another tense – the *potential future tense*:

past tense	sam ² , si ² , je ² ...
	+ <i>past form</i>
potential future	budem , budeš , bude ...
	+ <i>past form</i>

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.*

ići past-mpl

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** + **ću**)

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 **-ći**.

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.*

jesti

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 (**je**²) as another verb (referred by the form **jesam**), having no infinitive.

While it's true that **bude**-forms sometimes replace **je**²-forms, regarding **je**² 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 **je**²:

Ana će da bude gladna. *Ana will be hungry.*

You'll later see the exact circumstances when **bude**-forms replace **je**²-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 je negdje. *The car is somewhere.*

m

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 je bio tamo. *Someone was there.*

Nešto je bilo tamo. *Something was there.*

Netko 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 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 **ništa**:

Nemam ništa. *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° mi ništa. *I'm fine.* (lit. 'It's nothing to me.')

1 DL

Of course, instead of **mi**², you can use any noun or pronoun in the DL case. Since **ništa** is really the subject, it behaves like **što**, therefore 3rd pers. neut. sing. is used in the past tense:

Nije joj bilo ništa. *She was fine.*

3f DL

To negate adverb-like indefinite pronouns, again replace **ne-** with **ni-**, moving it to the beginning of the word:

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.'*)

ići

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?*

1 A

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)

1 A

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*

svugdje *everywhere*

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 svakoju ruci. *I'm holding a glass in each hand.*

držati

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):

gender	N	A	DL	G	I
feminine	sva	svu	svoj	sve	svom
neuter	sve	= N			
m. (not p/a)		= N	svemu	svega	svim
m. (p/a)	sav	= G			

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.*

zvati

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.*

1 DL

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. *Thanks to everyone.*

Razgovarao sam sa svima. *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. *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** → **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. *I have almost nothing.*

Skoro svi 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**):

Zar nakon svega	<i>Are you really after everything</i>
Joj nisi ni poziva vrijedan	<i>Not worth a single call to her</i>
A zbog nje si prešao	<i>And because of her you've switched</i>
na 091	<i>to 091</i>

prijeći *past-m*

Nije sve tako sivo	<i>Everything isn't so gray</i>
Kad imaš nekim	<i>When you have someone</i>
Otiđ na pivo	<i>To go for a beer</i>
(Mile Kekin)	

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 **otić** is just infinitive **otići** *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.*

ići past-m

Ušao sam u sobu. *I entered the room.*

ući past-m

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 ćemo 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 **iza-**.

The following verb deviates from the above pattern:

odlaziti ~ **otići** (**ode**, **otišao**, **otišla**) *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*:

Otišla je na plažu.

otići past-f

(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.*

doći past-mpf

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:

Otišli smo iz Zagreba. *We left Zagreb.*

otići past-mpf

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 negdje. *I left the wallet somewhere.* (I = 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 ~ **izaći** (**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:

Izašla sam iz sobe. *I came out of the room.*

izaći past-f

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** (**obiđe**, **obišao**, **obišla**) *go around; visit*
prelaziti ~ **preći** (**pređe**, **prešao**, **prešla**) *cross, go over* *
prolaziti ~ **proći** (**prođe**, **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:

Prolazim kroz šumu. *I'm passing through the forest.*

Prošao sam kroz šumu. *I passed through the forest.*

Prošao sam šumu. *I left the forest behind.*

proći *past-m*

proći *past-m*

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.*

f

f | **proći** *past-f*

The *past* form of the perf. verb is used as a real adjective, in the meaning *previous*, *last*:

Prošle godine sam bila u Zadru. *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 mosta. *I crossed over the bridge.*

Prešao sam most. *I crossed the bridge.*

Prelazim most. *I'm crossing the bridge.*

preći *past-m*

preći *past-m*

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**, **prešla**) *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 toga. *I can't dismiss it.*

Ne mogu preći preko toga. (the same, but non-standard)

moći *pres-1*

moći *pres-1*

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.* preći past-mpl

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.* obići past-m

When used with just an object (in A) it mostly means *visit, sight-see*:

Obišla sam grad. *I visited (went around) the city.* obići past-f

Another verb pair is very similar to these three, but it's used with DL (!) only:

prilaziti ~ prići (priđe, prišao, prišla) *approach, come close*

For example:

Prišla sam im. *I approached them.* prići past-f | 3pl DL

Then, there are three verbs with completely unexpected meaning:

nalaziti ~ naći (nađe, našao, našla) *find*

pronalažiti ~ pronaći (pronađe, pronašao, pronašla) *find, discover*

snažiti se ~ 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 past-m

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 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.* snaći se past-f

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:

prefix	used with	meaning
do-	dest., origin	<i>come</i>
iz-	origin, dest.	<i>come out</i>
u-	destination	<i>come in</i>
od- (oti-)	origin, dest.	<i>leave, depart</i>
obi-	oko + G / A	<i>go around</i>
pre-	preko + G / A	<i>cross, go over</i>
(prije-)	na + A	<i>switch to, move on to</i>
pro-	kroz + A / A	<i>pass</i>
pri-	DL	<i>approach</i>
na-	A	<i>find</i>
	se ²	<i>be located</i>
prona-	A	<i>find/discover</i>
sna-	se ²	<i>get accustomed</i>

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 ista sirotinja uđe	<i>And always the same poor people come</i>
U njezinu svjetlost iz mraka	<i>Into its light from the dark</i>
I s licem na kojem su	<i>And with a face which</i>

ući
f

obično brige	<i>usually has worries on</i>	
<u>Pređe</u> je u par koraka	<i>Crosses it in a couple of steps</i>	prijeći 3f A

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	<i>And one evening someone is not there</i>	f
A moro bi proć	<i>And he should have passed</i>	
I lampa gori, i gori u magli	<i>And the lamp is burning, burning in the fog</i>	
I već je <u>noć</u>	<i>And it's night already</i>	f

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 **veli** has only present tense forms; it will be explained in 59 [Knowing and Telling: Content and Noun Clauses](#):

I nema ga sutra	<i>And he's not there tomorrow</i>	3m/n G
Ni prekosutra ne	<i>Neither the day after tomorrow</i>	
I vele da bolestan <u>leži</u>	<i>And they say he's lying sick</i>	
I nema ga mjesec	<i>And he's not there for a month</i>	3m/n G
i nema ga dva	<i>neither for two</i>	3m/n G
I zima je već, i <u>sniježi</u>	<i>And it's already winter, and it's snowing</i>	

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 <u>prolaze</u> kao i <u>dosada</u> ljudi	<i>And people are passing like before</i>	
I maj već miriše	<i>And May already smells sweet</i>	
A njega nema, i nema, i nema	<i>And here's not there, and again, and again</i>	
I nema ga više	<i>And he's gone</i>	3m/n G

You can listen to various performances on YouTube™.

• Exercise

Complete the following sentences:

_____ (a) _____ (b) **rijeku**. *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](#).

43 And, Or, But: Basic Conjunctions

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:

Ivan i Ana rade. *Ivan and Ana are working.* (nouns)

Ana je žedna i gladna. *Ana is thirsty and hungry.* (two adjectives)

Sobe su u prizemlju i na katu. *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*:

Ana jede i pije. *Ana is eating and drinking.*

jesti | piti

[Pijem čaj] i [čitam knjigu]. *I'm drinking tea and reading a book.*

piti

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 mi je i dosadno. *I'm cold and bored.*

1 DL

However, if you want to join two sentences that have *different subjects* (and usually verbs too), you have to use the conjunction a":

Ana čita knjigu, a Goran 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:

Ana čita knjigu, a ja 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*:

Ana se zabavlja, a meni 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 sam² spavao. *Ana was reading a book, and I was sleeping.*
Gledam film i dosadno mi² je². *I’m watching a movie, and I’m bored.* 1 DL

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.* htjeti pres-1

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.* ići past-mpl

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:

English	<i>but</i>	
Croatian	ali	nego
German	<i>aber</i>	<i>sondern</i>
Spanish	<i>pero</i>	<i>sino</i>

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 Westworld. *I don't like (TV) series, but I like the Westworld.* 1 DL

(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*:

Janet nije iz Hrvatske, nego iz Kanade. *Janet isn't from Croatia, but from Canada.*
Janet nije iz Hrvatske, ali zna hrvatski. *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 Ivan i Ana rade. *Both Ivan and Ana are working.*

Sobe su i u prizemlju i na katu. *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 Ivan ni Ana ne rade. *Neither Ivan nor Ana are working.*

Sobe nisu ni u prizemlju ni na katu. *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 je ili patka ili guska. *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:

<p>pa te (bookish)</p>	}	<i>and</i> (time sequence)
--	---	----------------------------

Both can be replaced with *i* when linking two parts of a sentence. For example:

Bila sam gladna pa sam kupila sendvič. *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 sam. *I'm thirsty.*

— **Pa popij malo vode!** *Well, drink some water!*

It can be also used on its own, as a small (impatient) rhetorical question:

Pa? *Well? / So? / So what?*

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 fosili**, 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 <u>te</u> izgubim	<i>If I lose you</i>
najdraže moje	<i>oh my dearest</i>
Utopit će se zvijezde	<i>The stars will drown</i>

u valima tuge *in waves of sorrow*

Normally, the plural of **val** *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 *if* construction, i.e. referring to possible things in the future (such constructions will be explained later, in 70 [If I Were: Conditional Sentences](#)). The pairs are:

gubiti ~ **iz-** («) *lose*

utapati («) ~ **utopiti** («) *drown*

nastajati (**nastaje**) ~ **nastati** (**nastane**) *emerge, come about*

The last pair is a member of an important ‘verb family’ which will be explained in 52 [Stand, Become, Exist, Cease](#). The verb **ugasnuti** (**ugasne**) perf. *go out, die out* is very rare, it’s even missing from some dictionaries.

The following verses use the same pattern. The part **ni ptice ni ljudi** uses **ni... ni...** introduced in this chapter. Furthermore, the phrase 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.)

Ako te izgubim	<i>If I lose you</i>	
jednoga dana	<i>one day</i>	
Ugasnuti će sunce	<i>The sun will die out</i>	
i nastat će tama	<i>and darkness will come about</i>	
Da ne vidi nitko	<i>So that nobody can see</i>	
ni ptice, ni ljudi	<i>neither birds, nor people</i>	
Kad odem zauvijek	<i>When I leave for good</i>	otići
kad zauvijek odem	<i>when I leave for good</i>	otići
najdraže moje...	<i>oh my dearest...</i>	

2 A

Note the two lines where just words are in different positions, with a slight emphasis on **zauvijek** in the second line (which I could maybe translate as *really for good*).

The following verses contain **nikada više ljubavi nove** which is actually the negative existential **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:

Nikada više	<i>Never again</i>	
ljubavi nove	<i>a new love</i>	
najdraže moje	<i>oh my dearest</i>	
Tama će odnijet	<i>Darkness will take away</i>	
sve želje i snove	<i>all wishes and dreams</i>	

(Dea Volarić)

f

The verb **odnijeti** (..) perf. *take away* will be introduced in 65 [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 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 ____ (c) **film** ____ (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:

noun type	G-pl
nouns in -a (≈ fem.)	-a → -a* (or -i)
neuter nouns (≈ in -o , -e)	-o , -e → -a*
masc. nouns not in -a	N-pl -i → -a*
fem. not in -a (e.g. noć)	add -i

For example:

Goran se boji mrava. *Goran is afraid of ants.*

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**

carstvo empire → **carstava**

sestra sister → **sestara**

društvo society → **društava**

zemlja ground, country → **zemalja**

pismo letter → **pisama**

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 **st**, **št**, **šć**, **zd**, **žd** or **žd** (so-called *non-splittable sequences*):

zvijezda *star* → **zvijezda** **mjesto** *place* → **mjesta**

Masculine nouns that get short plural endings, and *end in a consonant*, get the **-a** always attached to their nominative form, even if they have a specific case-base:

kolač *cake* → **kolača**

magarac (**magarc-**) *donkey* → **magaraca**

pas (**ps-**) *dog* → **pasa**

vrabac (**vrapc-**) *sparrow* → **vrabaca**

This makes their *G-pl* form distinct from the singular genitive. For example:

Ana se bojala pasa. *Ana was afraid of dogs.*

Ana se bojala psa. *Ana was afraid of the dog.*

Few masculine nouns that end in two consonants which are not a *non-splittable sequence*, get an additional **a** in the same way as feminine and neuter nouns:

bicikl *bicycle* → **bicikala**

konzert *concert* → **koncerata**

dokument *document* → **dokumenata**

However, masculine nouns that end in a *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*):

anđeo (**anđel-**) *m angel* → **anđela**

auto (**aut-**) *m car* → **auta**

Some nouns on **-a** 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:

daska *plank* → **dasaka** / **daski**

karta *card, map* → **karata** / **karti**

olovka *pen* → **olovaka** / **olovki**

školjka *shell* → **školjaka** / **školjki**

voćka *fruit tree* → **voćaka** / **voćki**

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:

nepravda *injustice* **prijetnja** *threat*

pažnja *care, attention* **šetnja** *walk*

The following often used nouns have just **-i** in *G-pl*:

bajka <i>fairy tale</i>	palma <i>palm</i>
borba <i>struggle</i>	petlja <i>loop</i>
lopta <i>ball</i>	plahta <i>bed sheet</i> ®
majka <i>mother</i>	tajna <i>secret</i>
maska <i>mask</i>	torba <i>bag, big purse</i>
molba <i>plea</i>	žalba <i>complaint, appeal</i>

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-**) *finger nail, toenail* → **nokata** / **noktiju**

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:

gender	adj. G-pl	example
fem.		velikih riba <i>big fishes</i>
neut.	-ih	velikih jezera <i>big lakes</i>
masc.		velikih stolova <i>big tables</i>

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:

adj.	gender	DL	I	G
	fem.	-oj	-om	-e
sing.	neut.	-om	-im	-og
	masc.	(-em)		(-eg)
plur.	all	-im(+a)		-ih

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 u predgrađu	<i>Look for me in the suburbia</i>	1 A
Na ulici, na raskršću	<i>On the street, in the intersection</i>	
Gdje ti je jorgovan rasuo perle	<i>Where the lilac scattered your beads</i>	2 DL
Gdje nam je proljeće dotaklo usne	<i>Where the spring touched our lips</i>	2pl DL
i pobjeglo	<i>and ran away</i>	

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)	<i>scatter</i>
doticati (dotiče) ~ dotaći (dotakne , dotakao , dotakla)	<i>touch</i>
bježati (bježi) ~ pobjeći (pobjegne , pobjegao , pobjegla)	<i>run away</i>

(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 u predgrađu	<i>Look for me in the suburbia</i>	1 A
Kraj vlakova što prolaze	<i>Beside the passing trains</i>	
Bit ćemo sami u svitanje dana	<i>We'll be alone in the dawn of the day</i>	
Bit ćemo sami u pjesmama ptica	<i>We'll be alone in songs of the birds</i>	
ko nekada	<i>like long ago</i>	

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 od rublja i cvijeća	<i>Sails of cloth and flowers nap</i>	
Čekaju vjetar da nekuda plove	<i>They wait for the wind to sail somewhere</i>	
Čuješ li, naše nas predgrađe zove	<i>Do you hear, our suburbia is calling us</i>	1pl A
Traže te kuće i ulice stare	<i>Old houses and streets are looking for you</i>	

2 A

(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 predgrađe** is split by **A nas²**; 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 [Đorđe 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](#).

45 Quantities and Existence

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:

countable	uncountable	can be both
auto m <i>car</i>	kosa <i>hair</i> (on head)	kava <i>coffee</i> ®
jabuka <i>apple</i>	sol f <i>salt</i> ®	kruh <i>bread</i> ®
problem <i>problem</i>	sreća <i>luck</i>	papir <i>paper</i>
prozor <i>window</i>	vrijeme (vremen-) <i>time</i>	sok <i>juice</i>
Ana (name)	zrak <i>air</i> ®	voda <i>water</i>
...

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. *I have some salt.*

f

If you want to express the same thing, but for countable nouns, you should use the genitive case in plural:

Imamo jabuka. (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. *We have some bread.* ®

Imamo dva kruha. *I have 'two breads'.* (two loafs of bread)

Imam soka. *I have some juice.*

Molim dva soka. *'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) *I don't have any time.*

On nema sreće. (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):

form	hits
"nemam vremena" (G)	109000
"nemam vrijeme" (A)	154

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:

noun	countable	uncountable
mjesto	<i>place</i>	<i>place (as space, room)</i>
posao (posl-) m	<i>job</i>	<i>work</i>

For example:

Imam posao. (A) *I have a job.*

Imam posla. (G) *I have some work. (i.e. I'm busy.)*

Nemam posao. (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-pl) *I don't have any apples.*

Soba nema prozora. (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 <i>a bit / few</i>	prema lo <i>too little / few</i>
dosta <i>quite a few</i>	pre više <i>too much / many</i>

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:

puno] <i>much, many, a lot of</i>
mnogo	

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.*

3pl G

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.

3pl G

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

chapters.)

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) *I have some coffee.*

Imam nešto limuna. (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-pl) *There are some apples.*

Ima° vode. (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** (je² +) *be* instead of **imati**:

Bilo je jabuka. *There were some apples.*

Bilo je vode. *There was some water.*

Bit će krvi. *There will be blood.* ®

f

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. *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. *There were too many problems.*

Ima° dosta ljudi. *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 (**postoji**) *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...* [®]

postojati

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. *There is some water in the bottle.*

Bilo je vode u boci. *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) *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. *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. *The keys are in the drawer.* [®]

U ladici su (neki) ključevi. *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 <i>coffee</i> → kafa	sol <i>f salt</i> → so (sol-) <i>f</i>
kruh <i>bread</i> → hljeb, hleb	zrak <i>air</i> → vazduh
otok <i>island</i> → 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	<i>And there will be hard days</i>	
I jutro koja me ne vole	<i>And mornings that don't like me</i>	1 A
I ne znaš gdje im je kraj	<i>And you don't know where they end</i>	3pl DL
Nema te	<i>You're not here</i>	2 G
I sad plešem sama	<i>And now I dance alone</i>	plesati
Zatvorim oči i sanjam	<i>I close my eyes and dream</i>	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**. *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 pet jabuka**. *I have these five apples.*

If you use them as a subject, it behaves as *neuter singular*:

Pet jabuka je bilo u kutiji. *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):

jedan neki svaki	čovjek vrabac	je pjevao	jedna neka svaka	sestra ptica	je pjevala
dva tri četiri	čovjeka vrapca	su pjevala	dvije tri četiri	sestre ptice	su pjevale
pet puno nekoliko	ljudi vrabaca	je pjevalo	pet puno nekoliko	sestara ptica	je pjevalo

You can see e.g. **30 minuta** on a 30-minute Zagreb public transport short ride ticket (**karta**):



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)

1 DL

Goranu 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:

Koliko ti je godina? (the same meaning, sometimes used)

2 DL

There's a useful way to express *at what age* you did something:

s / **sa** + age (in instrumental) = *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 **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. **sam**²) come right after the word **kad(a)**.

Bigger numbers use the following words – there's more than one word for numbers 100 and 1000:

100	sto (adv.)	/ stotina
1000	tisuća ®	/ hiljada (colloq.) ®
million	milijun ®	

The above words are *nouns* (except **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 **tisuća**, while the noun **hiljada** is colloquial; both words are used in speech (I personally use **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 *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 *accusative forms* of nouns), regardless of their role, especially **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 je bilo u ladici. (adverb) *One thousand dollars were in the drawer.*

Tisuća dolara je bila u ladici. (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-pl, the same as if you were counting money in *bags* or any other noun:

Imam dvije tisuće dolara. *I have two thousand dollars.*

Imam pet tisuća dolara. *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[®] 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 than 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 **-ti**:

stoti *hundredth*
tisućiti *thousandth* [®]
milijunti *millionth* [®]

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 **zarež 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 **milijonti**.

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		RADNO VRIJEME SVAKI DAN 10.00 - 14.00
1 KRUG / GIRO / ROUND	= 10 kn	
3 KRUGA / GIRI / ROUNDS	= 20 kn	
10 KRUGOVA / GIRI / ROUNDS	= 50 kn	
1 OSOBA / 1 PERSON		
KRUG / GIRO / ROUND		
KRUGA / GIRI / ROUNDS		
VOŽNJA JE NA VLASTITU ODGOVORNOST.		

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.

47 Of Flowers, Thorns and Counting Children

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:

noun	mass noun
cvijet <i>flower</i>	cvijeće
grana <i>branch</i>	granje
grm <i>bush</i> ®	grmlje
kamen <i>stone</i>	kamenje
list <i>leaf</i>	lišće
trn <i>thorn</i>	trnje

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 voli cvijeće. *Ana likes flowers.*

Bear in mind that **cvijeće** is a *singular* noun:

Cvijeće 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*

povrće *vegetable(s)* **suđe** *dishes* [®]
oružje *weapon(s)* **voće** *fruit(s)*
rublje *laundry, underwear*

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):

obuća *footwear* **odjeća** *clothes*

Then, there are two important nouns that have *completely lost their plural*, and collective nouns are always used instead. They are:

noun (no pl.)	collective noun
brat <i>brother</i>	braća
dijete <i>child</i>	djeca

At first, they appear as normal, feminine singular nouns ending in **-a**:

Čekam djecu. *I'm waiting for my children.*

Pomažem tvojoj braći. *I'm helping your brothers.*

pomagati

However, when they are subjects of a sentence, *verbs come in plural*:

Djeca čekaju mamu. *Children are waiting for their mum.*

Braća su gladna. *Brothers are hungry.*

Braća 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. [®]

form	hits
"nemam djece"	6470
"nemam djecu"	6310

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*:

Collective numbers

<i>both</i>	oboje	5	petero
2	dvoje	6	šestero
3	troje	7	sedm-ero
4	četvero	etc.	

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 petero djece. *I have five children.*

Razgovarao sam s troje ljudi. *I talked to three people.*

(You'll sometimes also see and hear simply **pet djece** 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 dva brata. *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:

	<i>2 friends</i>	<i>2 guests</i>
all-male	dva prijatelja	dva gosta
all-female	dvije prijateljice	dvije gošće
mixed (G-pl!)	dvoje prijatelja	dvoje gostiju

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:

Oboje je otišlo. *Both left.*

otići past-n

Oboje su otišli. (sometimes used)

otići past-mpl

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:

noun	replacement(s)
mače (mačet-) <i>kitten</i>	mačić
pile (pilet-) <i>chick</i>	pilić
štene (štenet-) <i>puppy</i>	psić štenac (štenc-)

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:

noun	mass noun
mače (mačet-) <i>kitten</i>	mačad f
pile (pilet-) <i>chick</i>	pilad f
štene (štenet-) <i>puppy</i>	štenad f

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 čips je stvarno dobar. *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 lišću**).

® 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 **čtvoro** 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:

	noun	adverb
1/2	polovina	pol(a)
1/3	trećina	
1/4	četvrtina	četvrt
1/5	petina	
etc.		
part	dio (dijel-) m [®]	

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 je trećina jabuke. *This is a third of an apple.*

Imam trećinu jabuke. *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 je pola jabuke. *This is half an apple.*

Imam pola jabuke. *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 je bilo na stolu. *Half of an apple was on the table.*

Trećina jabuke je bila na stolu. *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 pola kruha. *'A half of bread, please.'* (i.e. *a half of a loaf of bread*) 2pl A

®

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-)** *part* can be used with *both* singular and plural nouns (in genitive, of course):

Imam dio jabuke. *I have a part of an apple.*

m

Imam dio jabuka. *I have 'a part' of apples. (i.e. a part of some set of apples)*

m

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.*

m

Dio ljudi je plesao. *Some people were dancing.*

m

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.* ®

jesti

(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.*

2pl A

(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* **vreća** *bag, sack*
kutija *box* **žlica** *spoon* ®
hrpa *heap*

For example:

Gomila ljudi **je bila** na trgu. *A large crowd of people was at the town square.*

Hrpa pijeska **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** hlača. *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	kila (colloq.) <i>kilogram</i>
dekagram <i>1/100 kilogram</i>	deka (colloq.) <i>1/100 kilogram</i>
tona <i>metric ton</i>	litra <i>liter</i>

All these words are *nouns*. The 1/100 kg unit, *dekagram*, 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.*[®] 2pl A

There are more *units* and it's interesting the masculine ones always have plural in just -i, regardless of the number of syllables:

gram → **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 <i>few</i> (+ sing.)	} adjectives used with countable nouns
mnogi <i>many</i> (+ plur.)	
neki <i>one, some</i> (+ 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 negdje. *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 lete 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** ptica je letjelo na jug. *Many birds were flying south.*

(2) **Mnoge** ptice su letjele na jug. (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:

Mnogi ne vole mlijeko. *Many don't like milk.*

Razgovarao sam s **mnogima**. *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 ih leti na jug. *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 trećine limuna. *I have two thirds of an lemon.*

Imam dva cijela limuna. *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** (**dijel-**) 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 **cijel** *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*:

Plivao 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* **tjedan dana** *1 week* ®

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:

Plivao 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 je 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 je 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 (prijepodne-) *time before noon*

popodne (popodne-) *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.*

f

Such use of **cijeli** also translates English phrases like *all day long*. It applies to seasons as well:

Kiša je 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 je 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 je dvije godine živio u Zagrebu. *Ivan lived in Zagreb for two years.* (but not now)

Ivan dvije godine živi u Zagrebu. *Ivan has lived in Zagreb for two years.* (and still does)

This is worth remembering:

	not anymore	still ongoing
Croatian	past tense	present tense
English	Past	Present Perfect

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 već dvije godine živi u Zagrebu. *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 dva dana. *I was reading the book for two days.* (impf.)

Pročitao sam knjigu **za dva dana.** *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:

Pročitat ću knjigu **za jedan dan.** *I'll read the book in a day.*

Pročitat ću knjigu **za par dana.** *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 **za jedan dan.** *I've read the book in a day.*

Pročitao sam knjigu **za jednu noć.** *I've read the book in a night.*

Pročitao sam knjigu **za dan.** (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.**

(2) **Otići ću na tjedan dana.**

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.):

definite period	A*
<i>for two days</i>	dva dana
‘time frame’	za + A(*)
<i>in two days</i>	za dva dana
‘round-trip’ (e.g. <i>leave</i>)	na + A*
<i>for two days</i>	na dva dana

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.** *For a year.*

Koliko ste bili u Hrvatskoj? *How long were you in Croatia?*

— **Tjedan dana.** *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 dana.** *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 prije dvije godine. *I lived in Zagreb two years ago.*

Živio sam u Njemačkoj prije godinu dana. *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 dvije godine ranije. *I worked in Zagreb two years earlier.*

Živio sam u Americi jednu godinu 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 dvije godine 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 ranije radio sam u Splitu. *Two years earlier, I worked in Split.*

Dvije godine kasnije radio sam u školi. *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. *I'm coming back in two months.*

This table summarizes relative time references:

before now	prije + A* (G*)
<i>a year ago</i>	prije jedne godine
after now	za + A*
<i>in a year</i>	za jednu godinu
before something else	A* ranije
<i>a year earlier</i>	A* prije (toga)
	jednu godinu prije (toga)
after something else	A* kasnije
<i>a year later</i>	A* poslije (toga)
	jednu godinu poslije (toga)

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*:

Trava je mokra zbog kiše. *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**:

Trava je mokra jer je padala kiša. *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 **je**²:

Trava¹ je² mokra [jer¹ je² padala kiša].

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:

Trava je mokra jer pada kiša. *The grass is wet because it's raining.*

Uzeo sam kišobran jer će padati kiša. *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 je mokra zato što je² padala kiša. (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 *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 *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 *purpose clauses*. English here uses a variety of conjunctions (*to, in order to, so that, so*). Croatian is way simpler – it just uses one word: **da**. These four sentences translate as:

- (1) **Uzeo sam kišobran da se ne smočim.**
- (2) **Trebam deset kuna da kupim sendvič.**
- (3) **Učim hrvatski da mogu razgovarati s Anom.**
- (4) **Kupit ću ti novi telefon da me možeš zvati.**

moći pres-1
2 DL | 1 A | moći 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):

kupovati (kupuje) ~ kupiti *buy*

Now, there's a *special rule*: verbs after **da** should be in the *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 *make wet*, but with **se**² it means *get wet*. (There are many verbs like that.)

As with **jer** and **zato što**, any fixed-position words come right after **da**, e.g. check the sentence #4:

Kupit¹ ću² ti² novi telefon [da¹ me² možeš zvati].

2 DL | 1 A | moći pres-2

There's *another special rule*: instead of the verb **biti** (**je**² +), the *potential* verb (**bude**) must be used in purpose clauses:

Trebaš kaput [da ti ne bude hladno]. *You need a coat so that you don't get cold.* 2 DL

In such sentences, the potential verb (**bude**) is often translated as English *get* or *become*. To see that the verb was replaced, compare the sentence above to the desired outcome; obviously, **nije** was replaced by **ne bude**:

Nije ti hladno. *You are not cold.*

2 DL

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**:

Zatvorit 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, zatvorit 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:

Expressing reasons in Croatian

<i>because of...</i>	zbog	+ thing in G
<i>because...</i>	jer zato što	+ clause in any tense
<i>(in order) to...</i> <i>so (that)...</i>	da	+ clause in pres. tense biti (je² +) → (bude)
<i>just in case...</i>	za slučaj da	+ clause
<i>just in case</i>	za svaki slučaj	
<i>(motion) to get...</i>	po"	+ thing in A

(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 zatvorio 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:

budući da] <i>since</i>
pošto	

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].* 3f A

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 by 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 Slabinac** (usually known under his nickname **Kićo**) 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	<i>Because of a gorgeous black woman</i>	
Zbog njene divne crne kose	<i>Because of her gorgeous black hair</i>	
Zbog jednog pogleda tužnog u <u>noći</u>	<i>Because of a sad look in the night</i>	f
Zbog obećanja	<i>Because of the promise</i>	
da će <u>mi</u> doći	<i>she is going to come to me</i>	1 DL
Tužan i sam, čekam <u>je</u> ja	<i>Sad and alone, I'm waiting for her</i>	3f A
(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, Repetitions 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 <i>day</i>	sat (N- <i>pl sati</i>) <i>hour</i>
godina <i>year</i>	tjedan (tjedn-) [®] <i>week</i>
mjesec <i>month</i>	

For example:

Čitao sam knjigu **tjednima**. *I was reading the book for weeks.*

Čekao sam **te satima**. *I was waiting for you for hours.*

2 A

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.* [®]

ići

The word **vikend** *weekend* is of course not a day of week, but has a similar role.

Rough time periods in I-*pl* 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 ću biti tjedan-dva. *I'll be at the seaside for a week or two.*

Radovi će trajati mjesec-dva. *The works will last for a month or two.*

Učila sam hrvatski 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 je dugo živjela u Splitu. *Ana lived in Split for a long time.* (but not now)

Ana dugo živi u Zagrebu. *Ana has lived in Zagreb for a long time.* (and still does)

Ivan već godinama živi u Zagrebu. *Ivan has lived in Zagreb for years.*

This table summarizes approximate time periods:

adverb	<i>for a short time</i>	kratko
	<i>for a long time</i>	dugo
I-pl	<i>for hours</i>	satima
	<i>for days</i>	danima
noun-number (A)	<i>for an hour or two</i>	sat-dva
	<i>for a year or two</i>	godinu-dvije

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.** *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. *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*

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) ići

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* * **mjesec** *month*
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** *f 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* * **noći** *night* f
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.* putovati

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.* jesti

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 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, 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:

stajati (stoji) *stand*

For example:

Stajao sam tamo satima. *I was standing there for hours.*

There's an important verb similar to it, but more regular:

postojati (postoji) *exist*

It's used without objects, just to express that something exists (or not):

Jeti ne postoji. *The Yeti doesn't exist.*

postojati

You will sometimes hear its present forms stressed as **postoji**.

Next, there is a verb pair that means *stop, come to stand*:

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*:

Stao sam pred vrata. *I stood in front of the door. (pred + A = dest.)*

Stajao 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):

Hlače ne stanu u kofer. *The pants don't fit into the suitcase. ®*

stati

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:

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.*

3m/n DL

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 (prestone) *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 (napíše)** 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 će doći sutra. *The rest (of them) will come tomorrow.*

Ostalo 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 su u dvorištu. *'All others are in the yard.'*

Sve ostalo je u kutiji. *All the rest is in the box.*

The verb pair derived with **po-** is similar to **biti** (**je²** +) *be* – it corresponds to English *become* or to English *get* with adjectives:

Postat će tata. *He'll become a dad.*

Postajem gladna. *I'm becoming/getting hungry.* (impf., I = female)

[postajati](#)

This verb, like *be*, usually uses objects in N (e.g. **tata** *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.* (impf.)

[postajati](#)

Postalo je hladno. *It became cold.*

Postaje° nam vruće. *We're getting hot.* (impf.)

[postajati](#) | 1pl DL

Postalo mi je hladno. *I got/became cold.*

1 DL

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 benzina. *The petrol ran out.*

Nestalo je struje. *The electricity is out.*

The same thing can be expressed also with the negative existential:

Nema° više benzina. *There's no more petrol.*

Nema° više struje. *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 je prestala. *The rain stopped.*

Goran je pretao plakati. *Goran stopped crying.*

You'll often see the base pair used in the first construction (just a subject) with the same meaning:

Kiša 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!):

počinjati (počinje / počínje) ~ početi (počne) *start, begin*

The verb pair is used in the same way as the **pre-** pair. For example:

Kiša je počela. *The rain started.*

Goran je počeo plakati. *Goran started crying.*

Such verbs that indicate start or end points are often called *phase verbs*. Pay attention that with these verbs, only impf. verbs in *inf* (e.g. **plakati**) are used. There's no accomplishment, the focus is on starting or stopping an activity.

The following verb pair has a very simple meaning:

ustajati (ustaje) ~ ustati (ustane) *stand up*

The following verbs follow exactly the same pattern:

pristajati (pristaje) ~ pristati (pristane) *consent, agree*

odustajati (odustaje) ~ odustati (odustane) *give up*

The first verb is often used with *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 je pristala na ručak. *Ana has agreed to have a lunch.*

Ana je odustala od izleta. *Ana has given up on the excursion.*

The following verb pairs have opposite meanings:

sastajati (sastaje) se² ~ sastati (sastane) se² *get together, meet*

rastajati (rastaje) se² ~ rastati (rastane) se² *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:

ra- / **ras-** / **raz-** *apart* **s-** / **sa-** *together*

Then, there's a verb derived with **nedo-** (again, the **ne** is always spelled together). It's already covered in 23 [I'm Cold: Basic Impressions](#). There's no perf. verb corresponding to it.

This table summarizes all verbs derived from the 'base' verb pair:

stajati (staje) ~ stati (stane)		
prefix	used with	meaning
(none)	(+ dest)	(come to) stand stop
na-		come to exist
ne-		disappear
o-	(N)	stay, remain
po-	(N)	become
pre-	(inf)	stop
pri-	(na" A)	consent, agree
odu-	(od" G)	give up
ra-	se ² (od" G)	split, separate
sa-	se ² (s" I)	get together, meet
nedo-	(DL)	lack

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 para	<i>Always with little, too little cash</i>
Kad upale se svjetla, ode dim	<i>When lights turn on, smoke leaves</i>
A miris noći	<i>And the smell of night</i>
opet postaje stvaran	<i>is becoming real again</i>

(Darko Rundek, Srđan Gulić)

[otići](#)
f
[postajati](#)

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 **se**² 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 **se**²-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!*

1 A

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*:

<i>pres-3pl</i>	<i>imper-2</i>	<i>imper-1pl</i>	<i>imper-2pl</i>
-u, -e	-i	-imo	-ite
-ju, (-je)®	-j	-jmo	-jte
-ku	-ci	-cimo	-cite

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* (Std. stress scheme!)
govori = *imper-2*

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* → **reci**

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?*

1 DL

Other very often used imperatives are (I have listed only their *imper-2* forms):

čekaj! *wait!* **pazi!** *take care!*

dodì! *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* → **boji**®

brojati (broji) *count* → **broji**®

bojati (boji) *se*² *be afraid* → **boj se²**

(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. *Read the book completely.* (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. *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. *Read books.*

Peri zube svaki dan. *'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 loptu. *Throw me the ball.* (perf. = *once*)

1 DL

Bacaj loptu. *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** in front of the imperative:

Ne čekajte me! *Don't wait for me!* (pl.)

1 A

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 <i>build</i>	pisati (piše) <i>write</i>
ići (ide , išao , išla) <i>go</i>	skakati (skače) <i>jump</i>
lagati (laže) <i>lie, tell lies</i>	vikati (viče) <i>yell</i>
nositi <i>carry, wear</i>	voziti <i>drive</i>

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:



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.)

1 A

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, dođi! *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**:

verb	<i>imper-2</i>	<i>imper-1pl</i>	<i>imper-2pl</i>
<i>negative</i>	nemoj	nemojmo	nemojte
<i>encouraging</i>	hajde	hajdemo	hajde
<i>(colloq.)</i>	ajde	ajmo	ajde

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!*

1 A

There are few exceptions to the rules above, relating to the 1st person plural. For the verb **ići** (**ide**, **išao**, **išla**) *go*, instead of the expected **idimo**, the present tense form **idemo** is used; it applies only to the *imper-1pl* – other forms are as expected:

<i>imper-2</i>	<i>imper-1pl</i>	<i>imper-2pl</i>
idi	idemo	idite

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 fosili** 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	<i>Our love will die out once</i>	f
Negdje drugdje gnijezda ćemo sviti	<i>We'll weave nests somewhere else</i>	
Uspomene odnijet će vrijeme	<i>Time will carry away memories</i>	
U albumu ni slike neće biti	<i>There won't be a single picture in the album</i>	

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 is 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 contains a negative existential phrase with two things in G, linked by **ni**.

Sanjaj <u>me</u>, sanjaj <u>me</u> noćas	<i>Dream of me, dream of me tonight</i>	1 A 1 A
[Kad <u>za</u> <u>me</u> nema	<i>[When, for me, there's</i>	1 A
spokoja ni snova]	<i>no tranquillity nor dreams]</i>	
Noćas <u>me</u> sanjaj	<i>Dream of me tonight</i>	1 A
jer možda već sutra	<i>because maybe already tomorrow</i>	
U snove <u>ti</u> <u>uđe</u> ljubav nova	<i>A new love will enter your dreams</i>	2 DL ući f
(Dea Volarić)		

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**², the fourth one **ti**².

Rajko Dujmić, a member of **Novi fosili**, 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 fosili**.

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.**

prestat

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 **prestat** (**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):

Otišli¹ smo² na plažu [kad¹ je² kiša prestala]. *We went to the beach* **otići** *past-mpf*
[*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.*

ići

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:

past	kad	past	happened in the past
pres.	kad	pres.	happened and will happen
pres.	kad	pres. (perf.) biti (je² +) → (bude)	immediate future
future	kad	pres. (perf.) (pot.) future (impf.) biti (je² +) → (bude)	plans for the future

Like in *purpose clauses*, the verb **biti** (**je**² +) *be* is replaced by **bude** in such time clauses – but only for future events, instead of the ordinary present forms.

Otišli smo na plažu kad je bilo toplo. *We went to the beach when it was warm.* (past) **otići** *past-mpf*

Odlazimo na plažu kad je toplo. *We go to the beach when it's warm.* (universal)

Odemo na plažu kad je toplo. *We go to the beach when it's warm.* (universal) **otići**

Otići ćemo na plažu kad bude toplo. *We'll go to the beach when it gets warm.* (future)

Odlazimo na plažu 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 kad bude padala kiša. *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 <i>while (+ until)</i>	čim <i>as soon</i>
prije nego što <i>before</i>	kad god / kadgod <i>whenever</i>
nakon što <i>after</i>	otkad(a) / otkako <i>since</i>

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 u školi. *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*:

Kuham meso dok ne postane mekano. *I cook meat until it gets soft.* postati

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.* naći past-m

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) **Očistit ću dvorište prije kiše.**
- (2) **Očistit ću kuću prije nego što dođu gosti.**

doći

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 sam² kuću prije nego što su² došli gosti.

doći past-mpl

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)*

3m/n A

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.*

otići

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):

	+ noun (in G)	+ clause
<i>while</i>	za vrijeme	dok (impf.)
<i>until</i>	do	dok (perf.) + "neg."
<i>before</i>	prije	prije nego što
<i>after</i>	poslije nakon	nakon što

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 noć, idemo spavati. *As soon the night falls, we are going to sleep.* **ići f pasti**

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)**.[®] This is from the Internet:

Dok dođe vrijeme ručka baš i nisam gladna. (colloq., sometimes) *When the lunch time comes, I'm not really hungry.* **doći**

(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**.[®]

[®] 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 naša ranih ljeta	<i>Our love of early years</i>	f
za oboje bješe jad	<i>was misery for both</i>	
sad je prava, sad je sveta	<i>now it's true, now it's sacred</i>	
[kada više nisam mlad]	<i>[when I'm not young anymore]</i>	

(Arsen Dedić)

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 bitke, ove rane	<i>These battles, these wounds</i>	f
otkrit će ljepotu svu	<i>will uncover all beauty</i>	
[kada budu stvari davne]	<i>[when they become things long gone]</i>	
[kad ne budu više tu]	<i>[when they aren't here anymore]</i>	

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 jutra što te muče	<i>These mornings bothering you</i>	2 A
Pružiti će i tebi sve	<i>will offer everything to you as well</i>	
[kada sutra bude jučer]	<i>[when tomorrow becomes yesterday]</i>	
a ti budeš ko zna gdje]	<i>and you get who knows where]</i>	

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:

do + G <i>by</i>	pored + G <i>beside</i>
uz + A <i>next to</i>	kod + G <i>at, by</i>
oko + G <i>around</i>	blizu + G <i>near</i>

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:

po + 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*:

Dijete puže po podu. *The child is crawling on the floor.*

puzati

The preposition **na** + 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*:

Goran skače po krevetu. *Goran is jumping on the bed.*

skakati

The difference between **na** + A and **po** + DL when expressing motion can be nicely illustrated with the following sentences:

Trčim na plažu. (A) *I'm running to the beach.*

trčati

Trčim po plaži. (DL) *I'm running on the beach.*

trčati

The first sentence expresses destination, the second location (as a surface) where the entire motion happens. Another common use of **po** + 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 Europi. *We're traveling across Europe.* ®

putovati

There's another preposition:

prema + 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 nije prema pravilima. *This is not according to the rules.*

Prema karti, imamo još dva kilometra do vrha. *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 *alright, OK*

This is, for example, used in a frequent phrase:

Sve je u redu. *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 ste na redu. *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** + A:

Red je na vas. (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 je na redu? *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) se² *care* **pisati (piše)** *write*
ovisiti *depend* **razgovarati** («) *talk*

For example (recall, you must use a stressed pronoun with a preposition):

Sve ovisi o njemu. *Everything depends on him.*

However, with the verb **misлити** *think*, this preposition is not used in the way you maybe expect. It's rather:

misлити

+ **na** + A *think about*

+ A + **o** + DL *have opinion on*

For example:

Ne mislim na nju. *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 u obliku srca. *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 od Austrije, Hrvatska ima more. *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:

preposition + nešto <i>something</i>	preposition + ništa <i>nothing</i>
od nečega	ni od čega
za nešto	ni za što
o nečemu	ni o čemu
bez nečega	bez ičega

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.

56 Desires and Demands

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 = **ona** *she*

Y = (**ona**) **pleše** *she dances*

plesati

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:

Želim nju. *I want her.*

Želim da (ona) pleše. *I want her to dance.* (lit. **da** + *she dances*)

plesati

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:

Želim 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:

Htio¹ sam² [da¹ me² nazoveš]. *I wanted you to call me.*

1 A | nazvati

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 vrati. *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. *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** (je² +) *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):

Main types of clauses in Croatian

indicative (the default)	any tense no perf. verbs in present
(counter)factual	only past or present no perf. verbs in present
atemporal	only the present tense perf. verbs allowed biti (je ² +) → (bude)
infinitive [®] (see below!)	only verbs in <i>inf</i> perf. verbs allowed no conjunction used

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. *I want to drink tea.* [®]

Željela te je vidjeti. *She wanted to see you.*

2 A

(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.') 2 A

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.' ® 3m/n A

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') 1 A | **nazvati**

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:

bitno

stalo + DL + **biti** (je² +)° + **da**...

važno

They mean *it’s important, it matters* to DL *that*... For example:

Bitno mi je da ga nazoveš. lit. *‘It’s important to me that you call him.’* 1 DL | 3m/n A | **nazvati**

Stalo mi je da dođeš. lit. *‘I care that you come.’* 1 DL | **doći**

(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:

Ani je jako važno da vratiš novce. *It’s very important to Ana that you return the money.*

(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:

Važno je da vratiš novce. *It’s important that you return the money.*

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:

Želim [da kupiš mobitel] [da možemo razgovarati svaki dan]. / **moći** *pres-1pl*
want you to buy a cellphone so that we can talk every day. ®

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 ®. 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**]. *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**,...) 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 znao**]. *I wish [I had known that].* (I = male)
Volio bih [**da imamo veću kuću**]. *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** (...) and **željeti** (...) 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**]. *I want to drink tea.* (Serbia, esp. southeast)

piti

Since **da bude** is then used instead of **biti** (due to 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:

Jedan tako običan dan	<i>One so ordinary day</i>
jedna djevojka	<i>one girl</i>
koju jedva da znam	<i>who I barely know</i>
I jedan prazan stan	<i>and an empty apartment</i>
dovoljan razlog	<i>a sufficient reason</i>
za još jednu laž	<i>for one more lie</i>

f

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:

Ti i ja	<i>You and me</i>
mi smo korak sad od sna	<i>we are now a step away from dream</i>

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:

Ne želim [da mi kažeš	<i>I don't want [you to tell me</i>
o sebi sve]	<i>all about yourself]</i>
jer ovo nije vrijeme	<i>because this is not a time</i>
Romea i Julije	<i>of Romeo and Juliet</i>
moje namjere nisu loše	<i>my intentions aren't bad</i>
o ne, ja ne ostavljam	<i>oh no, I don't leave</i>
nikakve tragove	<i>any tracks</i>

(Jasenko Houra)

1 DL | kazati

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*:

čiji *whose*

kakav (**kakv-**) *what... like / what kind*

The questions above look like this in Croatian:

Čija je ova knjiga? *Whose is this book?*

Kakva je ova knjiga? *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 čitaš? *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? *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** (**je**² +) *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 čitaš? *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 je knjiga? (colloq.) lit. ‘What is the book like to you?’ 2 DL
— **Dosadna.** *Boring.*

This question would be best translated *how you like the book*. As you can see, superficially similar words (**ta**, **to**, **ti**²) 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:®

gender	N	A	DL	G	I
fem.	koja	koju	kojoj	koje	kojom
neut.	koje	= N			
masc. (not p/a)	koji	= N	kojem(u)	kojeg(a)	kojim
masc. (p/a)		= G	kom(e) ®	kog(a) ®	

(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 čitaš? *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.** *The green one.*

Koje vino želiš? *Which wine do you want?*

— **Crno.** *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 je koncert? *'Which city square is the concert on?'*

— **Na glavnom.** *On the main one.*

— **Glavnom.** *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 to knjigu čitaš? *Whose book are you reading? (I saw you reading it)*

Kakvu to knjigu 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 je pred ulazom. *Someone's dog is in front of the entrance.*

Nekakav pas je pred ulazom. *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. *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:

	Std. Croatian	colloq.
<i>airplane</i>	zrakoplov	avion
<i>fridge</i>	hladnjak	frižider
<i>elevator</i>	dizalo	lift

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:

u liftu	34600
u dizalu	3480

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:

	Std. Croatian	colloq.
<i>whipped cream</i>	tučeno slatko vrhnje	šlag
<i>semolina</i>	pšenična krupica	griz

The following adjectives are common but colloquial; however standard words are often used as well:

	Std. Croatian	colloq.
<i>fresh</i>	svjež	friški
<i>violet</i>	ljubičast	lila
<i>pink</i>	ružičast	roza

There are couple of verbs as well, again the standard words are heard as well:

	Std. Croatian	colloq.
<i>lack, miss</i>	nedostajati (nedostaje)	faliti
<i>fry</i>	pržiti	frigati

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):

<i>library</i>	knjižnica	biblioteka
<i>music</i>	glazba	muzika
<i>system</i>	sustav	sistem

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:

	Std.	colloq.
<i>count</i>	brojiti	brojati (broji)
<i>paint</i>	bojiti	bojati (boji)

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 <i>stink</i> stariti <i>grow old</i> svrbiti <i>itch</i> štediti <i>save (money, resources)</i> vrtiti <i>spin, turn</i>	colloquial, quite common
---	-----------------------------

Just compare Google™ statistics for *past-f* forms on the Internet (.hr domain):

	...jela	...ila
smrd...	2100	9700
star...	310	1200
svrb...	2800	2200
šted...	11000	7000
vrt...	14000	24000

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:

	Standard	common (colloq.)
<i>planet</i>	planet	planeta
<i>visit</i>	posjet	posjeta

Then, Standard Croatian insists on three-way demonstrative adverbs of place and destination:

Standard	loc.	dest.
close	ovdje	ovamo
mid	tu	tamo
distant	ondje	onamo

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:

colloq.	loc.	dest.
close (here)	ovdje tu	ovamo
not close (there)	tamo	tamo (onamo)

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 + 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):

	Std./inland	coast
<i>bed sheet</i>	plahta	lancun
<i>fork</i>	vilica	pirun
<i>pillow</i>	jastuk	kušin
<i>towel</i>	ručnik	šugaman

As you'll see later, many such terms are related to home, especially food and 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:

	Standard	inland	coast
<i>clothing iron</i>	glačalo	pegla	šumpreš
<i>screwdriver</i>	odvijač	šrafčiger	kacavida
<i>shoelaces</i>	vezice f pl.	žniranci m pl.	špigete f pl.
<i>small meal, lunch during work</i>	užina	gablec	marenda
<i>tomato</i>	rajčica	paradajz	pom pomidor

So, here's is 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:

	Standard	inland	coast
<i>screw</i> (noun)	vijak (vijk-)	šaraf	vida
<i>slice</i> (of cake, bread)	kriška	šnita	feta

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:

	Slavic	Turkic/Greek
<i>bed</i>	postelja	krevet
<i>well</i>	zdenac (zdenc-)	bunar
<i>kerchief</i>	rubac (rupc-)	marama

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:

time	inland	coast
14:00	dva	dva
14:15	frtalj tri	dva i kvarat
14:30	pol(a) tri [®]	dva i po(l)
14:45	tri frtalj tri	tri manje kvarat
	tri frtalja tri	dva i trikvarat
15:00	tri	tri

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](#).

[®] 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 **gableci**:



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 **je**²) 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*

misлити *think*

pretpostavljati *suppose*

Out of these verbs, **znati** and **misлити** are most used in spoken language. The verb **misлити** 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

dokaz~~i~~vati (-uje «) ~ dokazati (**dokaže**) prove

javljati ~ javiti inform, let know

govoriti («) ~ reći (reče, rekao, rekla) tell, say

objašnjavati («) ~ objasniti («) explain

pisati (piše) ~ na- («) write

pokaz~~i~~vati (-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.*

kazati | 2 DL

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.*

2 DL

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.*

kazati

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.

reći past-f

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?*

m

Znam [gdje je auto]. *I know where the car is.*

m

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?*

reći past-m

Čula sam [što si rekao]. *I heard [what you said].*

reći past-m

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.*

otići past-f

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?*

m

Ne znam [je li kupila auto]. *I don't know if she bought a car.*

m

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?*

m

(S) **Da kupim auto?** (the same, but shortened)

m

Ne znam [da li da kupim auto]. *I don't know if I should buy a car.*

m

This applies to colloquial forms as well:

(F) **Jel idemo u kino?** (colloq.) *Are we going to cinema?* [®]

ići

(S) **Idemo u kino?** (the same, but shortened)

ići

Zanima me [jel idemo u kino]. (colloq.) *I wonder if we're going to cinema.* 1 A | ići

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 [®] **shvatiti** (+ A/CC) *understand*

You have likely noticed some special notation in the verb pair list (^{~1}, ^{~2}). 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 **shvatiti** 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 da nema Ane. *She noticed that Ana wasn't there.* (lit. 'that there was no Ana')

Osjećam da će padati kiša. *I feel it's going to rain.*

Razumijem da nemaš puno vremena. *I understand you don't have much time.* **razumjeti**

Very similar are the following verbs and verb pairs:

nadati se ² (+ DL/CC) *hope*

sanjati (+ A/CC) *dream*

zamišljati («) [~] **zamisliti** (+ A/CC) *imagine*

For example:

Sanjao sam da sam na odmoru. *I dreamed I was on vacation.*

Nadam se da je Ana došla. *I hope Ana has arrived.*

doći past-f

(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](#):

On 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 kiša]. *It's good [it's not raining].*

Bilo je dobro [da nije padala kiša]. *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 <i>better</i>	loše <i>bad</i>
čudno <i>strange, weird</i>	očito <i>obvious</i>
glupo <i>stupid</i>	strašno <i>terrible</i>
jasno <i>clear</i>	štetu <i>too bad</i>

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 je jasno da... *It's clear to Ana that...*

Ani 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. *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. *Fortunately, it's not raining.*

You can express feelings with dative phrases involving **drago** and **žao**:

Ani je žao da... *Ana was sorry that...*

Ani 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 došla. *I like that Ana came.*

1 DL | **doći** *past-f*

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:

Ana je kupila auto. *Ana bought a car.*

m

— **Nisam to 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 da je Ana kupila auto. *We discussed about Ana buying a car.* (lit. 'about that Ana has bought a car')

m

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 2 DL | 1 DL you're helping me.')

The DL in the main clause (e.g. **ti**² 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?' ®

Što misliš, 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 **mislimi** 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 osmijeh s lica	<i>I'm not hiding the smile from my face</i>
Želim [da znaš	<i>I want [you to know</i>
[Da sve je u redu	<i>[Everything is OK</i>
ovaj dan]]	<i>on this day]]</i>
(Mirko Kovač)	

The second verse has a desire clause that contains a content clause (in the third verse). The word **je**² 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>I think [you don't think</i>
[kako svemu je kraj]]	<i>[everything is over]]</i>
Al sve je u redu	<i>But everything is OK</i>
ovaj dan	<i>on this day</i>

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](#).

60 More Useful Verbs and Verbal Patterns

Now, let me introduce a couple of very useful verb pairs. The first one is the main way to express *success* and *failure* in Croatian:

uspj^{je}evati («) ~ **uspjeti** (**uspije**, **uspio**, **uspjela**) *succeed* ®

The impf. verb has the Standard stress shift to the 1st syllable (**-ije-** is usually one syllable when inside a word), but the perf. verb is pronounced as three syllables in the present tense: **us-pi-je**, like **piti** (**pije**) *drink*.

Unlike English, this verb takes a verb in *inf* – or an infinitive clause, i.e. an *inf* with an object and possibly other words attached – as its object. It can be translated with English *succeed* or *manage*:

Uspjeli smo riješiti problem. *We succeeded in solving the problem.* ®

Uspjela je otvoriti prozor. *She managed to open the window.*

Nisam uspio pročitati knjigu. *I failed to read the book.*

This verb is not used to ‘*manage household*’ and similar things – only to manage *to do* something.

Like **trebati** *need/should*, this verb pair can be – and often is – used in the ‘reverse’ 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 *inf*, it behaves like neuter singular:

Uspjelo nam je riješiti problem. *We succeeded in solving the problem.*

1pl DL

Uspjelo joj je otvoriti prozor. *She managed to open the window.*

3f DL

Nije mi uspjelo pročitati knjigu. *I failed to read the book.*

1 DL

Note that **problem**, **prozor** and **knjiga** are not the subjects: the subjects are now the verbs in *inf*: **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:

Kolač je uspio. *The cake turned out fine.*

Uspio nam je kolač. *We succeeded in making the cake.*

1pl DL

I have already explained important verbs derived from **ići** (**ide**, **išao**, **išla**) *go* and **stajati** (**staje**) ~ **stati** (**stane**) *stand*, now I will show you two more important ‘families’. The first one is derived from the verb pair:

stavljati ~ **staviti** *put, place*

These verbs are simple to use – just use A for what you put, and a *destination* (unlike in English!) for where you put something:

Stavio sam pivo u frižider. (colloq.) *I’ve put the beer in the fridge.*

(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 frižideru 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:

ostavljati ~ **ostaviti** *leave* (a thing)

pretpostavljati ~ **pretpostaviti** *suppose, assume*

The verb pair **ostavljati** ~ **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. *I left him alone.*

3m/n A

Another frequently used verb pair is:

nastavljati ~ **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:

postavljati ~ **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 je postavila stol. *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 na zid. *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. *I asked two questions.* (I = male)

These two verb pairs have exactly the opposite meaning:

rastavljati ~ **rastaviti** *take apart, disassemble*

sastavljati ~ **sastaviti** *put together, assemble*

When you disassemble something, the result is expressed in **na** + A (usually in

plural):

Goran je rastavio igračku na dijelove. *Goran has disassembled the toy to its parts.*

The following table summarizes this verb pair and its (common) family:

stavljati ~ staviti		
prefix	used with	meaning
<i>none</i>	A (+ dest)	<i>put, place</i>
po-	A (+ dest)	<i>set, place, erect</i>
o-	A	<i>leave</i>
	A na miru	<i>leave alone</i>
na-	A / <i>inf</i>	<i>continue</i>
pretpo-	da + clause	<i>suppose that...</i>
ra-	A (na A)	<i>take apart (to...)</i>
sa-	A	<i>put together</i>

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 je dala Goranu čokoladu. *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*:

Ne dam ti loptu. *I don’t want to give you the ball.*

2 DL

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:

davati (daje) ~ dati + sve od sebe *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 je dodao loptu Marku. *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 je prodao auto Ani. *Darko sold the car to Ana.*

Ivan prodaje jabuke. *Ivan sells apples.*

m
prodavati

The third common verb pair is derived with **pre-**, with the meaning *hand over*:

Poštar je predao pismo Ani. *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 predaje matematiku. *Ivan teaches math.*

predavati

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:

davati (daje) ~ dati

prefix	used with	meaning
(none)	A (DL)	<i>give</i>
do-	A (DL)	<i>add</i>
pre-	A (DL)	<i>hand over</i>
pro-	A (DL)	<i>sell</i>

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 je dobila poruku. *Ana has got a message.*

The origin can be expressed by adding **od** + G:

Ana je dobila poruku od Ivana. *Ana has got a message from Ivan.*

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:

English <i>get</i>	Croatian verb(s)
<i>I got beer from the fridge</i>	donositi («) ~ donijeti (doneše,...) <i>bring</i>
<i>I got what you said</i>	razumjeti (razumije,...) <i>understand</i>
<i>I got home, got to work</i>	dolaziti ~ doći (dođe, došao, došla) <i>come</i>
<i>I've got the tickets</i>	imati <i>have</i>
<i>I've got to go, gotta go</i>	morati <i>must</i>
<i>I got hungry</i>	postajati (postaje) ~ postati (postane) <i>become</i>
<i>I've got my hair cut</i>	rephrase, use specific verbs
<i>I got my car repaired</i>	

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 **uspjeti**, 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:

čuti (ču**je**) *hear*

htjeti (hoće +,...) *want*

imati *have*

osjećati ~ **osjetiti** *feel*

razumjeti (razu**m**ije,...) *understand*

It's difficult to explain why the pass. adj. of **razu**m**jeti** (...) *isn't* used, while the pass. adj. of **shvatiti** perf., a verb with a very similar meaning, *is* used. Likewise, **željati** (**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 **uspjivati** («) ~ **uspjeti** (usu**p**ije,...) *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* **očeki**v**ati** (očeku**je**) *expect*

čitati *read* **peći** (pe**ć**e,...) *bake*

čuvati *keep* **pratiti** *follow*

gledati *watch* **pržiti** *fry*

graditi *build* **nositi** *carry/wear*

koristiti *use* **voljeti** (voli,...) *love*

kuhati *cook* **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**:

verb	pass. adj.
gledati <i>watch</i>	gledan <i>watched</i>
napisati (napíše) perf. <i>write</i>	napisan <i>written</i>
poslati (pošalje) perf. <i>send</i>	poslan <i>sent</i>

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):

verb	pass. adj.
naći (nađe) perf. <i>find</i>	nađen <i>found</i>
pečići (pečē) <i>bake</i>	pečen <i>baked</i>
pojesti (pojede) perf. <i>eat</i>	pojeden <i>eaten</i>
plesti (plete) <i>knit</i>	pletan <i>knitted</i>

Finally we can say:

Kolač je pojeden. *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 **ć** (I have again omitted all past forms for clarity):

verb	pass. adj.
naučiti («) perf. <i>learn</i>	naučen <i>learned</i>
pržiti <i>fry</i>	pržen <i>fried</i>
otvoriti («) perf. <i>open</i>	otvoren <i>open</i>
zatvoriti («) perf. <i>close</i>	zatvoren <i>closed</i>
platiti perf. <i>pay</i>	plaćen <i>paid</i>
shvatiti perf. <i>understand</i>	shvaćen <i>understood</i>
vratiti perf. <i>return</i>	vraćen <i>returned</i>

For example:

Škola je **zatvorena**. *The school is closed.*

Stojim pred **otvorenim** vratima. *I'm standing in front of the open door.*

stajati

Knjiga je **vraćena**. *The book is returned.*

Račun nije bio **plaćen**. *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. <i>throw</i>	bačen <i>thrown</i>
spasiti perf. <i>rescue</i> ®	spašen <i>rescued</i>
zaraziti perf. <i>infect</i>	zaražen <i>infected</i>
vidjeti (vidi) <i>see</i>	viđen <i>seen</i>
voljeti (voli) <i>love</i>	voljen <i>loved</i> ®
napuniti perf. <i>fill up</i>	napunjen <i>filled up</i> ®
kupiti perf. <i>buy</i>	kupljen <i>bought</i> ®
napraviti perf. <i>make</i>	napravljen <i>made</i> ®
primiti perf. <i>receive</i>	primljen <i>received</i> ®

For example:

Auto je **napravljen** u Poljskoj, a **kupljen** ovdje. *The car is made in Poland and bought here.*

m

Poruka je već **primljena**. *The message is already received.*

Moj auto je **popravljen**. *My car has been repaired.*

m

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 **šč**):

izmišliti perf. *make up* → **izmišljen** *made up* ®

čistiti *clean* → **čišćen** *cleaned*

koristiti *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 (**skr~~i~~je**) 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:

<i>inf</i>	<i>pres-3</i>	pass. adj.
pročitati	pročita perf. <i>read</i>	pročitan <i>read</i>

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 (**ispeč~~e~~**,...) perf. *bake* → **ispečen**

This also applies to some verbs in -**sti** that have a shift only in the 'western' scheme:

pojesti (**pojed~~e~~**) perf. *eat* → **pojed~~e~~n**

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**:

verb	pass. adj.
gurnuti (gurne) perf. <i>push</i>	gurnut <i>pushed</i>
pokrenuti (pokrene) perf. <i>start, move</i>	pokrenut <i>started</i>

The same holds for verbs similar to **uzeti**:

verb	pass. adj.
zauzeti (zauzme) perf. <i>occupy</i>	zauzet <i>occupied</i>

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.)

zaузeti verb (inf.)

zaузeti 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:

Trgovina 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**

1 A

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**

Take a note that **jabuka** is here in N – and free to change, as we'll see – while the word after it is in A, describing the role of **jabuka** in relation to the verb that follows.

The section **koji me je zvao** or **koju si kupio** is another type of clause – *the relative clause*. As in all other clauses, word-counting restarts in them, and the first position is filled by the first word (a form of adjective/pronoun **koji**):

Pojeo sam jabuku [koju**¹ si² kupio]**. *I have eaten the apple [you bought]*.

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.*

1 A | **doći** past-m

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 prijatelj koji me je zvao. (the same meaning) doći past-m | 1 A

Bear in mind that the description does not change if the described noun change its case:

Vidim prijatelja koji me je zvao. *I can see the friend who called me.* 1 A

Razgovarao sam s prijateljem koji me je zvao. *I talked to the friend who called me.* 1 A

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 koji su me zvali. *I can see the friends who called me.* 1 A

Vidim prijatelje koje 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 s kojim sam putovao. *I can see the friend I traveled with.*

Došli smo na plažu na kojoj je bilo mnogo ljudi. *'We came to a beach many people were on.'* doći past-mpl

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 koju je izgradio moj djed. *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 [što ne mogu objasniti]. *I saw something [I can't explain].* moći pres-1

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 **čemu(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].* poznavati

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].* 2 DL

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.* doći past-impl

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* **zadnji** *the last person*

prvo *the first thing* **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 **koji** ...

such as **ostali** *the rest* (of people)

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 weiß.*

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:

Ovo je mjesto [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:

Ovo su knjige [što sam ih kupio]. *These are the books [I bought].* ®
lit. 'These are the books **što** I bought them.'

3pl A

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:

Vjetar [što tuče u lice i dušu] *The wind [that's beating my face and soul]*
Pričam o ljubavi jednoj [što bila je davno] *I'm telling about a love [that was* f
long ago]

It's absolutely not required that you use this construction in speech, but be prepared to see sometimes it in writing and maybe speech.[®]

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 [kojeg svi čekamo: "Pedeset nijansi sive"]. (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!

[®] Instead of **što** and **tko**, forms **šta** 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 **šta**, 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 **šta**. 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](#).

63 Bigger and Better: Comparatives

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-lji-viji**).

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**

glup *stupid* → **gluplji**

blag *gentle* → **blaži**

mlad *young* → **mlađi**

čist *clean, pure* → **čišći**

skup *expensive* → **skuplji**

čvrst *rigid* → **čvršći**

tih *quiet* → **tiši**

dug *long* → **duži**

tvrd *hard* → **tvrdi**

Some one-syllable adjectives use the simpler way to create comparatives and just add **-iji**. Often used ones are:

crn *black* **pun** *full* **spor** *slow*

loš *bad* **rani** *early* **star** *old*

nov *new* **slab** *weak* **strm** *steep*

plavi *blue* **slan** *salty* **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** **širok** *wide* → **širi**

dubok *deep* → **dublji** **težak** *heavy* → **teži**

kratak *short* → **kraći** **uzak** *narrow* → **uži**

nizak *low* → **niži** **visok** *tall* → **viši**®

Few adjectives have completely irregular comparatives (everything so far was kind

of regular, believe it or not):

dobar *good* → **bolji** **loš** *bad* → **gori**
dug *long* → **dulji** **mali** *small* → **manji**
lak *light, easy* → **lakši** **mekan** *soft* → **mekši**
lijep *nice* → **ljepši** **velik** *big* → **veći**

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:

bljied *pale* → **bljeđi** (sometimes: **bljjeđi**)
lijep *nice* → **ljepši**
vrjedan *valuable* → **vredniji** / **vrjedniji** / **vrjjeđniji**

At least since 1950's, comparative forms like **vrjjeđniji** *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 **vrjedniji**):

form	hits
vredniji	18700
vrjedniji	11600
vrjjeđniji	22900

To say that something is e.g. bigger than something else, use **od** + G after the comparative:

Damir 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 je mnogo brži. *Your car is a lot faster.*

m | brz

Damir je dosta stariji od Ane. *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 stariji od Ane? *How much older is Damir than Ana?*

— **Dosta.** *Quite older.*

— **Osam godina.** *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 što dublji lonac. *I need as deep a pot as possible.*

1 DL | dubok

Želimo što veću sobu. *We want as big a room as possible.*

velik

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 postaje sve toplije. *The sea is getting/becoming warmer and warmer.*

postajati

Filmovi su sve dosadniji. *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 je stupanj toplije. *The sea is warmer by one degree.*

More je toplije 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:

mlad <i>young</i>	premlad <i>too young</i> (absolute superlative)
mlađi <i>younger</i>	najmlađi <i>the youngest</i> (superlative)

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-) <i>beautiful, magnificent</i>
prelijep <i>beautiful, magnificent</i>
presretan (presretn-) <i>delighted, ecstatic</i>

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 je najmlađi od njene djece. *Igor is the youngest of her children.* mlad

You can also specify the context of the absolute superlative, what for is someone *too something*:

Igor je premlad da vozi auto. *Igor too young to drive a car.* m

This is really merely a purpose clause, all restrictions apply.

It's worth knowing the verb pair meaning *compare*:

usporediti (-uje) ~ **usporediti** («) *compare* ®

The pair is used in the same way as the English verb:

Usporedili smo dva filma. *We have compared the two movies.*

Usporedila sam novi iPhone s novim Samsungom. *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 su ključevi novog novcatog auta. *These are keys of a brand-new car.*

[m](#)

® 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, **višji** 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 **usporedi|vati** (-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)i**, 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](#).

64 The Door Opens: Fun with se²

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:

Kuća je brzo prodana. *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):

Jogurt se dobro prodaje. *Yogurt sells well.*

prodavati

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 **se**²-passive is preferred.

The kinds of passives in Croatian (one with **se**², another with passive adjectives) correspond well to two kinds of passives in German, one with *werden* and another with *sein*:

Prozor se zatvara. = (Ger.) *Das Fenster wird geschlossen.*

Prozor je zatvoren. = (Ger.) *Das Fenster ist geschlossen.*

German has also the third possibility: passives with *sich*, that basically translate word-for-word into Croatian **se**²-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)	<i>Omnia mutantur.</i>] <i>Everything changes.</i>
(German)	<i>Alles ändert <u>sich</u>.</i>	
(Swedish)	<i>Allting förändras.</i>	
	Sve <u>se</u> mijenja.	

Swedish has again the suffix -s appended to the verb *förändra*.

The **se**²-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):

Prozor 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)	<i>La fenêtre s’ouvre difficilement.</i>] <i>The window opens ‘difficultly’.</i> = <i>The window is difficult to open.</i>
	Prozor <u>se teško otvara</u>.	

The mediopassive is also used when something is ‘for sale’, or ‘for rent’, so it’s not sold yet:

Prodaje se kuća. *The house is for sale.* (lit. ‘being sold’)

prodavati

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.*

čuti

Mjesec se vidio. *The Moon could be seen.*

Očekuje se snijeg. *Snow is expected.*

očekivati

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.*

f

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 Japanu se jede riža. *Rice is eaten in Japan.*

jesti

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 Japanu ljudi jedu rižu. *People in Japan eat rice.*

jesti

(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.*

jesti

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.*

peći

The French 'reflexive passive' has the same use:

(French) *Ça ne se fait pas.* } lit. *It's not done.*
To se 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 išlo u kino. *People were going to cinema often.*

ići past-n

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*:



German again has the same feature (but with *werden*-passive), while Swedish has the -s passive here:

(German) *Es wurde die ganze Nacht getanzt.* }
 (Swedish) *Det dansades hela natten.* } lit. 'It was danced all night.'

Plesalo se cijelu noć.

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...*

moći pres-1

Vjeruje se da... *It's believed that...*

vjerovati

Očekuje se da... *It's expected that...*

očekivati

Činilo se da... *It seemed that...*

Moglo se reći da... *It could be said that...*

moći past-n

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 **mi**² 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° mi se. *I feel like throwing up.*

1 DL

Vrti° mi se. *I'm dizzy.*

1 DL

Ani se povraćalo. *Ana felt like throwing up.*

The second sentence uses the verb **vrtjeti/vrtiti** *spin*. (Bear in mind that the sentences are again impersonal, as the past tense reminds you.) The following expressions are more pleasant:

Pije° mi se. *I feel like drinking.*

piti | 1 DL

Puši° mi se. *I need to smoke.*

1 DL

Ne pleše° mi se. *I don't feel like dancing.*

plesati | 1 DL

Ani se spava°. *Ana is sleepy.*

Ne ide° mi se na posao. *I don't feel like going to work.*

1 DL | ići

If you express *what* you feel like drinking/eating, *it becomes the subject*, so the verb must be adjusted accordingly:

Pije mi se čaj. *I feel like drinking tea.*

piti | 1 DL

Jedu mi se kolači. *I feel like eating cakes.*

jesti | 1 DL

Compare the previous sentences in the past tense:

Pilo mi se. *I felt like drinking.*

1 DL

Ani se spavalo. *Ana was sleepy.*

Nije mi se išlo na posao. *I didn't feel like going to work.*

1 DL | ići *past-n*

Pio mi se čaj. *I felt like drinking tea.*

1 DL

Jeli su mi se kolači. *I felt like eating cakes.*

1 DL

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 **se**²? 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 **se**²:

Ovdje piše da... *It's written here that...*

pisati

U knjizi piše istina. *The truth is written in the book.*

pisati

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 **se**² 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 **se**² with these verbs too:

Njegovo ime se ne piše tako. *His name is not written like that.*

pisati

• 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	Love has disappeared in a day	f
Vidjela sam	I saw	
Ja znam	I know	
Tvoje lice	Your face	
se promijenilo	has changed	

I čitav svijet za koji znam	And the whole world I know about
Kao san	Like a dream
Je nestao	Has disappeared
Tvoje lice	Your face
me promijenilo	has changed me

1 A

(I. Babić & N. Borgudan)

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

One verse has mediopassive **se**², 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** 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 ~ **po-** («) *break* (stop working)

mijenjati ~ **promijeniti** («) *change*

topiti ~ **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** (**done**se, **donio**, **donijela**) *bring* ®

The basic verb means not just *carry*, but also *wear*:

Goran nosi plavu majicu. *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 je donijela vino. *Ana brought wine.*

donijeti past-f

This verb, and all derived from it, use *destinations* and *origins*:

Ana je donijela sendvič Goranu. *Ana brought Goran a sandwich.*

Common verbs that follow this pattern are:

-nositi («) ~

-nijeti (**-nese**, **-nio**, **-nijela**)

prefix	used with	meaning
do-	A (DL)	<i>bring (here)</i>
pre-	A	<i>carry over, transfer</i>
od-	A (DL)	<i>bring*</i> (perf.)
	A (od + G)	<i>take away</i>
u-	A	<i>bring in</i>
pod-	A	<i>tolerate, can stand</i>
po-	not a pair! (specific meanings)	

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**):

Komarci prenose bolesti. *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 ne podnosi komarce. *Ana can't stand mosquitoes.*

Furthermore, there are a couple of unexpected things: first, the verb **odnositi** («) when used with **se**² – only the impf. verb – has the following meanings:

odnositi («) **se**²

+ **na** + A relate, refer to A, be about A

+ **prema** + DL behave towards DL, treat DL

For example:

Loše se odnosio prema meni. *He behaved badly towards me.*

This verb, with **na** + A, is often used where English uses *apply* and similar verbs:

Popust se odnosi na sve majice. *The discount 'relates to' all T-shirts. (= applies to)*

Next, the prefix **po-** creates two verbs that don't form a pair:

ponositi («) **se**² (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 je ponijela laptop. *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):

donijeti (...) perf. *bring* → **donijet** / **donesen**

odnijeti (...) perf. *carry away* → **odnijet** / **odnesen**

etc.

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 (κ) ~ **dovesti** (**dovede**, **doveo**) *bring* (someone)

dovoziti (κ) ~ **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 je dovela svog brata. *Ivana brought her brother.*

dovesti past-f

Ivana je dovela svog psa. *Ivana brought her dog.*

dovesti past-f

Compare this with the use of the corresponding verb derived from **nositi**:

Ivana je donijela svoju gitaru. *Ivana brought her guitar.*

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 je donijela svog hrčka. *Ivana brought her hamster.*

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 je odvela Gorana u školu. *Ana took Goran to school.*

odvesti past-f

Ana je odnijela knjige u školu. *Ana took books to school.*

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 je povelu psa. *Ana took the dog with her.*

povesti past-f

Ana je **ponijela** knjigu. *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 je **preveo** pismo. *Dario has translated the letter.*

prevesti *past-m*

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 je **prevela** poruku **s** njemačkog **na** hrvatski. *Ana has translated the message from German to Croatian.*

prevesti *past-f*

This table summarizes verb common verb pairs in this family:

-voditi («) ~ -vesti (-vede , -veo)		
prefix	used with	meaning
do-	A (DL)	<i>bring (here)*</i>
iz-	A	<i>lead out*, perform</i>
pre-	A	<i>bring over*, translate</i>
od-	A (od + G)	<i>take away*</i>
u-	A	<i>lead in*, introduce</i>
pro-	A (time)	<i>spend (time)</i>
proiz-	A	<i>produce, manufacture</i>

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 nije **uvela** euro. *Croatia haven't introduced the euro.*

uvesti *past-f*

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 će **izvesti** nekoliko pjesama. *They will perform several songs.*

To express *perform* without an object, use the verb pair:

nastupati («) ~ **nastupiti** («) *perform, take stage*

For example:

Goran **nastupa** u školi. *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 u Dubrovniku. *We spent two days in Dubrovnik.* provesti past-impl

Provest ću jutro u vlaku. *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:

trošiti ~ po- («) *spend (money, resources)*

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 se²](#)):

Ovi laptopi se proizvode u Kini. *These laptops are manufactured in China.* (lit. 'are being manufactured')

The derived pass. adj. (of the perf. verb) is used as the translation of *made in*: **proizvedeno** + (location). Note the stress of pass. adj. – it applies to all pass. adjectives derived from perf. verbs this family – always on **-e-**:

izvesti (...) perf. *perform* → **izveden**

uvesti (...) perf. *introduce* → **uveden** etc.

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:

Ana je odvezla Gorana u školu. *Ana drove Goran to school.* odvesti past-f

The verb **voziti** can be used with A (*drive something or someone*, or **se²**, when the meaning is mediopassive – we don't know who's driving really:

Ana vozi auto. *Ana is driving the car.* m

Ana se vozi. *Ana is driving (in a car).*

Most verbs in the family derived from **voziti** must have a subject in A or a **se²**:

Ana je odvezla Gorana u školu. *Ana drove Goran to school.*

Ana se odvezla u školu. *Ana drove to school.*

odvesti past-f

odvesti past-f

Now, the verb pair derived from **voziti** with **pre-** has only the simple meaning – *transport*:

Trajekti prevoze aute. *Ferries transport cars.* m

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 u**vo**zi banane. *Croatia imports bananas.*

Njemačka iz**vo**zi aute. *Germany exports cars.*

m

Like perf. verbs in the **voziti** family, all perf. verbs in this family have stress on **-e-** in pass. adj.:

Auto je u**ve**zen iz Poljske. *The car is imported from Poland.*

m

® In the “Ekavian” pronunciation, which completely dominates in Serbia, verb pairs derived from **nositi** *carry* have regular past forms, e.g.:

donositi («) ~ **doneti** (**done**se) *bring*

It seems **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. *I like swimming.*

Plivanje je zdravo. *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:

verb	pass. adj.	gerund
pušiti <i>smoke</i> →	pušen →	pušenje
čistiti <i>clean</i> →	čišćen →	čišćenje

We can summarize rules for pass. adjectives and gerunds in one nice table:

<i>inf</i>	<i>pres-3</i>	pass. adj.	gerund
-ati		-an	-anje
-nuti	doesn't matter	-nut	-nuće
-eti		-et	-eće
other	-e	-en	-enje
	-i	*-en	*-enje

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** → **ć**, **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 je opasno. *Smoking is dangerous.*

Trčanje je zdravo. *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) *I'm washing my hair.*

prati

Pranje kose je dosadno. (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 pada. (N) *Leaves are falling.*

Volim padanje lišća. (G) *'I like falling of leaves.'*

Objects in other cases are sometimes changed to **na** + A:

Sjećam se nje. (G) *I remember her.*

3f G

sjećanje na nju (na + A) *memory of her*

3f A

Some gerunds have specific meanings and are no longer felt connected to verbs. Common ones, derived from impf. verbs, are:

mišljenje *opinion*

značenje *meaning*

pitanje *question*

znanje *knowledge*

putovanje *travel, trip*

There are also verbal nouns with specific meanings derived from perf. verbs:

iznenađenje *surprise*

osvježenje *refreshment*

objašnjenje *explanation*

upozorenje *warning*

obećanje *promise*

stanje *state*

olakšanje *relief*

uzbuđenje *excitement*

opravdanje *excuse*

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 'paćenje', 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*:

štedjeti/štediti (*štedi*) *save (money)* → **štednja**

šutjeti/šutiti (*šuti*) *be silent* → **šutnja**®

One common verb uses both the regular way and adding **-nja**:

graditi *build* → **građenje**
gradnja

Another way is to change verbs ending in **-avati** (*pres-3 -aje*) to **-aja**:

prodavati (**prodaje**) *sell* → **prodaja**
udavati (**udaje**) *se² marry* (woman to man) → **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:

dolaziti *come* → **dolazak** (**dolask-**) *arrival*
odlaziti *leave* → **odlazak** (**dolask-**) *departure*

There are more common verbs that follow this pattern, some of them perfective:

početi (**počne**) perf. *begin* → **početak** (**početk-**) *beginning*
rastati (**rastane**) *se² perf. separate* → **rastanak** (**rastank-**) *parting, farewell*
sastati (**sastane**) *se² perf. meet* → **sastanak** (**sastank-**) *meeting*

Therefore, **sastanak** (**sastank-**) *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:

boriti *se² fight* → **borba** *fight*
ploviti *sail, navigate* → **plovidba** *navigation*
uspoređiti («) perf. *compare* → **usporedba** *comparison* ®

There is the verbal noun **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:

odnositi («) *se² relate* → **odnos** *relation*
ponositi («) *se² be proud* → **ponos** *pride*
izvoziti («) *export* → **izvoz** *export* (noun)

If the underlying verbs have the prefix **pre-**, it's changed to **prije-** in the verbal nouns:

prevoditi («) *translate* → **prijevod** *translation*
prevoziti («) *transport* → **prijevoz** *transport* (noun)

However, the noun **prijevod** really means the result, and not the process – there's the regular verbal noun **prevođenje** 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:

	impf.	perf.
verbs	padati	~ pasti (padne , pao) <i>fall</i>
nouns	padanje <i>falling</i>	pad <i>fall</i> (noun)

Similar 'perf.' root verbal nouns are:

doprinos <i>contribution</i>	potpis <i>signature</i>
ispit <i>exam</i>	razvod <i>divorce</i>
napad <i>attack</i>	uvod <i>introduction</i>

Objects of **napasti** (...) *attack* are changed with **na** + A when you use the 'perfective' verbal noun (this is the same as in English):

Napoleon je napao Rusiju. (A) *Napoleon attacked Russia.*
napad na Rusiju (**na** + A) *attack on Russia*

napasti *perf-m*

There are some impf. verbs that have root verbal nouns; common ones are:

boljeti (boli ,...) <i>ache, cause pain</i> → bol <i>f pain</i>
izgledati («) <i>appear, look, seem</i> → izgled <i>look, appearance</i>
raditi <i>work / do</i> → rad <i>work</i>

Some verbs have verbal nouns in **-a**, or completely irregular verbal nouns; for example:

verb	noun
bojati (boji) se ² <i>be afraid of</i>	strah <i>fear</i>
brinuti (brine) (se ²) <i>care, worry</i>	briga <i>worry, care</i>
trebati <i>need / should</i>	potreba <i>need</i>
namjeravati («) <i>intend</i>	namjera <i>intention</i>
željeti (želi ,...) <i>want, desire</i>	želja <i>wish</i>

Finally, some verbs have no verbal noun at all:

čuti (**čuje**) *hear* **ići** (**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) → **izvozni**
rad work → **radni** **uvod** introduction → **uvodni**

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. lit. '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 **mrzeti** (**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-**: **uporediti** (⌘) and **porediti** (⌘). 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.*

Otišli smo samo u kino. *We went only to the cinema.*®

[otići past-mpl](#)

Poslao sam razglednicu samo 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*:

Otišli smo u kino umjesto u restoran. *We went to the cinema*

[otići past-mpl](#)

instead of restaurant.

Pojest ću salatu **umjesto jabuke.** (A → G) *I'll eat salad instead of an apple.*

Ivan 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:

Goran je ostao u krevetu **umjesto da ode u školu.** *Goran stayed in bed instead of going to school.*

[otići](#)

(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, pada kiša. *Besides, it's raining.*

Umjesto toga, idemo u kino. *Instead, we're going to the cinema.*

[ići](#)

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. *I like coffee.* ☺

Volim i čaj. *I like tea as well.*

I Ivan 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 voli čaj. *Ana too likes tea.*

Ana 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 volim kavu. *I like coffee as well.*

I njima se sviđa film. *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 će posjetiti Rim. *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 ja ne volim kavu. *I don't like coffee either.*

Ni njima se ne sviđa film. *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 čaj. *I like tea.*

— **I ja.** *Me too.*

Ne volim vino. *I don't like wine.*

— **Ni ja.** *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 ga ni vidjela. *She didn't even see him.* (or *it*, depending on the context)

3m/n A

Neću te ni pitati. *I won't even ask you.*

2 A

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 kune. *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:

who/what/where/how context adverbs

to the current moment, situation

još in addition to previously said/discussed/known

sve totality: want to know everything

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)* poznavati

Treba mi još nešto. *I need something more. (beside things I already said/took)* 1 DL

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 nešto drugo. *I need something else. (instead)*

1 DL

® 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 **također** 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:



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 **sedm-orica**
 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.*

[otići past-f](#)

Obojica su otišla. *Both men left.*

[otići past-f](#)

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:

all-male	mixed	all-female
nas obojica	nas oboje	nas obje
nas dvojica	nas dvoje	nas dvije
nas trojica	nas troje	nas tri
etc.		

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 trojica *three of them* (all male)

vas obje *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*

jedan od nas *one of us*

netko od nas *somebody of us*

neki od nas *some of us*

mnogi od nas *many of us*

svatko od nas *each of us*

nekoliko nas *several of us*

mnogo nas *many of us*

dosta nas *quite a few of us*

puno nas *a lot 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 se**² (+ G/inf/CC) *remember, recall*
zaboravljati ~ **zaboraviti** (+ A/inf/CC) *forget*

The twist is that Croatian distinguishes *storing* into memory (**zapamtiti**) and *retrieving* something from memory (**sjetiti se**²) 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 se**² – largely overlap in meaning; the latter verb is much more common in speech. In the meantime, English uses usually just *remember*:

Zapamtio sam [gdje je auto]. *I remembered [where the car is].* (and now I know it) m

Sjećam se [gdje je auto]. *I recall [where the car is].* (I can get it from my memory) m

The perf. verb **sjetiti se**² 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) m

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 zatvoriti prozor? *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 zatvoriti prozor. *I didn't remember to close the window.*

Zaboravio sam zatvoriti prozor. *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 jaknu! *I forgot my jacket!*

Zaboravio sam na utakmicu! *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 zatvoriti prozor]. *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) se² (+ G/inf/clause)

For example:

Ana se boji zmija. *Ana is afraid of snakes.*

bojati se

Another way is using the noun **strah** + the verb **biti (je² +)** + one who's afraid in A (+ what is afraid of in G):

Anu je strah zmija. *Ana is afraid of snakes.*

Anu je bio strah zmija. *Ana was afraid of snakes.*

Anu je bilo strah zmija. (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 (je² +) 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 zmija *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- *scare*

The verbs can be used in both ways:

Ana se plaši zmija. *Ana is scared of snakes.*

Anu plaše zmije. *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 se boji voziti bicikl. *Goran is afraid to drive bicycle.*

bojati se

Anu je strah 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. *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 se boji **da** **će biti hladno.**
Očekujem **nećemo pobijediti.**

bojati se
očekivati

The usual rules of word order in clauses apply:

Ana 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. *'I expect that rain will fall.'*

očekivati

Očekujem da padne kiša. (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. *'I expect that rain will be falling.'* (later)

očekivati

Očekujem da pada kiša. *'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. *'I'm afraid that rain will fall.'*

bojati se

Bojim se da ne padne kiša. (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 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** (**je**² +) *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 **se**², 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.

bojati se

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 **se**², 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.*

bojati se

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.*

bojati se

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**

When a bow

rasplakati

gudalo žice,

makes strings cry,

Tremolo u meni

Tremolo in me

sve ono **najbolje polomi**

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 ti [da

I'll prove to you

2 DL

nismo slučajan odabir [we're not a random choice]

This verse has a content clause.

Bojim se [da	<i>I'm afraid</i>	bojati se postati m
ne postanemo dio	<i>[we'll become a part</i>	
stalne postav	<i>of the permanent exhibition</i>	
Prašnjavi eksponat	<i>A dusty item</i>	
Muzeja prekinutih veza	<i>Of the Museum of broken relationships]</i>	

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>I'm afraid [that...]</i>	bojati se 1pl A
[da nas ne razdvoje	<i>[they will separate</i>	
i rastope]	<i>and dissolve us]</i>	

Bojim se [da	<i>I'm afraid [that</i>	bojati se ostati
ne ostanemo samo	<i>we'll remain just</i>	
ožiljak u vremenu]	<i>a scar in time]</i>	

(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 have 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) otići past-mpf

Da je toplo, otišli bismo na plažu. *If it were warm, we would go to the beach.* (present) otići past-mpf

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) moći past-mpf

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) m

Finally, recall that in colloquial speech and writing, conditional is usually expressed with just **bi**² 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) ići

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 + **li**² 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) 1 A

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* 3f A | nazvati

immediately. (past, imperative)

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 [otići past-mpl](#) 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) [otići past-mpl](#)

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 [otići past-mpl](#) 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 [ići past-mpl](#) 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 vrati? *Will you call her, if she comes back?*

3f A

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	<i>If I were an empty sheet</i>
potpuno čist	<i>completely blank</i>
Koristio bih puno,	<i>I'd use a much,</i>
puno deblji kist	<i>much thicker brush</i>
I samo jarke	<i>And only vivid</i>
i šarene boje	<i>and bright colors</i>
[Da napišem ime	<i>To write the name</i>
tvoje i moje]	<i>yours and mine</i>

(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	<i>If I could, like long ago,</i>	moći pres-1
vratiti na početak	<i>return to the start</i>	
I biti onaj isti	<i>And be the same</i>	
bahati dječak	<i>arrogant boy</i>	
Ne bih forsirao	<i>I wouldn't insist on</i>	
neki ležeran stil	<i>a relaxed style</i>	

(Mile Kekin)

The form **forsirao** is the masc. past form of the verb **forsirati** («) *insist, force* with the ending **-ao** colloquially shortened. 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...

moći pres-1

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)

dopuštati (») ~ dopustiti (») *allow* (+ DL)

predlagati (predlaže) ~ predložiti (») *propose, suggest* (+ DL)

savjetovati (savjetuje) *advise, suggest* (+ DL)

zabranjivati (-uje ») ~ 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 Ani da ode ranije. *I suggested (that) Ana leave earlier.*

[otići](#)

The next two verbs are about giving orders, not in a restaurant, or ordering stuff over Internet, but as a boss to your subordinates:

naredjivati (-uje ») ~ narediti (») *order* (+ DL)

zapovjedjivati (-uje ») ~ zapovijediti (») *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:

nagovarati (») ~ nagovoriti (») *talk into* (+ A)

tjerati ~ 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 Goranu da jede sladoled. *Ana doesn’t let Goran eat ice-cream.* (lit. [jesti](#) ‘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*: **dā**).

It's also quite common to use this construction in imperative:

Ne daj mu da jede sladoled. *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** used in some mediopassive constructions. I've already explained the most common uses of mediopassive (in 64 [The Door Opens: Fun with se²](#)). 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 se ne mogu otvoriti. *The door cannot be opened.* moći pres-3pl
Prozor se može otvoriti. *The window can be opened.* moći pres-3

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 se ne daju otvoriti. (colloq.) *The door cannot be opened.*
Prozor 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** 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's even more colloquial (any maybe restricted to some areas?):

Vrata 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^o** **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 pizza** *I don't feel like eating pizza*, but the phrase with **dati** is normally used when someone avoids duties, chores, any

activity found hard or boring. For example:

Ani se ne da prati suđe 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 se nije dalo prati suđe. *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 se čekati satima. *I can't be bothered to wait for hours.* 1 DL

This construction is sometimes used without negation; it then roughly corresponds to *make oneself* (but it implies a bit less pressure):

Jel ti se da čekati u redu? (colloq.) *Can you make yourself wait in line?* 2 DL

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:

prefix	used with	meaning
(none)	A	<i>release, let go</i>
	DL + clause	<i>allow</i> (colloq.)
do-	DL + clause	<i>allow</i>
po-	DL	<i>give in</i>
	(A)	<i>loosen</i>
pre-	A DL	<i>relinquish, give over</i>
is-	A	<i>drop, let drop, emit</i>
na-	A	<i>abandon, leave behind</i>
o-	A	<i>relax (body)</i>
pro-	A	<i>miss, skip</i>
s-	A	<i>lower, descend</i>

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 **se**²:

Ana 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 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 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 rolete. *I lowered the blinds.* ®

The noun **roleta** (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**° **se**² + 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 mrzi da naveče pere sudove. *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)**^o + A + **da** is unknown in Croatia, and even misunderstood sometimes.

The word **roleta** (window) *blind* is used in a slightly different form **roletna** 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 [...]:

Ne daj [da nestanem] *Don't let [me disappear]*

Ne daj [da propustim] *Don't let [me miss]*

[Dok se gase svjetla] *[While the lights go off]*

Jedno za drugim] *One after another]*

The first two lines use **dati** perf. *give* + **da**-clause. The third line uses a mediopassive **se**². The last line above uses **za** + 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*:

Ne daj [da ovaj dan] *Don't let [this day]*

Potraje predugo] *Last too long]*

I ne daj [da se] *And don't let [us]*

Sutra ne vidimo] *Don't see each other tomorrow]*

The last two lines above uses **se**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:

Reci mi tiho nešto *Tell me quietly something*

[Da se nasmješim] *[So that I smile]*

Drži mi ruku *Hold my hand*

[Da ne zaboravim] *[So that I don't forget]*

(Marin Ostojić & Marta Muždalo)

1 DL

1 DL

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](#).

72 Addressing and Vocative Case

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:

noun type (N)	V
nouns in -a (≈ fem.)	-a → -o -ica → -ice (or: no change)
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, dođite, doktore. *Please, come here, doctor.*

Izvolite, gospodine. *Here you are, mister.*

Dobar dan, gospođo. *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):

Dođi, Kruno. *Come here, Kruno.*

Dođi, 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		gospodine (+ last name)
poštovani	+	gospodo (+ last name)
		name in V

Words **gospodin** *mister* and **gospođa** *madam* are often shortened:

gospodin *mister* = **g.** / **gosp.**

gospođa *madam* = **gđa**

There's one more word: **gospođica** *miss*, sometimes shortened to **gđica**.

Abbreviations **gđa** and **gđica** are declined as nouns, that is V = **gđo**, A = **gđu**, etc.

There's no period (.) after **gđa** and **gđica**.

For example, a letter could start with one of the following:

Dragi Ivane,...

Poštovana gospodo 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:

Titles used by children

teta	' <i>madam</i> '
-------------	------------------

striček (NW, including Zagreb)

barba (coast, except Dubrovnik)

dundo (Dubrovnik)	' <i>mister</i> '
--------------------------	-------------------

čiko (A -u) (elsewhere)

striko (A -u) (elsewhere)

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 Ana. *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 učī djecu. *Ivan teaches children.*

Another way is to use a more formal verb pair:

predavati (predaje) ~ predati *teach, give lecture*

So we can say:

Ivan predaje matematiku. *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 Ani. *I've lent the umbrella to Ana.*

Iznajmili smo im kuću. *We've rented (out) the house to them.*

3pl DL

However, if you instead of DL use **od** + G, the meaning shifts, and G represents the source (i.e. the owner):

Ana je posudila kišobran od mene. *Ana borrowed the umbrella from me.*

Iznajmili su kuću od nas. *They've rented the house from us.*

1pl G

It's interesting that English *rent* shows the same double meaning. If you use the verbs without DL or **od** + 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** + A:

Iznajmili smo im kuću na dva tjedna. *We've rented (out) the house to them for two weeks.*

3pl DL

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** must be used:

Radujem se odmoru. *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**² now):

Raduje me odmor. (the same meaning, less frequent)

1 A

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 me [da je nema]. *I am surprised [she's not here].*

1 A | 3f G

Check the Google™ results on the .hr domain:

form	hits
"čudi me da"	46800
"čudim se da"	28900

When translated to English, **čuditi** corresponds to several English verbs:

čuditi se² (+ 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 smeta Ani. *A pebble annoys Ana.*

But you will occasionally see A used instead of DL with these two verbs.

® In Serbia, and often in Bosnia, **pozajmljivati** (-uje «) ~ **pozajmiti** («) is used in meaning *borrow/lend*.

74 It Just Happened to Me

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:

To **mi** se **dogodilo**. *It happened to me.*

1 DL

It's kind of similar to expressions like **hladno mi je**, but now subjective feelings are not important. Consider the following sentence:

Čaša je pala. *The glass fell.*

We don't know why it happened. Just adding a person in DL changes its meaning subtly:

Čaša mi je pala. *I dropped the glass (accidentally).*

1 DL

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) *Se cayó*. *It fell.*

(Spanish) *Se me cayó*. *I dropped it.*

If you look into an English-Croatian dictionary, you will probably find that there's the verb pair **ispuštati** («) ~ **ispustiti** («) listed having one meaning *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 *intentionally*, another verb pair is used:

bacati ~ **baciti** (A) *throw, intentionally drop*

A similar difference is expressed with two a bit similar verb pairs that both translate to English as *leave*:

ostavljati ~ **ostaviti** + A

ostajati ~ **ostati** (**ostane**) + 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:

Jakna mi je ostala u autu. *I left the jacket in the car (accidentally).*

1 DL

If we would use the first verb pair, it's not said whether it was intentional or not, could be either way. Notice how the person affected is now the subject, and what is left is object:

Ostavio sam jaknu u autu. *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:

razbijati (razbija) ~ razbiti (razbije) break

+ A = intentionally

+ se² + DL = accidentally

For example:

Razbio sam čašu. *I broke the glass.*

Čaša mi se razbila. *The glass broke ('on me').*

1 DL

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 *who's affected* – always a person/animal or a group – to anything. Consider:

Grijanje ne radi. *The heating doesn't work.*

The sentence above lacks context: *what heating*. If it's not working in your house, you would add a possessive in English: *our heating*. It can be also done in Croatian, but the preferred way in speech is to add DL:

Grijanje nam ne radi. *Our heating doesn't work.* (lit. *'doesn't work to us'*)

1pl DL

Again, if you know some Spanish, this will all be very familiar to you. This usage is so common that some people call it *possessive dative*.

The accidental construction is really just the 'mediopassive' – that is, using 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 *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) **Razbile su mi se čaše.** *The glasses have broken.* (*'on me'*)

1 DL

(2) **Razbijale su mi se čaše.** also: *I felt like breaking glasses.*

1 DL

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 **ti**² to many sentences when you say something about yourself or someone else, similar to colloquial English *you know*:

Ja ti sutra ne radim. *I don't work tomorrow. (you know)*

2 DL

Of course, if you're talking to a group, you would use another pronoun:

Ja vam sutra ne radim.

2pl DL

On the other side, when you ask a question, the DL **mi**² is sometimes added to emphasize that you're interested:

Kako si mi? *How are you doing? (I'd like to know)*

1 DL

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:

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:

	male	female
<i>neighbor</i>	susjed ®	susjeda ®
<i>godfather/godmother</i>	kum	kuma
<i>acquaintance</i>	poznanik	poznanica
<i>boss</i>	šef	šefica
<i>coworker</i>	kolega	kolegica ®

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 je tvoj susjed. *Ivan is your neighbor.*

Ana je moja susjeda. *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 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:

sin <i>son</i>		unuk <i>grandson</i>
kći] <i>daughter</i>	unuka <i>granddaughter</i>
kćerka		

For example (the second sentence is less precise in English!):

Ana je Goranova mama. *Ana is Goran's Mom.*

Čekamo Ivanovog strica. *We're waiting for Ivan's uncle.*

The noun **kći** *daughter* is a special noun, having the following weird forms:

N	A	DL
kći / kćer	kćer	kćeri

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**, **ći** 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*, **praunuka** *granddaughter*, etc.).

If you are married, there are names for your husband or wife and her or his parents:

žena [supruga] *wife*
punica *her mother*® — **tast** / **punac** (punc-) *her father*
muž [suprug] *husband*
svekrva *his mother* — **svekar** (svekr-) *his father*

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:

zet *daughter's husband*
snaha *son's wife*®

(There are no established terms for same-sex couples yet.)

There are couple of often used additional terms for various relatives:

nećak *brother's or sister's son (nephew)*
nećakinja *brother's or sister's daughter (niece)*
bratić *male cousin*

sestrična *female cousin*

šogor *sister's husband / brother of the spouse (brother-in-law)*

šogorica *brother's wife / sister of the spouse (sister-in-law)*

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 živi u Splitu. *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](#).

76 Inner, Outer, Step by Step: More on Space and Time

Here are two spatial adverbs that distinguish *locations* from *directions*, with associated prepositions:

	dir.	loc.	preposition
<i>outside</i>	van ®	vani ®	izvan <i>outside of</i>
<i>inside</i>	unutra		unutar <i>within</i>

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:

dan*as today* → **današnji**

jutro*s this morning* → **jutrošnji**

noć*as tonight* → **noćasnji**

veče*ras this evening* → **večerašnji**

juče*r yesterday* → **jučerašnji**

sutra *tomorrow* → **sutrašnji**

(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:

sad(a) *now* → **sadašnji** **nekad(a)** *a time ago* → **nekadašnji**
tad(a) *then* → **tadašnji** **prije** *before* → **prijašnji**

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:

sinoć *last evening* → **sinoćni** (also **sinoćnji**)
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 po korak. *I was moving step by step.*

Očistio sam sve, sobu po sobu. *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 i Marku pedeset kuna. *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 i Marku po pedeset kuna. *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*

ponetko (**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*

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 je 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 **moгуće je da...** *it's possible that...*, content clauses are used (the word **moгуć** *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 igram protiv Barcelone]. *Everything is possible, except [that I play' against Barcelona]*. = *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 [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 [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 is 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].* masc.

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 pojedem]. *The sandwich is too big [for me] [to eat (it completely)].* 3m/n

Literally, the Croatian sentence says:

The sandwich is too big da I completely-eat it.

It's 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 pojeo]. 3m/n A

Sendvič je prevelik [da bih ga mogao pojesti]. 3m/n A | moći past-m

As with other atemporal clauses, instead of **biti** (**je**² +) *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 je tako debela [da ću je čitati danima]. *The book is so thick [that I'll be reading it for days].* 3f A

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 [da ih ne mogu izbrojati]. *I see so many sparrows [that I can't count them].* 3pl A | **moći pres-1**

Sometimes **toliko** is used with adjectives, so you'll encounter **toliko skupa... da...** and similar expressions:

Pizza je bila toliko ljuta [da sam popio litru 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 je takva [da svi 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 [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 [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 nije mačka, nego pas. *It's not a cat, it's a dog. (or: instead, it's a dog)*

You can also say it for verbs:

On ne spava, nego gleda televiziju. *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 mi je hladno, nego se smrzavam.

1 DL

What is 'weird' in this construction? First, **ne** 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 mi je hladno, smrzavam se.

1 DL

The second weird thing is that you can pull things (I mean, words) out from the **da** clause:

Meni 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):

Voda ne da curi, nego teče. *Water is not just leaking, it's flowing.*

teći

The understatement in the first part can be also negative:

Ne da nije pročitao knjigu, nije ju ni otvorio. *It's not just that he didn't read the book completely, he didn't even open it.*

3f A

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 **nema**° + **me**², 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 nema tu]	And as [if I weren't here]	1 G
ja tonem sve do dna	I'm sinking all the way to the bottom	
I kao [da mi nestaje	And as [if	1 DL
tlo 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 tijelo gori]	And as [if my body were burning]	1 DL
ja zovem upomoć	I'm calling for help	
A ponovo bi dala sve	And I'd give everything again	
za jednu jedinu noć	for a single night	f

(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):

Standard word	Ikavian
dijete <i>child</i>	dite
dvije <i>two (f)</i>	dvi
gdje <i>where</i>	di / gdi
lijep <i>adj. nice, beautiful</i>	lip
mlijeko <i>milk</i>	mliko
nedjelja <i>Sunday</i>	nedilja
vrijeme <i>time/weather</i>	vrimе

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 <i>understand</i>	} regular verbs in Ikavian
viditi <i>see</i>	
živiti <i>live</i>	
etc.	

There are a couple of words where just the Standard **re** is changed to **ri**:

Standard word	Ikavian
mreža <i>net</i>	mriža
prestati (pre stane) perf. stop	pristati (pri stane)
rezati (reže) impf. cut	rizati (riže)
sreća <i>happiness, luck</i>	srića
trebati impf. need/should	tribati
usred <i>in the middle of</i>	usrid
jesti <i>eat</i>	jisti
orah <i>walnut</i>	orih

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**:

Standard word	Ikavian
nemaš <i>pres-2 you don't have</i>	nimaš
neki adj. <i>some</i>	niki
nešto <i>something</i>	ništo

Many Ikavian dialects also have specific *past-m* forms: instead of **-o**, they have **-a** and **-ja**:

verb	Std. <i>past-m</i>	Ikavian
biti (je ² +) <i>be</i>	bio	bija
imati <i>have</i>	ima o	ima
vidjeti <i>see</i>	vidio	vidija

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:

verb	Std. <i>pres-1</i>	coast
biti (je ² +) <i>be</i>	sa m	sa n
imati <i>have</i>	ima m	ima n

For nouns and adjectives (example for the instrumental case):

word		Std. I	coast
žena <i>woman/wife</i>		žen o m	žen o n
moj <i>my</i>	m, n	moj i m	moj i n
	f	moj o m	moj o n

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**:

	Standard word	coast
people	lj u di m pl.	j u di
love	lj u bav f	j u bav
trouble	nevo lj a	nevo j a

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):

	Standard word	Dalmatia
pillow	j a st u k	ku š i n
towel	ru č ni k	š u ga m a n
clock, hour	sa t	u r a
plate (to eat from)	ta n ju r	pa t
fork	vi l ica	pi r u n

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):

Standard word	h -less
kruh bread	kruv
hladan adj. cold	ladan
snaha son's wife	snaja
suh adj. dry	suv

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).

Za tobom noćas	<i>For you tonight</i>	
plaču mandoline	<i>mandolins cry</i>	
Najlipša ružo	<i>Most beautiful rose</i>	
ikad procvitala	<i>ever blossomed</i>	
Lipa si, lipa	<i>You're beautiful, beautiful</i>	
anđeli ti slič	<i>angels look like you</i>	2 DL
Lipa si, lipa	<i>You're beautiful, beautiful</i>	
usne, tvoje lice	<i>the lips, your face</i>	
Jubi me, jubi	<i>Kiss me, kiss</i>	1 A
i kad zora sviće	<i>even when a dawn breaks</i>	
Sa neba pada	<i>From skies fall</i>	
po nama cvijeće	<i>flowers onto us</i>	
Dođi u ponoć	<i>Come at midnight</i>	f
prođi kraj fontane	<i>pass by the fountain</i>	
Da misec vidi	<i>So the Moon can see</i>	
tvoje lijepe oči	<i>your beautiful eyes</i>	f
(Nenad Ninčević)		

You can listen to it on YouTube™.

Another example is **U prolazu** *In passing*. It's again a purely Ikavian song:

Pusti, neka vitar nosi	<i>Let the wind carry</i>	
Ove naše zadnje riječi	<i>These last words of ours</i>	f
Svitlo sja u tvojoj kosi	<i>Light shines in your hair</i>	
Tvoj me pogled i sad liječi	<i>Your look still heals me</i>	1 A
U prolazu, u prolazu	<i>In passing, in passing</i>	
(Jakša Fiamengo)		

A bit later, there are verses:

I dok čekam, teku ure *And while I'm waiting, hours 'flow'*
Ko zna ča i komu 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:

Su pjatom juve *With a plate of soup*
Kad projdu dani *When days pass*
I stvari luše *And fancy things*
Ova nas jubav *This love*
Jača i rani *Strengthens and feeds us*
A vitar puše! *And the wind is blowing!*
 (Jakša Fiamengo)

projti
f
1pl A | f

You can see here loss of **h**, e.g. **rani** instead of **hrani**.

There's another interesting form: **projdu** instead of **prođu**. 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:

Ju te san se *With you I've*
zajubija *fallen in love*
Druge ne bi *Another one I wouldn't*
poželija *wish*
Cesarica da bi bila *Even if she were an empress*

2 A

There's an interesting (and archaic) feature: the verb **poželiti** perf. *wish* (Ikavian

form) uses G (**druge**) instead of A (**drugu**) for its object, *when negated*. (This is not a classic perf. verb, as you cannot "complete" *wish*: such verbs will be explained in 81 [Sneeze Once and Start Blooming](#).)

You can check a performance by a big choir, made of merged *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 **The Beat Fleet**, usually shortened to **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, **Fantastična** *Fantastic* (f) – about a friend who becomes a drug addict and hallucinates having a girlfriend, literally a *fantasy*:

Mara nije ima mobitel	<i>Mara had no cellphone</i>	
nikad nije bia doma	<i>he was never at home</i>	
I onda jednog jutra	<i>And then one morning</i>	
sam ga srea ispred lifta	<i>I met him in front of the elevator</i>	3m/n A sresti
a Mara je bia sritan	<i>and Mara was happy</i>	
ka nikad	<i>like never (before)</i>	
I sta je pričat:	<i>And he started to talk:</i>	
upozna sam	<i>I've met</i>	
<u>ljubav</u> svog života	<i>the love of my life</i>	f
prije misec dana	<i>a month ago</i>	
Kad sam se spustia	<i>When I went down</i>	
do dućana	<i>to the store</i>	
Po <u>kruv</u> i mliko	<i>To get bread and milk</i>	
u onoj plastičnoj boci	<i>in that plastic bottle</i>	
Na blagajni ugleda te <u>oči</u>	<i>I saw those eyes at the checkout</i>	f
(Aleksandar Antić)		

One form is worth explaining: in parts of Dalmatia, the verb **stati** (**stane**) perf. *come to stand* also means *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 **srea** instead of Ikavian **sria**, **prije** instead of Ikavian **pri**, later you can hear **tjedan** *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:

	right	wrong
biti (je ² +) <i>be</i> +	u pravu	u krivu ®
imati <i>have</i> +	pravo	krivo ®

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 me shvatila. *You misunderstood me.*

1 A

However, to express that something is done *right*, this word is usually used:

ispravno *correctly*

For example:

Ispravno si me shvatila. *You understood me correctly.*

1 A

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 pravo na svoje mišljenje. *You're entitled to your opinion.*

There are adjectives with opposite meanings:

pravi <i>true, right</i>	kriv <i>false, wrong, guilty</i>
	lažan (lažn-) <i>false, fake</i>
	pogrešan (pogrešn-) <i>wrong</i>

The adjective with the positive meaning covers both *something that really is so*, and the *right choice*:

On je pravi prijatelj. *He's a true friend.*

Ovo je pravo mjesto. *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).*

2 DL

Nitko ti nije kriv. *It's all your fault. (lit. 'nobody is guilty to you.')*

2 DL

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:

-pravljati ~ -praviti

prefix	used with	meaning
is-	A	<i>correct</i>
po-	A	<i>repair, fix, mend</i>
	se²	<i>improve</i>
pre-	A	<i>reconstruct, remodel</i>
ras-	(o" DL)	<i>discuss</i>

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 (**ispravk-**) *correction* but:

popravak (**popravk-**) *repair* **rasprava** *discussion*

Then, there's the verb **ticati** (**tiće**) *touch* which is mostly used in this phrase:

ticati (**tiće**) **se**² + G *concern, involve*

For example, this is a very frequent sentence:

Ne tiće me se. *It doesn't concern me. = It's none of my business.*

1 A

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 (**se**² + A) construction is usually called 'impersonal', *its meaning is really mediopassive*. We can call it **se**²+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:

pitam se	<i>I ask myself</i> or: <i>I am asked.</i> ??	???
pitao me se ®	<i>One asks me.</i> <i>= I am asked.</i>	no confusion

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 **me**², to further emphasize the point):

Ako se mene pita°... If I'm asked... (i.e. *if you want to know what I think*)

This expression is also common:

Da se mene pita°, a ne pita° me se,...

1 A

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° 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 nije bio kit. Radilo se o morskom psu. *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*

f

The verb here is usually understood as having **riječ** *f word* as its subject, so in the past it's **bila je riječ**.... 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** (**dođe**, **došao**, **došla**) + **do** + G *come up, arise, occur*

For example:

Došlo je do nesporazuma. *A misunderstanding has arisen.*

doći past-n

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):

Dolazi^o do toga da... *It's getting to the point where...*

Došlo je do toga da... *It got to the point where...*

doći *past-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:

poznavajući + *A from what I know about A* ®

There are more present adverbs used in phrases. A common one is:

zahvaljivati (**-uje «**) *thank* → **zahvaljujući**

It's used with DL:

Zahvaljujući dobrom vremenu, plaže su pune. *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. *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 <i>flying</i>	prateći <i>accompanying</i>
ležeći <i>lying</i>	trepćući <i>blinking</i>
odgovarajući <i>suitable</i>	viseći <i>hanging</i>
postojeći <i>existing</i>	vodeći <i>leading</i>

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):

verb	present adj.
(bude) perf. <i>be</i>	budući <i>future</i>
ići (ide) <i>go</i>	idući <i>following, next</i>
moći (može +) <i>can</i>	moguć <i>possible</i>
slijediti <i>follow</i>	sljedeći <i>next</i>
teći (teče) <i>flow</i>	tekući <i>flowing, liquid</i> ®

The adjective **budući** means *future* in e.g. *future tense*. The word **sljedeći** is spelled so when used as an adjective, but **slijedeći** 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° puno ležećih policajaca na cesti. *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 (čuje)** *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 form, 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* → **šivaći**

spavati *sleep* → **spavaći** **žvakati** (**žvače**) *chew* → **žvakaći**

(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*

igrača karta *playing card*

kupaći kostim *bathing costume*

kupaće gaće *swim briefs*

spavaća soba *bedroom*

šivaća mašina *sewing machine*

žvakaća guma *chewing gum*

The adjective **kupaći** 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 kupaćeg. (colloq.) *She left without the swimming costume.* **otići** *past-f*

Zaboravio sam kupaće. (colloq.) *I forgot my swim briefs.*

Here the adjective **kupaći** 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. **poznavajući** is considered non-standard.

In Serbia and most of Bosnia, the meaning *liquid* is expressed with another adjective: **tečan** (**tečn-**), 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:

padati ~ pasti (padne, pao) *fall*

From it, you can derive e.g. the following verb pairs with specific meanings:

ispadati ~ ispasti (ispadne, ispao) *fall out*

raspadati ~ raspasti (raspadne, raspao) *se² fall apart*

upadati ~ upasti (upadne, upao) *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 **pri-** to the base pair:

pripadati ~ pripasti (pripadne, pripao) ?

The verb **pripadati** of course means *belong*, but what should the perfective verb mean? Belonging is a *state*; how can you complete it?

It turns out that the perfective verb *is* used, but in the meaning *begin to belong, start to belong*. For verbs that indicate lasting states, associated perfective verbs often mean *entering the state*.

Such verbs are often hard to translate into English. The verb **pripasti** (...) will be usually translated as *given, assigned* and so on, or the sentence would be rephrased.

Such perfective verbs that don't mean completion or accomplishment are sometimes called *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:

mrziti ~~ **za-** («) *hate* ®

pamtiti ~~ **za-** *memorize*

voljeti (voli, volio, voljela) ~~ **za-** («) *love/like*

For example:

Ana je **zavoljela** zeleni čaj. *Ana started to love green tea.*

Some pairs don't follow this scheme:

cvjetati ~~ **pro-** *bloom*

spavati ~~ **zaspati (zaspi)** *sleep*

shvaćati ® ~~ **shvatiti** *understand, realize*

svidati se² ~~ **svidjeti (svidi, svidio, svidjela)** *se² like*

The verb **zaspati** has an alternative, non-standard *pres-3* form **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 (spi)** *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 (zaplāče) *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:

	perfective		
impf.	done	begin	
↓	↓	↓	
plivati	~ ot-	~ za-	<i>swim</i>

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*

ozdraviti perf. *recover, get healthy*

razboljeti (**razboli**, ...) **se**² perf. *get sick*

For some meanings, you can either *make* someone something, or *get* something; the second meaning requires a **se**² in Croatian, i.e. it's another example of mediopassive **se**², when the subject changes 'on its own':

perf. verb	+ A	+ se ²
rasplakati (rasplaće)	<i>drive to tears</i>	<i>burst into tears</i>
rastužiti («)	<i>make sad</i>	<i>get sad</i>
razljutiti («)	<i>make angry</i>	<i>get angry</i>
razveseliti («)	<i>cheer up (someone)</i>	<i>cheer up</i>
uvrijediti («)	<i>offend</i>	<i>take offence</i>

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:

	enter-impf.	enter-perf.	state (impf.)
<i>lie</i>	lijegati (liježe)	leći (legne, legao, legla)	ležati (leži)
<i>sit</i>	sjedati	sjesti (sjedne, sjeo)	sjediti
<i>stand</i>	stajati (staje)	stati (stane)	stajati (stoji)
<i>be</i>	postajati (postaje)	postati (postane)	biti (je ² +)

It's interesting how all verbs in the last row can have same arguments, i.e. nouns or adjectives in N:

Goran postaje gladan. *Goran is getting hungry.*

Goran je postao gladan. *Goran got hungry.*

Goran je gladan. *Goran is hungry.*

If we look further, we can find more *inchoative triplets*, for example:

enter-impf.	enter-perf.	state (impf.)
učiti <i>learn, study</i>	naučiti («) <i>learn</i>	znati <i>know</i>
doznavati (doznaje) <i>find out, get to know</i>	doznati <i>find out, get to know</i>	
upoznavati (upoznaje) <i>get acquainted with</i>	upoznati <i>get acq. with</i>	poznati (poznaje) <i>know (person, city), be acquainted with</i>

The pair **doznavati (doznaje) ~ doznati** is for simple facts, with little effort, while **učiti ~ 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 *smf.*); 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:

misлити ~¹ **po-** *think*
nadati se ~² ~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 **pomisлити**. 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:

‘inchoative’ (start-of-state)	‘semelfactive’ (atomic / brief)
	
zaspati (zaspi) <i>fall asleep</i>	kihnuti (kihne) <i>sneeze (once)</i>
zavoljeti (zavoli ,...) <i>start to love</i>	pomisлити <i>think for a moment</i>

However, there are perf. verbs where the two meanings are mixed. Two common ones are:

zaželjeti (**zaželi**,...) **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:

pomisлити smlf. *think for a moment* → **pomišljati** («)

The relation of these two verbs is like **kihnuti** (...) vs. **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):

misлити impf. *think*

pomisлити smlf. *think for a moment, once*

pomišljati («) impf. *think once a while*

All three verbs are sometimes translated as *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:

bacati ~/^{~1} **baciti** *throw*

pokazivati (-uje «) ~/^{~1} **pokazati** (**pokaže**) *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.

® In Serbia, the verb **mrziti** *hate* has the unexpected “Ekavian” form **mrzeti** (**mrzi**).

In Serbia and most of Bosnia, the verb **shvaćati** *understand* has a bit different form **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-** → **čit**ljiv**** *readable*

vidjeti *see* → **vid-** → **vid**ljiv**** *visible*

They are frequently derived from perf. verbs:

prihvatiti perf. *accept* → **prihvat**ljiv**** *acceptable*

shvatiti inch. *understand* → **shvat**ljiv**** *understandable*

uzbuditi («) perf. *excite* → **uzbud**ljiv**** *exciting*

zapaliti («) perf. *ignite* → **zapal**ljiv**** *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* → **podes**siv**** *adjustable*

prenositi *transport* → **preno**siv**** *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* → **promjen**ljiv**** / **promjen**ljiv**** *variable*

hraniti *feed* → **hran**ljiv**** *nutritious*

sumnjati *suspect* → **sumn**ljiv**** *suspicious*

(You will sometimes see the spelling **sum**ljiv****; 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* → **jest**iv**** *eatable*

opisati (*opiše*) perf. *describe* → **opis**siv**** *describable*

saviti (*savije*) perf. *bend* → **savit**ljiv**** *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* → **djel**ljiv**** *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*

neuništiv *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 se *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* → **hranjiv** *nutritious*

osjetiti *inch. feel* → **osjetljiv** *sensitive*

smrđjeti / **smrđiti** *stink* → **smrdljiv** *foul-smelling*

strpiti se *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* → **brzina** *speed, velocity*
topao (**topl-**) *warm* → **toplina** *warmth, heat* ®
vješt *skilled* → **vještina** *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:

kolik *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**:

dubina *depth* → **dubinski** **većina** *majority* → **većinski**
toplina *heat* → **toplinski** **visina** *height* → **visinski**

Few adjectives make abstract nouns by adding **-oća**:

čist *clean* → **čistoća** *cleanliness*
gluh *deaf* → **gluhota** *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* → **ljepota** *beauty*
sljep *blind* → **sljepota** *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* → **kraljevstvo** *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*
moću *possible* → **moćnost** *f possibility*
prošao (*prošli-*) *past* → **prošlost** *f past*

The stress is mostly moved to the syllable that precedes the suffix. More important nouns created by this suffix:

opasan (opasn-) *dangerous* → **opasnost** f *danger*
sličan (sličn-) *similar, alike* → **sličnost** f *similarity*
slučajan (slučajn-) *accidental* → **slučajnost** f *coincidence*
stvaran (stvarn-) *real* → **stvarnost** f *reality*
udaljen *distant* → **udaljenost** f *distance*
važan (važn-) *important* → **važnost** f *importance*

Passive adjectives always use this suffix to create abstract nouns, usually corresponding to English *-ness*:

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).

Potential adjectives always use this suffix to create abstract nouns as well:

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):

verb	adjectives	(verbal) nouns
isključiti («) perf. <i>exclude</i> (also <i>turn off</i>)	isključen <i>excluded</i> (<i>turned off</i>)	isključenje <i>excluding</i>
	isključiv <i>exclusive,</i> <i>strict</i>	isključivost f <i>exclusiveness,</i> <i>strictness</i>

In addition, there are (for most potential and passive adjectives), negated adjectives, and derived negated abstract words; for example:

vidljiv *visible* **nevidljiv** *invisible*
vidljivost f *visibility* **nevidljivost** f *invisibility*

Such negated adjectives and abstract nouns are always derived by appending **ne-**.

Some nouns created by **-ost** have meaning that's not obvious from the adjective they are derived from:

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 <i>essence, gist</i>	propast f <i>downfall</i>
čast f <i>honor</i>	smrt f <i>death</i>
moć f <i>might, power</i>	strast f <i>passion</i>
pomoć f <i>help</i>	vijest f <i>news</i>
povijest f <i>history</i> ®	vlast f <i>authority, government</i>

® 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 **ći** (the sound wasn't of today **ć**, 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	<i>To you silence is carrying me</i>	1 A
Na krilima vremena	<i>On wings of time</i>	
Mjesta još uvijek ima	<i>There's still some room</i>	

Kad <u>zastanem</u> pitat ću zvijezde	<i>When I stop, I'll ask stars</i>	
Koliko me dijeli do tebe	<i>How far I'm from you</i>	1 A
I tvojih visina	<i>And your heights</i>	

(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 **dolaziti** will be stressed on the second syllable.
2. No distinction in *pronunciation* of **č** vs. **ć** and **đ** 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 ga vidio?** *Did you see him?*

— **Se bojiš?** *Are you afraid?*

The Standard Croatian stressed form of **si** is **jesi**, while the particle **se**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* :: **tako**

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 <i>head</i> → glavica	pčela <i>bee</i> → pčelica
krava <i>cow</i> → kravica	riba <i>fish</i> → ribica
kiša <i>rain</i> → kišica	tata <i>m dad</i> → tatica <i>m</i>
kuća <i>house</i> → kućica	žena <i>woman/wife</i> → ženica

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 <i>grandmother</i> → bakica	ptica <i>bird</i> → ptičica
daska <i>plank</i> → daščica	ruka <i>hand, arm</i> → ručica
mačka <i>cat</i> → mačkica	noga <i>foot, leg</i> → nožica

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.) <i>girl</i> → curica
djevojka (formal) <i>girl</i> → djevojčica

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 <i>pumpkin</i> → tikvica <i>zucchini (courgette)</i>
torba <i>bag</i> → torbica <i>purse</i>

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**

most bridge → **mostić**

kolač cake → **kolačić**

nož knife → **nožić**

komad piece → **komadić** ®

prst finger → **prstić**

list leaf → **listić**

zid wall → **zidić**

nos nose → **nosić**

zub tooth → **zubić**

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 → **sunčce**

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 <i>teddy bear</i> → medek] (NW Croatia)
srce <i>heart</i> → srčeko	

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** *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	Petar (Petr-) → Pero ®
Ivan → Ivo / Ive	Tomislav → Tomo ®
Juraj → Jure / Jura	Vladimir → Vlado ®
Katarina → Kata	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	Ivo → Ivica m
Kata → Katica	Jure → Jurica m
Ruža → Ružica	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.

® 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** (*parčeti*) 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:

tvoriti
o-tvarati («) ~ **o-tvoriti** («)

The base verb, **tvoriti**, is quite rare. The derived pairs are not:

prefix	used with	meaning
o-	A	<i>open</i>
pri-	A	<i>leave ajar ('almost close')</i>
za-	A	<i>close</i>
pre-	A (u" A)	<i>transform</i>
s-	A	<i>create</i>
	se ²	<i>show up (colloq.)</i>

There's not much to say about the first three verbs: they express *open* and *close* – either literal (*window, shop*), or metaphoric (*discussion, person*).

The last two verbs have specific meanings. The **pre-** verb is similar to transport verbs derived by **pre-**: it uses *destinations* (expressed by u" + A) and optionally also *origins* (expressed by iz" + G, matching the destination). The verb is used with either an object in A, or a **se**² (mediopassively, if something transforms 'on its own'):

Mali problem se pretvorio u veliki. *A small problem has transformed into a big one.*

The verb pair **otvarati** («) ~ **otvoriti** («) *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 *imperfective* verb:

Otvrao sam prozor. *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:

Otvorio sam prozor. *I've opened the window.* (And it's open now.)

This is the 'standing outcome' principle. This is because perf. verbs *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 i poslije ga zatvorio. *I've opened the window and closed it later.*

3m/n A

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 i oprao ga. *I've opened the window and washed it.*

3m/n A

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):

example	implies
Išla sam u trgovinu. <i>I was going/went to the shop.</i>	<i>imperfective!</i> <u>no implications</u> whatsoever
Otišla sam u trgovinu. <i>I have gone to the shop.</i>	(I'm in the shop)
Otišla sam u trgovinu i kupila pivo. <i>I went to the shop and bought beer.</i>	(I have some beer)
Otišla sam u trgovinu, kupila pivo i popila ga. <i>I went to the shop, bought beer and drank it.</i>	(no beer; I might be drunk)
Pala sam. <i>I fell.</i>	<i>involuntary event!</i> <u>no implications</u>

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>I'm watching</i>
↓	...put the verb gledati into the past
past	gledala sam <i>I was watching</i>
↓	...put the verb biti (je² +) into the past
pluperfect	bila sam gledala <i>I had been watching</i>

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):

form	hits
gledao sam	152000
bio sam gledao	7
gledao sam bio	2

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:

prefix	used with	meaning
o-	A	<i>equip</i>
pos-	A (dest)	<i>tidy, put to place</i>
pri-	A (za" A1)	<i>prepare</i>
s-	A (dest)	<i>put to its place make ready *</i>
do-	A (dest)	<i>deliver</i>

The pair derived with **pri-** has a simple meaning, *prepare*. It's used with an object or with a **se**²:

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:

prefix	used with	meaning
do-	A	<i>finalize, complete</i>
iz-	A	<i>carry out, execute</i>
za-	A	<i>end, terminate</i>

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 / **se**²) (**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:

prefix	used with	meaning
is-	A (orig)	<i>exclude, switch off</i>
pri-	A (dest)	<i>join, connect, plug in</i>
u-	A (dest)	<i>include, switch on</i>
za-	A / CC	<i>conclude</i>

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**:

verb	‘ <i>player</i> ’ noun
birati <i>choose</i>	bir <u>ač</u> <i>elector, voter</i>
glasati <i>vote</i>	glas <u>ač</u> <i>voter</i>
igrati <i>play</i>	igr <u>ač</u> <i>player</i>
kupati <i>bathe</i>	kup <u>ač</u> <i>bather</i>
pjevati <i>sing</i>	pjev <u>ač</u> <i>singer</i>
plivati <i>swim</i>	pliv <u>ač</u> <i>swimmer</i>
plesati (pleše) <i>dance</i>	ples <u>ač</u> <i>dancer</i>
pušiti <i>smoke</i>	puš <u>ač</u> <i>smoker</i>
trčati (trči) <i>run</i>	trk <u>ač</u> <i>runner</i>
voziti <i>drive</i>	voz <u>ač</u> <i>driver</i>

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 **igr**ač**a**

The feminine versions are simply derived by adding **-ica** (and consequently moving the standard stress):

igrač *player* (m) → **igr**ač**ica** *player* (f)

pjevač *singer* (m) → **pjev**ač**ica** *singer* (f)

vozač *driver* (m) → **voz**ač**ica** *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):

čitač *reader* **prek**id**ač** *switch*

nosač *carrier / prop* **pokr**iv**ač** *cover*

grijač *heater* ® **pun**j**ač** *charger*

otvar**ač** *opener* **up**al**jač** *lighter*

The word **čit**ač *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:

verb	'player' noun
čitati <i>read</i>	čitatelj <i>reader</i>
gledati <i>watch</i>	gledatelj <i>watcher</i>
graditi <i>build</i>	graditelj <i>builder</i>
natjecati (natječe) <i>se² compete</i>	natjecatelj <i>competitor</i> ®
roditi <i>give birth</i>	roditelj <i>parent</i>
slušati <i>listen</i>	slušatelj <i>listener</i>

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:

verb	'player' noun
čitati <i>read</i>	čitalac (čitaoc-) <i>reader</i>
gledati <i>watch</i>	gledalac (čitaoc-) <i>watcher</i> (colloq.) ®
slušati <i>listen</i>	slušalac (čitaoc-) <i>listener</i>
misлити <i>think</i>	misilac (mislioc-) <i>thinker</i>
nositi <i>carry</i>	nosilac (nosioc-) <i>carrier</i>
roniti <i>dive</i>	ronilac (ronioc-) <i>diver</i>

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):

form	hits	form	hits
ronilac	20900	nosilac	24400
ronioc	9980	nosioc	11700

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-**):

verb	'player' noun
boriti se ² <i>fight</i>	borac (borc-) <i>fighter</i>
glumiti <i>act</i>	glumac (glumc-) <i>actor</i>
loviti <i>catch, hunt</i>	lovac (lovc-) <i>hunter</i>
kupiti perf. <i>buy</i>	kupac (kupc-) <i>buyer</i>
pisati (piše) <i>write</i>	pisac (pisc-) <i>writer</i>

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**:

verb	'player' noun
kuhati <i>cook</i>	kuhar <i>cook</i> ®
slikati <i>paint</i> (pictures)	slikar <i>painter</i>
meso <i>meat</i>	mesar <i>butcher</i>
pošta <i>post</i>	poštar <i>postman</i>
riba <i>fish</i>	ribar <i>fisherman</i>
stol <i>table</i> ®	stolar <i>carpenter</i>
ura <i>clock</i> (see below)	urar <i>watchmaker</i> ®
zid <i>wall</i>	zidar <i>mason</i>
zub <i>tooth</i>	zubar <i>dentist</i>

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)

slikar *painter* (m) → **slikarica** *painter* (f)

zubar *dentist* (m) → **zubarica** *dentist* (f) ®

Another suffix that gets attached to both verbs and nouns is **-nik**:

verb	‘player’ noun
koristiti <i>use</i>	korisnik <i>user</i>
liječiti <i>cure</i>	liječnik <i>physician</i> ®
početi (počne) <i>perf. begin</i>	početnik <i>beginner</i>
vjerovati (vjeruje) <i>believe</i>	vjernik <i>believer</i>
ljubav <i>f love</i>	ljubavnik <i>lover</i>
moć <i>f might, ability</i>	moćnik <i>person in power</i>
put <i>way</i>	putnik <i>traveler</i>
rad <i>work</i>	radnik <i>worker</i>
rat <i>war</i>	ratnik <i>warrior</i>
vlast <i>f government, rule</i>	vlasnik <i>owner</i>

(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**:

verb	‘playroom’ noun
igrati <i>play</i>	igraonica <i>playroom</i>
kupati <i>bathe</i>	kupaonica <i>bathroom</i>
učiti <i>study / teach</i>	učionica <i>classroom</i>

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	} <i>bakery</i>
pekarna (colloq., common in Zagreb)	
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)] <i>flower shop</i>
cvjetarna (Rijeka area)	

For instance, on this flower shop in a small town near Rijeka, it's **cvjetarna**:



Finally, there are 'ground' nouns, derived usually with **-lište**:

verb	'playground' noun
igrati <i>play</i>	igralište <i>playground</i>
graditi <i>build</i>	gradilište <i>building site</i>
kupati <i>bathe</i>	kupalište <i>bathing place, area</i>
parkirati («) <i>park (a car)</i>	parkiralište <i>parking area</i>

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**) *se*² *compete*, the verb **takmičiti** *se*² 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**.

88 Weird Words and Constructions

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 je crvene boje. lit. *The T-shirt is 'of red color'.*

Hlače su plave boje. 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 je majica? *What color is the T-shirt?*

— **Crvene.** (G fem.) *Red.*

— **Crvena.** (N fem.) *Red.*

Koje boje je auto? *What color is the car?*

— **Crne.** (G fem.) *Black.*

— **Crni.** (N masc.) *Black.*

m

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 je od velike važnosti. *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*®
jezero *lake* **općina** *municipality*®

For example (again u" + DL):

hotel Panorama → **u hotelu Panorama** / **u hotelu Panoram**i
kazalište Komedija → **u kazalištu Komedija** / **u kazalištu Komedij**i

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:

Voliš 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 kanuu**

separe *restoran booth* → **u separeu**

The two consecutive vowels are pronounced separately, e.g. DL **kanuu** 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** *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 ogreban. *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 i mast nisu bili skupi. *Salt and lard were not expensive.* [®]

The last feature seems to depend on the region.

(The rest is coming soon)

[®] 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*:

<u>novi gazde</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>naši tate</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>nove gazde</u>	<u>7120</u>	<u>naše tate</u>	<u>124</u>

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 («) **se**² ~ **vjenčati se**² *marry* (Std; rare in speech)

It's possible, but slightly old-fashioned to use both verb pairs without the **se**²: 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:

karneval	mesopust
fašnik	poklade f pl.
maškare f pl.	pust

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.

(the rest is coming soon)

® 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:

‘Compounding’ number forms

1- jedno -	10- deseto -
2- dvo -	11- jedanaesto -
3- tro -	12- dvanaesto -
4- četvero -	20- dvadeseto -
5- peto -	100- sto -
6- šesto -	200- dvjesto -
7- sedmo -	1000- tisuću -
8- osmo -	
9- deveto -	<i>many više</i> -

For example:

trodnevni *three-day*

četverogodišnji *four-year*

četridesetogodišnji *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:

desetinčni *10-inch* **sto**inčni *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 **tro**dnevni **fest**ival. *A three-day festival begins tomorrow.*

počinjati

Bili smo na dvotjednom **odm**oru. *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 **pedeset**godišnji besides usual **pedeset**godišnji. You will also see non-standard forms derived from numbers 5, 6 and 7, like ones for 4, that is:

(all colloq.)

5- **petero-** 7- **sedmero-**

6- **šestero-** 8- **osmero-**

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.* **dovesti past-f**

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 → **jedīnica** 6 → **šestīca**

2 → **dvojka** 7 → **sedmīca**

3 → **trojka** 8 → **osmīca**

4 → **četvorka** 9 → **devetka**

5 → **petīca** 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 šestīcu. (colloq.) *I’ll wait for a number 6 tram.*

However nouns derived from 1, 3 and 4 have special meanings as well:

jedīnica *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 **-njinja** (f). As with the most other male/female pairs, the male form is also generic/default:

Četverogodišnjaci 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*:

Multiplicity adjectives

jednostruk	<i>one-fold, single-layer</i>
dvostruk dupli (colloq.)	<i>double</i>
trostruk	<i>triple</i>
četverostruk	<i>fourfold</i>
peterostruk	<i>5-fold</i>
šesterostruk	<i>6-fold</i>
...	...
deseterostruk	<i>10-fold</i>
...	...
dvadeseterostruk	<i>20-fold</i>
stostruk	<i>100-fold</i>
mnogostruk višestruk	<i>multiple, manifold</i>

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 prvacima Europe. *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 mobitel je dvostruko bolji. *The new cellphone is twice better.*

Novi mobitel je duplo bolji. (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 je jebeno skup. *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):

jeho te / jebote (abbr. **jbt**) = amazement

jebi ga / jebiga (abbr. **jbg**) = resignation

The most common verb pair derived from this verb is:

zajebavati («) ~ **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 **se**². There are two meanings then. First, it's *make a mistake*, such that affects the subject. Next, the impf. verb with **se**² 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. (vulgar!) *He doesn't give a fuck.*

3m/n A

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 ide u kurac. (vulgar!) *Everything is going to hell.*

ići

Ivan je u kurcu. (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 je u banani. (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 [*iiieee*](#).

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 can 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 **-ti**, the ending is replaced with the following personal endings:

person	sing.	plur.
1st	-h	-smo
2nd	-	-ste
3rd	-	-še

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 **-ti** in *inf*):

naučiti perf. *learn* → *aor-1* **naučih**

pozvati perf. *call, invite* → *aor-1* **pozvah**

uzeti perf. *take* → *aor-1* **uzeh**

vidjeti *see* → *aor-1* **vidjeh**

Observe that it's not important if the verb is 'regular' or not: only the *inf* ending matters.

For 2nd and 3rd person in singular, the ending is 'empty', so we get **naučī** and **uze**.

Verbs with *inf* ending in **-sti** and **-ći** insert a vowel before the aorist endings, **-o-** in *aor-1* and plural, and **-e-** in *aor-23* (the form common to the 2nd and 3rd person):

person	sing.	plur.
1st	-oh	-osmo
2nd	-e	-oste
3rd	-e	-oše

For such verbs, aorist forms aren't derived from *inf*. If they have *past-m* in **-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 **-e** for such verbs):

pojesti (**pojede**, **pojeo**) perf. *eat* → aor-1 **pojedoh**
reći (**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**, **otišao**, **otišla**) perf. *leave* → aor-1 **odoh**

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:

aor-1	pojedoh
aor-23	pojede
aor-1pl	pojedosmo
...	

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 odoh. *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**

eat (perf.) **pojela** → **pojevši**

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** (**je**² +) *be* is often used, but it's 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:

gender	N	A	DL	G	I
neuter	-o (-e)	= N			
masc. (not p/a)	dict.	= N	-u	-a	-om (-em)
masc. (p/a)	dict.	-a			

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*:

Vidim njegova brata. *I see his brother.* (Standard, but very rare)

Vidim njegovog brata. (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:

number	DLI
obje f <i>both</i>	objema
dvije f <i>two</i>	dvjema
tri <i>three</i>	trima

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 +):

noun type (N)	A	DL	I	G
-a (≈ fem.)	-u	*-i	-om	-e
neut. (≈ -o , -e)	= N	-u	N + m	-a
not masc. not p/a	= N	-u	-om	-a
in masc. p/a	-a		(-em)	
-a fem.	= N	-i	-i	-i

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:

<i>gender</i>	N	A	DL	I	G
fem.	-a	-u	-oj	-om	-e
neut.	-o (-e)	= N			
masc. not p/a		= N	-om	-im	-og
masc. p/a	<i>dict.</i>	-og (-eg)	(-em)		(-eg)

The default, dictionary form, as listed in dictionaries, usually has no endings, and is indicated with *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 **e** instead of **o** in masc. and neut. genders are attached to adjectives ending on a Croatian-specific letter:

nov *new* → **novom**
loš *bad* → **lošem**

The **e**-endings also apply to all comparatives, even if they don't end in a Croatian-specific letter (e.g. **širi** *wider*).

Pay attention that alternative endings don't exist for the feminine gender.

The *p/a* in tables above stands for *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:

noun type (N)	N- <i>pl</i>	A- <i>pl</i>	DLI- <i>pl</i>	G- <i>pl</i>	
-a (≈ fem.)	-e	= N	-ama	*-a	
neut. (≈ -o, -e)	-a	= N	-ima	-a	
end in	masc.	*-i	*-e	N + ma	*-a
cons.	fem.	-i	= N	N + ma	*-i

Most short (one-syllable) masc. nouns ending on a consonant have either **ov** or **ev** inserted before the endings listed above. For some masc. nouns there's a consonant alternation in N and DLI.

Details are described in [29 Plural of Masculine Nouns and Adjectives](#).

The genitive case in plural has many exceptions that get rather -i instead of -a. Additionally, some nouns get *lengthened* by inserting an additional **a** or by using the nominative form instead of their case-base:

N	N-pl	G-pl
pas <i>dog</i>	psi	pasa
pismo <i>letter</i>	pisma	pisama

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:

<i>gender</i>	N-pl	A-pl	DLI-pl	G-pl
fem.	-e	= N		
neut.	-a	= N	-im	-ih
masc.	-i	-e		

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:

<i>gender</i>	N	A	DL	G	I
fem.	moja	moju	mojoj	moje	mojom
neut.	moje	= N	mojem(u)	mojeg(a)	mojim
m $\frac{\text{not p/a}}{\text{p/a}}$	moj	= G	mom(e)	mog(a)	

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:

<i>pres-1</i>	-a-m	-i-m	-e-m
<i>pres-2</i>	-a-š	-i-š	-e-š
<i>pres-3</i>	-a	-i	-e
<i>pres-1pl</i>	-a-mo	-i-mo	-e-mo
<i>pres-2pl</i>	-a-te	-i-te	-e-te
<i>pres-3pl</i>	-aju	-e	-u

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:

<i>aor-1</i>	-h	-o-h
<i>aor-23</i>	-	-e
<i>aor-1pl</i>	-smo	-o-smo
<i>aor-2pl</i>	-ste	-o-ste
<i>aor-3pl</i>	-še	-o-še

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:

<i>inf</i>	<i>aor-1</i>
naučiti perf. <i>learn</i>	naučih
uzeti perf. <i>take</i>	uzeh
pojesti perf. <i>eat</i>	pojedoh

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:

	<i>inf</i>	<i>pres-3</i>	<i>past-m</i>
a	-a-ti	-a	-a-o
i	-i-ti	-i	-i-o
n	-nu-ti	-n-e	-nu-o
ova/uje	-ova-ti	-uj-e	-ova-o

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 <i>worry</i>	trnuti <i>numb</i>
čeznuti <i>yearn</i>	trunuti <i>rot</i>
ginuti <i>perish, die</i>	venuti <i>wither</i>
tonuti <i>sink</i>	

The a-verbs are the *default class* of verbs: all new verbs that are adapted into Croatian (mostly colloquially) are adapted as a-verbs:

četatati <i>chat</i> (over Internet)
printati <i>print</i> (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:

	<i>inf</i>	<i>pres-3</i>	<i>past-m</i>
ava/aje	-ava-ti	-aj-e	-ava-o
eva/uje	-eva-ti	-uj-e	-eva-o
iva/uje	-iva-ti	-uj-e	-iva-o
uva/uje	-uva-ti	-uj-e	-uva-o

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, uva/uje) out of the 4 above contain only a handful 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-znade)**.

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:

	<i>inf</i>	<i>pres-3</i>	<i>past-m</i>	<i>past-f</i>
a/i	-a-ti	-i	-a-o	-a-la
je/i	-je-ti	-i	-i-o	-je-la
je/ije	-je-ti	-ij-e	-i-o	-je-la

Only a limited number of verbs belong to the a/i-verbs. Some of them have general, quite basic meanings:

bježati <i>run away</i>	klečati <i>kneel</i>
bojati <i>paint</i> (wall, fence) *	trčati <i>run</i>
bojati se ² <i>be afraid</i>	spati <i>sleep</i>
brojati <i>count</i> *	stajati (stoji) <i>stand</i>
čućiati <i>squat</i>	-stojati
držati <i>hold</i>	strujati <i>stream</i> *
ležati <i>lay</i>	

(Only infinitives are listed, *pres-3* forms end in -i!) The verb **stajati** (**stoji**) *stand* is irregular. This does not apply to verb derived from it, which have regular forms from **-stojati**. The verb **spati** (**spi**) *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 <i>cry</i> (baby)	režati <i>growl</i>
blejati <i>bleat</i>	šuštati <i>rustle, murmur</i>
bruhati <i>hum</i>	vrištati <i>scream</i>
cvrčati <i>chirr</i>	zujati <i>buzz</i> *
hučati <i>boom</i>	zvečati <i>twang</i>
ječati <i>cry, shrill</i>	zviždati <i>whistle</i>
pištati <i>squeak, beep</i>	zvučati <i>sound</i>
pljuštati <i>rain heavily, shower</i>	

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) <i>run away</i>	vrištati (vrišti) <i>scream</i>
...	...

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 (zui)	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):

gnijljjeti <i>rot</i>	strepjeti <i>fear, quail</i>
hlapjeti <i>evaporate</i>	šumjeti <i>whirr, hum</i>
starjeti <i>age, grow old</i>	tamnjeti <i>darken</i>

(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 <i>burn</i>	trpjeti <i>suffer</i>
grmjjeti <i>thunder</i>	vrtjeti <i>spin, turn</i>
smrdjeti <i>stink</i>	visjeti <i>hang</i>
štedjeti <i>save (money)</i>	vrvjjeti <i>swarm</i>
šutjeti <i>be quiet</i>	žudjeti <i>yearn</i>

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**:

	<i>inf</i>	<i>pres-3</i>	<i>past-m</i>
	-ja-ti	-j-e	-ja-o
a/*e	-sa-ti	-š-e	-sa-o
	etc.	etc.	etc.

Common verbs that fall into this class without a sound shift are:

brijati (brije) <i>shave</i>	penjati (penje) <i>se² climb</i>
češati (češe) <i>scratch</i>	sijati (sije) <i>sow</i>
derati (dere) <i>tear</i>	smijati (smije) <i>se² laugh</i>
grijati (grije) <i>heat</i>	stajati (staje) <i>stop, stand</i>
kašljati (kašlje) <i>cough</i>	stenjati (stenje) <i>groan</i>
lajati (laje) <i>bark</i>	trajati (traje) <i>last</i>
orati (ore) <i>till</i>	

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 <i>snore</i>	skakati <i>jump</i>
micati <i>move</i>	srkati <i>sip (while eating)</i>
nicati <i>sprout</i>	urlikati <i>scream</i>
plakati <i>cry, shed tears</i>	ticati <i>touch</i>
klicati <i>shout, cheer</i>	vikati <i>yell</i>
-ricati	žvakati <i>chew</i>

The following verbs have change **h** or **s** → **š**, e.g. **pisati** (**piše**):

brisati <i>wipe, clear</i>	mirisati («) <i>smell</i>
kihati <i>sneeze</i>	njihati <i>sway, wobble</i>
klesati <i>chisel</i>	pisati <i>write</i>
kresati <i>trim</i>	puhati <i>blow</i>
jahati <i>ride (animal)</i>	sisati <i>suck</i>
mahati <i>wave</i>	

The following verbs have change **g** or **z** → **ž**, e.g. **rezati** (**reže**):

kazati <i>say, tell</i>	puzati <i>crawl</i>
klizati <i>slide, skate</i>	rezati <i>cut</i>
lagati <i>lie, tell lies</i>	stizati <i>arrive, make on time</i>
lizati <i>lick</i>	vagati <i>weigh</i>
mazati <i>spread (on bread, skin)</i>	vezati <i>tie</i>
pomagati <i>help</i>	

(to be expanded)

Vowel-root

This class is the simplest one historically, there's just **-ti** in infinitive and **-je** in *pres-3*:

	<i>inf</i>	<i>pres-3</i>	<i>past-m</i>
vowel-root	-ti	-j-e	-o

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:

	<i>inf</i>	<i>pres-3</i>	<i>past-m</i>	<i>past-f</i>
s-root	-s-ti	-s-e	-s-a-o	-s-la
st-root	-s-ti	-st-e	-st-a-o	-s-la
b-root	-ps-ti	-b-e	-b-a-o	-b-la
z-root	-s-ti	-z-e	-z-a-o	-z-la
d/t-root	-s-ti	-d-e	-o	-la
	-s-ti	-t-e	-o	-la

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. **odrastiti** (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:

	<i>inf</i>	<i>pres-3</i>	<i>past-m</i>	<i>past-f</i>
k/g-root	-ći	-č-e	-k-a-o	-k-la

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*):

<i>inf</i>	vu-ći
<i>pres-3</i>	vu-će
<i>pres-3pl</i>	vu-ku
<i>past-m</i>	vu-kao
<i>past-f</i>	vu-kla
<i>imper-2</i>	vu-ci
<i>pass. adj.</i>	vu-čen

Such verbs are (only infinitives are listed for brevity):

obući perf. <i>wear</i> (clothes)	teći <i>flow</i>
peći <i>bake</i>	tući <i>beat</i>
reći perf. <i>say</i>	vući <i>pull</i>
sjeći (sijeće) <i>cut</i>	

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:

odra sti (odra ste)
ispe ći (ispe će)
obu ći (obu će)

All these classes have the *aor-1* in **-oh**, with their historic final consonants:

	<i>inf</i>		<i>aor-1</i>
d/t-root	pojesti	<i>pres-3</i>	pojede pojed-oh
k/g-root	reći	<i>past-m</i>	rekao rek-oh

In *aor-23*, the consonant before the ending **-e** changes like in *pres* forms:

rekoh *aor-1* → **reće** *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) <i>pick</i> (fruits)	srati (sere) <i>shit</i> (impolite!)
klati (kolje) <i>slaughter</i>	slati (šalje) <i>send</i>
prati (pere) <i>wash</i>	zvati (zove) <i>call</i>

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) <i>curse</i>	naduti (nadme) perf. <i>bloat</i>
mljeti (melje) <i>mill</i>	oteti (otme) perf. <i>hijack</i>
žeti (žanje) <i>rip, harvest</i>	uzeti (uzme) perf. <i>take</i>

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**) **se**² perf. *climb*
raspeti (**raspne**) perf. *crucify*
zpeti (**zapne**) perf. *stumble*

-suti (**-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 (**pad**ne, **pao**) perf. *fall*
sjesti (**sjed**ne, **sjeo**) perf. *sit*
sresti (**sret**ne, **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 (**-bjeg**ne, **-bjegao**, **-bjegla**):
izbjeći (**izbjeg**ne, **izbjegao**, **izbjegla**) perf. *avoid*
pobjeći (**pobjeg**ne, **pobjegao**, **pobjegla**) perf. *run away*
leći (**leg**ne, **legao**, **legla**) perf. *lie (down)*
pomoći (**pomog**ne, **pomogao**, **pomogla**) perf. *help*
stići (**stig**ne, **stigao**, **stigla**) perf. *arrive (on time)*
dići (**dig**ne, **digao**, **digla**) perf. *raise*
 also **dignuti** (**dig**ne)
nići (**nik**ne, **nikao**, **nikla**) perf. *sprout*
 also **niknuti** (**nik**ne)
pući (**puk**ne, **pukao**, **pukla**) perf. *break, burst*
 also **puknuti** (**puk**ne)
taći (**tak**ne, **takao**, **takla**) perf. *touch*
 also **taknuti** (**tak**ne)

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 (**-đe**, **-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*:

<i>inf</i>	biti	htjeti	moći
<i>past-m</i>	bio	htio	mogao
<i>past-f</i>	bila	htjela	mogla
<i>pres-1</i>	sam ²	ću ²	mogu
<i>pres-1</i>	si ²	ćeš ²	možeš
<i>pres-3</i>	je ²	će ²	može
<i>pres-1pl</i>	smo ²	ćemo ²	možemo
<i>pres-2pl</i>	ste ²	ćete ²	možete
<i>pres-3pl</i>	su ²	će ²	mogu
<i>imper-2</i>	budi	—	—

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 of 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:

Order of second-position words

li²

bih², **bi**², **bismo**², **biste**² (conditional verb)

sam², **si**², **smo**², **ste**², **su**² (all except **je**²)

ću², **ćeš**², **će**², **ćemo**², **ćete**²

mi², **ti**², ... (pronouns in DL)

me², **te**², ... (pronouns in A and G)

se²

je² (usually left out if **se**² is present)

Before second-position words, there's one or more words in the "first position".

Words like **i**¹, **ni**¹ and **a**¹ (which all translate as *and*), prepositions (e.g. **u**¹, **na**¹, **pod**¹, etc.) and the negative particle **ne**¹ 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:

Hold the 1st position: *never* split

preposition + word	U sobi je hladno. <i>It's cold in the room.</i>
--------------------	---

ne" + verb	Ne bojim se. <i>I'm not afraid.</i>
------------	---

These "phrases", where one noun is described by another, are very rarely split:

Hold the 1st position: *very rarely* split

noun + za" + noun in A	Četka za kosu je u ladici. <i>The hairbrush is in the drawer.</i>
------------------------	---

noun + na" + noun in A	Igračke na baterije su jeftine. <i>Battery-powered toys are cheap.</i>
------------------------	--

noun + od" + noun in G	Sok od naranče je u frižideru. <i>The orange juice is in the fridge.</i>
------------------------	--

noun + noun in G	Kraj filma je glup. <i>The end of the movie is stupid.</i>
------------------	--

These "phrases" are very rarely split in speech, but you can see them split in formal writing:

Hold the 1st position: *split in formal writing*

adjective(s) + noun	Moj stari prijatelj je ovdje. <i>My old friend is here.</i>
---------------------	---

preposition + adjective(s) + noun	U mojoj sobi je hladno. <i>It's cold in my room.</i>
-----------------------------------	--

names	Ivana Horvat je ovdje. <i>Ivana Horvat is here.</i>
-------	---

time expressions	Godina dana je prošla. <i>A year passed.</i>
------------------	--

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)

U mojoj je sobi hladno. (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

intensity adverb + adverb		Jako dugo je čekala. <i>She waited for a very long time.</i>
number + noun		Troje ljudi te čeka. <i>Three people are waiting for you.</i>
quantity + noun		Puno ljudi te čeka. <i>A lot people are waiting for you.</i>
baš <i>absolutely</i> skoro <i>almost</i>	adverb	Skoro uvijek je hladno. <i>It's cold almost always.</i>
	+ pronoun/ adjective	Baš svi su ovdje. <i>Absolutely everybody is here.</i>

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:

Trava¹ je² mokra [jer¹ 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 [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 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:

Vowel length	
short vowel	a
long vowel	ā

This holds also for "vocalic" **r**: there's long **ř** ; however I will mark it as **ř̄**, 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:

	short vowel	long vowel
falling stress		
rising stress		

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):

	sing.	plur.
N	<u>lonac</u>	<u>lōnci</u>
G	<u>lōncā</u>	<u>lonācā</u>

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:

	"A"	"B"	"C"
N	ri ba	že <u>na</u>	vo <u>da</u>
DL	ri bi	že <u>ni</u>	vo <u>di</u>
G	ri bē	žē <u>nē</u>	vo <u>dē</u>
A	ri bu u-ri bu	ž <u>enu</u> u- ž <u>enu</u>	vo du u-vo <u>du</u>
V	ri bo	ž <u>e</u> no	vo <u>do</u>
NA-pl	ri be	ž <u>e</u> ne	vo <u>de</u>

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:

Neoštokavian stress shift		
centuries ago	ž<u>e</u>na	→ ž<u>e</u>na
we see today	po + ri bu	→ po-ri bu

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 <i>plank</i>	srijēda <i>Wednesday</i>
grāna <i>branch</i>	strijēla <i>arrow</i>
grēda <i>wooden beam</i>	srna <i>fem. roe deer</i>
igla <i>needle</i>	stijēna <i>rock</i>
kosa <i>hair (on scalp)</i>	strāna <i>side</i>
metla <i>broom</i>	vōjska <i>army</i>
ovca <i>sheep</i>	zora <i>dawn</i>
pčela <i>bee</i>	zīma <i>winter</i>
pēta <i>heel</i>	zvijēzda <i>star</i>
rosa <i>dew</i>	

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 <i>soul</i>	rūka <i>arm/hand</i>
glāva <i>head</i>	voda <i>water</i>
noga <i>leg</i>	zemlja <i>ground, country, Earth</i>

(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':

	'west'	'east'
<i>you can</i>	moreš	možeš
<i>four men/boys</i>	četvero	čtvoro

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;

'Štokavian': SL - Slavonian, WI - Western Ikavian, HK - Herzegovina-Krajina (East Herzegovinian), EB - East Bosnian, ŠV - Šumadija-Vojvodina, SM - Smederevo-Vršac, ZS - Zeta-Sandžak, KR - Kosovo-Resava;

'Torlak': PM - Prizren-South Morava, TL - Timok-Lužnica.

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	ə	ö	l r
e	ë	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 **sllnce** and *hand* was **rööka**.

Developments of the old vowels **ě** and **ə** – 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 **ë** 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 **o** are used instead of my **ë** 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](#)).

Then, we need marks for various types of stress. I'll use the following marks for stress and tones within *one* syllable:

<u>a</u>	short, stressed
<u>aa</u>	long stressed vowel with a falling tone
<u>aa</u>	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:

<u>a...a</u>	short stressed	+ a high tone following it
<u>aa...a</u>	long stressed	

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):

aa = ā (–)	aa = ǣ (˜)
a = ǎ (\\)	a...a = ǎ...a (\\)
aa = ā (^)	aa...a = á...a (/)

Therefore, what I write as e.g. **öö** is in most linguistic works written as **q** 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 of 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:

mlěēko <i>milk</i>	kljuuč <i>key</i> (G kljuuča)
röōka <i>hand</i>	sestra <i>sister</i> (G-pl sestər)
větər <i>wind</i>	ženā <i>woman, wife</i> (A ženö)

(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:

short		long/diphtongs	
i	u	ii	uu
e		ie ee	uo ou
	o		oo
ɛ	a	ɛɛ	aa

The vowel **ɛ** – 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 **ę**, which is not visible on all devices, or sometimes **æ**).

Vowels **ie**, **uo**, **ou** are *diphtongs*, 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 **i[˥]e**, **u[˥]o**, **o[˥]u**.

Unfortunately, long vowels **ii**, **ɛɛ** are too usually written just with **i** and **e**. Here are a couple of words with various vowels:

- dietɛ** *child* (**djete**, usually spelled **dijete**)
- mɛɛse** *meat* (**meso**)
- rouka** *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):

	e, ě	ě	ə	o	ö	l
short	ɛ	e	e	^o -e	u	ou
long	ɛɛ	ie	ie aa	oo uo	ou	ou

Many ‘Kajkavian’ dialects (but not all) have **-e** instead of **-o** in all neuter nouns and adjectives in neuter gender, i.e. **sɛɛle** *village* vs. std. **selo**.

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 → **žēna** *woman, wife*

viino → **vijno** *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 **ć** 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 **mr~~z~~** *frost* is actually pronounced as **s**, while the pronunciation of genitive **mr~~z~~a** 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:

	sing.	plur
1st	-m	-mε
2nd	-š	-tε
3rd	-	-ju

(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 **latinica** *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:

original	Serbian spelling	
New York	Njujork	Њујорк
George Bush	Džordž Buš	Џорџ Буш
Chicago	Čikago	Чикаго

The second difference is spelling of the future tense. When an infinitive in **-t** is immediately followed by an auxiliary **ću², ćeš²...** it’s spelled together, and the infinitive-final **-t** is discarded, with possible sound mutations:

Croatian	Serbian	
pisat ću	pisaću	писаћу
jest ću	ješću	јешћу
reći ću	reći ću	рећи ћу

This is, however, merely a spelling convention: the words **ću²**, **ćeš²** 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 **mlijeko**, Ikavian has **mliko** and Ekavian **mleko** for *milk*.

People usually associate Ekavian (**mleko**, **pesma**) and not Ijekavian (**mlijeko**, **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:

verb	Ijekavian	Ekavian
<i>heat</i>	grijati (grije)	grejati (greje)
<i>laugh</i>	smijati (smije) se²	smejati (smeje) se²
<i>hate</i>	mrziti	mrzeti (mrzi)
<i>sit</i>	sjediti	sedeti (sedi)
<i>be worth</i>	vrijediti	vredeti (vredi)

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*:

verb	Ijekavian	Ekavian
<i>want</i>	htjeti (hoće +, htio , htjela)	hteti (hoće +)
<i>see</i>	vidjeti (vidi, vidio , vidjela)	videti (vidi)
<i>understand</i>	razumjeti (razumije,...)	razumeti
<i>may</i>	smjeti (smije, smio , smijela)	smeti

The Ekavian verbs **razumeti** and **smeti** 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*, **primljen** *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:

word	Ijekavian	Ekavian
<i>part</i>	dio (dijel-)	deo (del-)
<i>last year</i>	lani	lane
<i>lazy</i>	lijen	lenj

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**:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>deaf</i>	gluh	gluv
<i>dry</i>	suh	suv
<i>fly (insect)</i>	muha	muva
<i>cook (verb)</i>	kuhati	kuvati
<i>son's wife</i>	snha	snja

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**:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>salt</i>	solf	so (sol-) f
<i>table</i>	stol	sto (stol-) m
<i>ox</i>	vol	vo (vol-) m
<i>evening</i>	večer f	veče (večer- f)
<i>yesterday</i>	jučer	juče
<i>also</i>	takočer	takoče

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:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>who</i>	tko	ko
<i>someone</i>	netko	neko
<i>what</i>	što	šta

In *some* words there's **su** in Croatian vs. **sa** in Serbian, while in others there's no difference; common examples are:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>cooperation</i>	sur<u>a</u>dnja	sar<u>a</u>dnja
<i>consent</i>	sug<u>l</u>asnost f	sag<u>l</u>asnost f
<i>conflict</i>	sukob	
<i>contents</i>	sadržaj	

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:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>bladder</i>	mje<u>h</u>ur	beška
<i>week</i>	tjedan (tjedn-)	nedjelja nedelja sedmica
<i>island</i>	otok	ostrvo
<i>pants, trousers</i>	hlače f pl.	pantal<u>o</u>ne f pl.
<i>farmer's market</i>	tržnica	pijaca
<i>floor (of a building)</i>	kat	sprat
<i>wave</i>	val	talas
<i>handbag, purse</i>	torba	tašna
<i>wheel (not to steer)</i>	kotač	točak (točk-)
<i>condition, prerequisite</i>	uvjet	uslov
<i>air</i>	zrak	vazduh

Some words are only slightly different:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>eyeglasses</i>	naočale f pl.	naočari f. pl.
<i>price-list</i>	cjenik	cjenovnik cenovnik
<i>salary</i>	plaća	plata
<i>point, dot</i>	točka	tačka
<i>priest</i>	svećenik	sveštenik
<i>physician (m)</i>	liječnik	ljekar lekar
<i>physician (f)</i>	liječnica	ljekarka lekarka
<i>coal</i>	ugljen	ugalj (uglj-)

There are also different terms related to modern life:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>factory</i>	tvornica	fabrika
<i>football</i>	nogomet	fudbal
<i>train</i>	vlak	voz
<i>movie theatre</i>	kino	bioskop
<i>mobile phone</i>	mobitel	mobilni (adj.)

Especially, terms related to cooking, food, and standard house items show numerous differences; these terms are often completely unknown outside their 'territory':

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>green beans</i>	mahune f pl.	boranija
<i>apricot</i>	marelica	kajsija
<i>bread</i>	kruh	hljeb hleb
<i>beans</i>	grah	pasulj
<i>rice</i>	riža	pirinač
<i>carrot</i>	mrkva	šargarepa
<i>leek</i>	poriluk	praziluk
<i>vinegar</i>	ocat (oct-)	sirće (sirćet-)
<i>soup</i>	juha	supa
<i>spoon</i>	žlica	kašika
<i>cup (of tea, coffee)</i>	šalica	šolja
<i>scissors</i>	škare f pl.	makaze f pl.
<i>towel</i>	ručnik	peškir

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*:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>hydrogen</i>	vodik	vodonik
<i>oxygen</i>	kisik	kiseonik
<i>nitrogen</i>	dušik	azot
<i>tin</i>	kositar (kositr-)	kalaj
<i>gas</i>	plin	gas
<i>liquid</i>	tekućina	tečnost
<i>(chem.) compound</i>	spoj	jedinjenje
<i>(chem.) solution</i>	otopina	rastvor
<i>cell (in biology)</i>	stanica	ćelija
<i>mammal</i>	sisavac (sisavc-)	sisar
<i>rat</i>	štakor	pacov
<i>camel</i>	deva	kamila
<i>science</i>	znanost	nauka

However, *prison cell* is just **ćelija** in both Croatian and Serbian. Croatian uses **obitelj** 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:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>triangle</i>	trokut	trougao (troughl-)
<i>rule (to draw lines)</i>	ravnalo	lenjir
<i>straight line</i>	pravac (pravc-)	prava
<i>curve</i>	krivulja	kriva
<i>sum</i>	zbroj	zbir
<i>degree</i>	stupanj (stupnj-)	stepen
<i>equation</i>	jednadžba	jednačina
<i>lecture, class in school</i>	sat	čas
<i>class (group of students)</i>	razred	odjeljenje odeljenje

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):

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>accent</i>	akcent	akcenat (akcent-)
<i>fascist</i>	fašist	fašista
<i>flu</i>	gripa	grip
<i>casette</i>	kazeta	kaseta
<i>mayonnaise</i>	majoneza	majonez
<i>orange</i>	naranča	narandža / pomorandža
<i>chimp</i>	čimpanza	šimpanza
<i>clown</i>	klaun	klovn

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-**:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>chemistry</i>	kemija	hemija
<i>chaos</i>	kaos	haos
<i>chlorine</i>	klor	hlor
<i>surgeon</i>	kirurg	hirurg
<i>labyrinth</i>	labirint	lavirint
<i>ocean</i>	ocean	okean

Some regions, countries and cities also have different names, sometimes the difference is slight:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>Athens</i>	Atena	Atina
<i>Babylon</i>	Babilon	Vavilon
<i>Cyprus</i>	Cipar (Cipr-)	Kipar (Kipr-)
<i>Europe</i>	Europa	Evropa
<i>Persia</i>	Perzija	Persija
<i>The Netherlands</i>	Nizozemska (adj.)	Holandija
<i>Romania</i>	Rumunjska (adj.)	Rumunija
<i>Spain</i>	Španjolska (adj.)	Španija

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**:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>Parisian</i>	pariški	pariski
<i>Tunisian</i>	tuniški	tuniski

Words related to government, having the suffix **-kracija** in Croatian, have **-kratija** in Serbian:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>bureaucracy</i>	birokracija	birokratija
<i>democracy</i>	demokracija	demokratija

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:

term	Croatian	Serbian & Croatian
<i>library</i>	knjižnica	biblioteka
<i>machine</i>	stroj	mašina
<i>music</i>	glazba	muzika
<i>system</i>	sustav	sistem

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:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>university student (f)</i>	studentica	studentkinja
<i>doctor (f)</i>	doktorica	doktorka
<i>teacher (f)</i>		učiteljica
<i>mathematician (f)</i>		matematičarka

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:

term	Croatian	Serbian
<i>common</i>	opći	opšti
<i>happy, lucky</i>	sretan (srećn-)	srećan (srećn-)
<i>used</i>	korišten	korišćen
<i>secure, safe</i>	siguran (sigurn-)	bezbjedan (-n-) bezbedan (-n-)

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
<i>define</i>	definirati («)	defini sati (-še)
<i>formulate</i>	formulirati («)	formuli sati (-še)
<i>generate</i>	generirati («)	generi sati (-še)
<i>function</i>	funkcionirati («)	funkcioni sati (-še)
<i>ignore</i>	ignorirati («)	ignori sati (-še)
<i>integrate</i>	integrirati («)	integri sati (-še)
<i>intervene</i>	intervenirati («)	interven i sati (-še)
<i>manage, oversee</i>	kontrolirati («)	kontrol i sati (-še)
<i>operate</i>	operirati («)	operi sati (-še)
<i>reform</i>	reformirati («)	reformi sati (-še)
<i>reserve</i>	rezervirati («)	rezervi sati (-še)
<i>tolerate</i>	tolerirati («)	toleri sati (-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 («) <i>analyze</i>	planirati («) <i>plan</i>
diplomirati («) <i>graduate</i> (on univ.)	studirati («) <i>study</i> (on univ.)
kopirati («) <i>copy</i>	šokirati («) <i>shock</i>
kreirati («) <i>create</i>	trenirati («) <i>train</i>
maskirati («) <i>mask</i>	varirati («) <i>vary</i>
parkirati («) <i>park</i> (a car)	etc.

Also, some Croatian **-irati** verbs correspond to Serbian ones in **-ovati** (**-uje**). Common ones are:

verb	Croatian	Serbian
<i>improvise</i>	improvizirati («)	improviz ovati (-uje)
<i>isolate</i>	izolirati («)	izol ovati (-uje)
<i>combine</i>	kombinirati («)	kombin ovati (-uje)
<i>compensate</i>	kompenzirati («)	kompenz ovati (-uje)
<i>modernize</i>	modernizirati («)	moderniz ovati (-uje)
<i>organize</i>	organizirati («)	organiz ovati (-uje)
<i>pack</i>	pakirati («)	pak ovati (-uje)

When such verbs have **-ćirati** in Croatian, they have **-kovati** in Serbian:

verb	Croatian	Serbian
<i>disinfect, sanitize</i>	dezinficirati («)	dezinfikovati (-uje)
<i>identify</i>	identificirati («)	identifikovati (-uje)
<i>complicate</i>	komplikirati («)	komplikovati (-uje)
<i>modify</i>	modificirati («)	modifikovati (-uje)

Occasionally, there's a non-trivial correspondence to Croatian **-irati** verbs:

verb	Croatian	Serbian
<i>comment</i>	komentirati («)	komentarisati (-še)

Many recently adapted verbs – mostly colloquial – often have just **-ati** in Croatia vs **-ovati** (-uje) in Serbia:

verb	Croatian	Serbian
<i>like</i> (on Facebook)	lajkati	lajkovati (-uje)
<i>surf</i>	surfati	surfovati (-uje)
<i>strike</i> (in workplace)	štrajkati	štrajkovati (-uje)

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:

verb	Croatian	Serbian
<i>be silent</i>	šutjeti / šutiti	ćutati (ćuti)
<i>move, shift</i>	pomicati (pomiće) ~ pomaknuti (pomakne)	pomjerati («) ~ pomjeriti pomerati («) ~ pomeriti
<i>mention</i>	spominjati ~ ¹ spomenuti (spomene)	pominjati ~ ¹ pomenuti (pomene)
<i>watch, look at</i>	promatrati («)	posmatrati («)

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):

form	Croatia (.hr)	Bosnia (.ba)	Serbia (.rs)
Želim da kažem	0.2	54	116
Želim reći	74	51	10
Želim da idem	0	24	45
Želim ići	12	4	0.3

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 **đ** in Montenegrin:

word	Croatian	Montenegrin
<i>where</i>	gdje	đe
<i>nowhere</i>	nigdje	nide
<i>girl</i>	djevojka	đevojka

Recently the Montenegrin alphabet introduced two additional letters: **đ** and **ž** (there are Cyrillic versions as well) for specific consonants heard in speech there – but they are rarely used in real life.

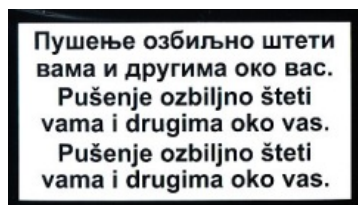
It has been observed that Montenegrin public media have recently started to use more Croatian forms than before.

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):



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):

Ana *	Ivana	Ljubica	Nina
Anamarija	Ivona	Lucija *	Paola
Andreja ¹	Jadranka	Magdalena	Patricija
Antonija ¹	Jana	Maja	Petra *
Anita	Jasmina	Marija *	Renata
Anja	Jelena	Marijana	Sandra
Arijana ¹	Karla *	Marina	Sanja
Barbara	Kata	Marta *	Sara *
Branka	Katarina	Martina *	Snježana
Brankica	Katica	Maša	Silvija
Dora *	Klara	Mateja *	Suzana
Dunja	Kristina	Mia *	Tanja
Elena	Ksenija	Mihaela	Tamara
Ema *	Lana *	Mirjana	Tea *
Eva	Laura *	Mirna	Tena
Gabrijela	Lea *	Monika	Tihana
Hana	Leona	Morana	Tina
Gordana	Leonarda	Nada	Valentina
Helena	Lidija	Natalija	Vedrana
Irena	Lorena	Nika *	Vesna
Iva	Lucija *	Nikolina	Željka

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:

Dolores	Erin	Iris	Nives
Doris	Ines *	Karmen	Meri
Eli	Ingrid	Natali	Stefani

These are common male names ending in a consonant:

(under construction)

Alen	Dragan	Krešimir	Mladen
Antun	Dragutin	Kristijan	Petar (Petr-)
Branimir	Filip *	Krunoslav	Patrik

Damir	Fran *	Leon *	Stjepan
Davor	Goran	Marijan	Tin *
Danijel	Igor	Marin	Tomislav
Dejan	Ivan *	Matej	Vedran
David *	Jakov	Mihael	Vladimir
Domagoj	Jan *	Milan	Zoran
Dominik *	Josip	Miroslav	Zvonimir

There are male names like **Rene** that behave as if ending in a consonant (A **Renea**, 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	Leo	Mirko	Vlatko
Hrvoje	Marko *	Roko	Zlatko
Jadranko	Mateo *	Silvije	Žarko
Karlo	Matko	Slavko	Željko

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	Ivica	Luka	Nikola *
Borna	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	Duje	Jure	Mato
Braco	Edo	Krešo	Mišo
Bruno	Frano	Kruno	Pero
Dado	Franjo	Lovro *	Stipe
Dino	Ive	Ljubo	Tomo
Drago	Ivo	Mate	Vlado

(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:

Amerikan|ac (-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:

Dan|ac (-c-) ~ -kinja

There's yet another common scheme for nouns, where male noun is always *shortened* in plural forms, the 'in/ka scheme':

Kanađanin (N-pl Kanađani) ~ Kanađanka

Observe that the stress is the same in male and female noun. I'll write just:

Kanađan|in (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:

country/region (→ adjective)	inhabitants, male ~ female
<i>Austria</i> Austrija → austrijski	Austrijan -ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Britain</i> Britanija → britanski	Britan -ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Belgium</i> Belgija → belgijski	Belgijan -ac (-c-) ~ -ka Belgij -ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Bosnia</i> Bosna → bosanski	Bosan -ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Bulgaria</i> Bugarska (adj.)	Bugar -in (N-pl -i) * ~ -ka
<i>Croatia</i> Hrvatska (adj.)	Hrvat ~ Hrvatica
<i>Cyprus</i> Cipar (Cipr-) → ciparski	Cipran -in (N-pl -i) ~ -ka
<i>Czech Rep.</i> Češka (adj.)	Čeh ~ Čehinja
<i>Denmark</i> Danska (adj.)	Dan -ac (-c-) ~ -kinja
<i>England</i> Engleska (adj.)	Englez ~ Engleskinja
<i>Finland</i> Finska (adj.)	Fin -ac (-c-) ~ -kinja
<i>France</i> Francuska (adj.)	Francuz ~ Francuskinja
<i>Germany</i> Njemačka (adj.)	Nijemac (Nijemc-) ~ Njemica
<i>Greece</i> Grčka (adj.)	Grk ~ Grkinja
<i>Hungary</i> Mađarska (adj.)	Mađar ~ Mađarica
<i>Ireland</i> Irska (adj.)	Ir -ac (-c-) ~ -kinja
<i>Iceland</i> Island → islandski	Islandan -in (N-pl -i) ~ -ka
<i>Italy</i> Italija → talijanski ^{w1}	Talijan ~ Talijanka
<i>Netherlands</i> Nizozemska (adj.)	Nizozem -ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Norway</i> Norveška (adj.)	Norvežan -in (N-pl -i) ~ -ka
<i>Poland</i> Poljska (adj.)	Poljak ~ Poljakinja
<i>Portugal</i> Portugal → portugalski	Portugal -ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Russia</i> Rusija → ruski	Rus ~ Ruskinja
<i>Romania</i> Rumunjska (adj.)	Rumunj ~ Rumunjka
<i>Scotland</i> Škotska (adj.)	Škot ~ Škotkinja
<i>Serbia</i> Srbija → srpski	Srbin * ~ Srpkinja
<i>Slovakia</i> Slovačka (adj.)	Slovak ~ Slovakinja

country/region (→ adjective)	inhabitants, male ~ female
<i>Slavonia</i> Slovenija → slovenski	Sloven ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Spain</i> Španjolska (adj.)	Španjol ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Sweden</i> Švedska (adj.)	Švedan in (N-pl -i) ~ -ka
<i>Switzerland</i> Švicarska (adj.)	Švicar ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Turkey</i> Turska (adj.)	Turčin * ~ Turkinja
<i>Wales</i> Vels → velški	Velšan in (N-pl -i) ~ -ka

These are common countries and regions outside Europe:

country/region (→ adjective)	inhabitants, male ~ female
<i>Africa</i> Afrika → afrički	Afrikan ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>America</i> Amerika → američki	Amerikan ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Arabia</i> Arabija → arapski	Arapin * ~ Arapkinja
<i>Brazil</i> Brazil → brazilski	Brazil ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Canada</i> Kanada → kanadski	Kanađan in (N-pl -i) ~ -ka
<i>Chile</i> Čile m → čileanski	Čilean ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>China</i> Kina → kineski	Kinez ~ Kineskinja
<i>Egypt</i> Egipat (Egipt-) → egipatski	Egipćan in (N-pl -i) ~ -ka
<i>India</i> Indija → indijski	Indij ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Japan</i> Japan → japanski	Japan ac (-c-) ~ -ka

These are major regions within Croatia:

region (→ adjective)	inhabitants, male ~ female
<i>Dalmatia</i> Dalmacija → dalmatinski	Dalmatin ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Istria</i> Istra → istarski	Istrijan ~ Istrijanka Istran in (N-pl -i) ~ -ka
<i>Cro. Littoral</i> Primorje → primorski	Primor ac (-c-) ~ -ka
<i>Slavonia</i> Slavonija → slavonski	Slavon ac (-c-) ~ -ka
Zagorje → zagorski	Zagor ac (-c-) ~ -ka

All masc. nouns that end in **-in** lose that ending in plural; furthermore, the noun **Turčin** *Turk* has specific forms in plural:

N	Srbin	Turčin
A	Srbina	Turčina

N-pl	Srbi	Turci
DLI-pl	Srbima	Turcima
A-pl	Srbe	Turke
G-pl	Srba	Turaka

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).

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:

Bak ar (-r-)	Krk	Pula
Belišće	Kutina	Rab
Benkov ac (-c-)	Kutjevo	Rije ka (DL -ci)
Bjelovar	Labin	Rov inj
Buje	Lepoglava	Samobor
Buzet	Lipik	Senj
Cres	Ludbreg	Sinj
Crikvenica	Makarska (adj.)	Sis ak (-c-)
Čab ar (-r-)	Metković	Skrad in
Čakov ec (-c-)	Našice f pl.	Slatina
Čazma	Nin	Slunj
Daruvar	Novalja	Sol in
Delnice f pl.	Novigrad	Split
Drniš	Novska (adj.)	Supet ar (-r-)
Dubrovnik	Obrov ac (-c-)	Šibenik
Đakovo	Ogulin	Trilj
Đurđev ac (-c-)	Om iš	Trogir
Garešnica	Opatija	Um ag
Glina	Opuzen	Valpovo
Gospić	Orahovica	Vara ždin
Hvar	Oroslavje	Vinkovci m pl.
Ilok	Osijek	Virov itica
Imotski (adj.)	Otoč ac (-c-)	Vis
Ivan ec (-c-)	Otok	Vodice f pl.
Jastrebarsko (adj.)	Oz alj (-lj-)	Vodnjan
Karlov ac (-c-)	Pag	Vrbov ec (-c-)
Kast av (-v-)	Pakrac	Vrbovsko (adj.)
Kaštela n pl.	Pazin	Vrgor ac (-c-)
Klanj ec (-c-)	Petrinja	Vrli ka (DL -ci)
Knin	Pleternica	Vukovar
Komiža	Ploče f pl.	Zabok
Koprivnica	Popovača	Zad ar (-r-)
Korčula	Poreč	Zagreb
Kraljevica	Požega	Zaprešić
Krapina	Pregrada	Zlatar

Križevci m pl. Prelog Županja

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:

A<u>t</u>ena Athens	Bukure<u>š</u>t 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	Torino Turin
Milano Milan	Moskva Moscow	Varšava Warsaw

Some major cities in Europe have slightly specific pronunciation in Croatian:

Berlin London Madrid Pariz

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

Pariz → 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 → riječki
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)
m ^a	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 (m^a and f) are listed in a way that the generic noun comes first. For example, **prijatelj** m^a stands for *both* masculine and generic *friend*; the same holds for **lav** m^a *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-) m^a *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](#)

anđeo (anđel-) m^a *angel*

· anđeoski rel. adj.

Amerikanac (Amerikanc-) m^a *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 (besplatan-) adj. *free, offered without payment*

bez prep. (+ G) *without*

bezbrizan (bezbrizn-) 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*

· bistrina f *transparency*

biti (je² +; imper-2 budi) ~ (bude) v.p. *be* (many uses)

bježati (bježi) ~ pobjeći (pobjegne,

pobjegao, pobjegla) v.p. *escape; run away from* DL

blagajna f *cash register* (na[~] l/d) {B/S: kasa}

blagajnik m^a *cashier*

· blagajnica f

blato n *mud*

· blatan (blatan-) adj. *muddy*

blizak (blisk-) adj. (comp. bliži) *close*

· blizina f *closeness*

blizu adv. *close; (+ G) close to*

boca f *bottle*

bog m^a *god*

· božica f *goddess*

· božji rel. adj.

bogat adj. *rich*

· bogatstvo n *richness, plenty*

bogataš m^a *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)

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bojati (boji) se² impf. *be afraid (of G)* § [69](#)
bol f (sometimes m) *pain (pl usually bolovi m)* § [25](#)
bolan (boln-) adj. *painful*
bolest f *illness, disease*
bolesnik m^a *ill person, patient*
 · **bolesnica** f
 · **bolesnički** rel. adj.
bolestan (bolesn-) adj. *ill*
bolnica f *hospital*
 · **bolnički** rel. adj.
boljeti (boli, bolio, boljela) impf. *hurt*
 (the person who experiences pain is in A) § [27](#)
bolji adj. comp. *better*; → [dobar](#)
bor m *pine tree*
borac (borc-) m^a *fighter*
borba f (G-pl **borbi**) *fight*
boriti se² impf. *fight*; (s l) *fight with l*;
 (protiv G) *fight against G*
brada f *chin; beard*
brak m *marriage*
 · **u braku** pred. *married*
 · **bračni** rel. adj. *marital*
brana f *dam*
braniti ~ **o-** («) v.p. A / **se**² (**od G**)
defend (A / oneself) (from G)
brašno n *flour*
brat m^a *brother*; as pl. **braća** (coll.) § [40](#)
bratić m^a *male cousin* (female:
sestrična)
brava f *lock*
brdo n *hill*
 · **brdski** rel. adj.
brijati (brije) ~ **o-** v.p. *shave A* / **se**²
briga f *concern, worry*
brinuti (brine) (se²) impf. *worry*; (**za A**)
care (about A); (**o DL**) *care (about DL)*
 § [69](#)
brisati (briše) ~ **po-**, **iz-** v.p. (A) *delete*,
erase (A)
brod m *ship*
 · **brodski** rel. adj.
broj m *number, count*

brojati / brojiti (broji) ~ **iz-** («) v.p.
count (brojati is more common,
 although **brojiti** is Standard)
brz adj. (comp. **brži**) *fast*
 · **bržina** f *speed*
 · **na bržinu** *at first glance; on short*
notice
bubreg m *kidney*
 · **bubrežni** rel. adj.
bučan (bučn-) adj. *noisy*
budala f *fool*
budan (budn-) adj. *awake*
buditi ~ **pro-** («) v.p. *wake up A*; **se**²
wake up
buka f *noise*
bunar m *well*
bura f *strong wind on the Croatian*
coast, coming from inland
bušiti ~ **pro-** («) / **iz-** («) v.p. *drill*,
perforate (A)

C

car m^a (N-pl **carevi**) *emperor*
 · **carica** f *empress*
 · **carski** rel. adj.
cesta f *road (na[~] l/d)* {l: **cista**}
cijeli adj. *whole* {E: **ceo**}
 · **cjelina** f *the whole, entirety*
cijena f *price*
cilj m *aim; finishing line*
 · **ciljni** rel. adj.
cipela f *shoe*
crkva f *church*
 · **crkveni** rel. adj.
crn adj. *black* § [11](#)
crt f *line*
crtati ~ **na-** v.p. *draw* (a sketch,
 drawing)
crtež m *drawing (na[~] l/d)*
crv m^a (N-pl **crvi**) *worm*
crven adj. *red*
cura f (colloq.) *girl, girlfriend* (more
 formal: **djevojka**)
 · **curica** f (colloq.) *little girl*
curiti ~ **is-** («) v.p. *drip, leak*

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
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cvijet (N-*pl* **cvjetovi**) m *flower*

· **cvijeće** n coll.

· **cvjetni** rel. adj.

Č

čaj m *tea* (**na**ː act.)

· **čajni** rel. adj.

čak adv. *even, more than expected*

čamac (**čamac-**) m *small boat*

čarapa f *sock, stocking*

čaroban (**čarobn-**) adj. *magic, magical*

čarobnjak m^a *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

čekić m *hammer*

čelik m *steel*

· **čelični** adj.

čep m *cork*

čest adj. (comp. **češći**) *frequent*

čestitati («) impf. (DL) (**na**ː DL) *congratulate* (DL) (on DL)

čestitka f *greeting card*

češati (**češe**) ~ **po-** («) v.p. *scratch A* (only to remove itch; to leave marks: **grebati**)

češalj (**češlj-**) m (N-*pl* **češljevi**) *comb*

češljati ~ **po-** v.p. *comb A* / **se**²

češnjak m *garlic*

četiri number 4

četdeset number 40

četvero number *four people* § 47

četvorica coll. *four men* § 68

četvrtak (**četvrtk-**) m *Thursday*

četvrti adj. *fourth* § 31

· **četvrt** f *quarter*

· **četvrtina** f *quarter*

činiti impf. *do, make A* (**raditi** is more common); **se**² *seem*; impers. **se**² (DL) **da...** *it seems (to DL) that...*

čist adj. (comp. **čišći**) *pure, clean*

· **čistoća** f *cleanliness*

čistiti ~ **o-** 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 m^a *human, man*; as pl. **ljudi** m pl. § 29

čući (**čuči**) ~ **čućnuti** (**čućne**) v.p. *crouch*

čudan (**čudn-**) adj. *strange*

čuditi ~ **za-** v.p. *astonish A*; **se**² *be astonished (by DL)*; **se**² **da...** *be astonished that...*

čudo n (N-*pl* **čuda** / **čudeša**) *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 m^a *guard*

· **čuvarica** f

čvrst adj. (comp. **čvršći**) *sturdy, robust, firm*

· **čvrstoća** f *firmness*

čvor m *knot*

Ć

ćelav adj. *bald*

· **ćelavost** f *baldness*

ćevap m *nugget of grilled minced meat, traditional Bosnian fast food*

· **ćevapčić** m the same thing as **ćevap**

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

[K](#)

[L](#)

[LJ](#)

[M](#)

[N](#)

[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

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*

· **daljina** f *distance*

dan m (N-pl **dani**) *day*

· **danas** adv. *today* § [18](#)

· **današnji** adj. *today's* § [76](#)

dar m *gift*

· **na dar** pred. *as a gift*

darivati («) ~ **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. **deblji**) *thick; fat* (for people/animals)

· **debljina** f *thickness*

deset number 10

desni adj. *right* (opp. to *left*)

detalj m *detail*

· **detaljni** rel. adj.

devet number 9

dijeliti ~ **po-** («) (**na** A1) *divide* A (to A1); (**s** I, DL) *share* (with I, DL)

dijete (djetet-) 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 ~¹ **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); **se**² *raise, get off bed*

dječak m^a (formal) *boy*

· **dječaćki** rel. adj.

djed m^a *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*

dlan m *palm* (of hand)

dnevni adj. *daily*

dnevnik m *diary; daily newspaper; major evening TV news* (**na** I/d)

dno n *bottom* (**na** I/d)

do prep. (+ G) *next to* G; *up to* G § [21](#)

dobar (dobr-) adj. (comp. **bolji**) *good*

dobivati («) ~ **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...*); **se**² (**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*

[A](#)[B](#)[C](#)[Č](#)[Ć](#)**D**[DŽ](#)[Đ](#)[E](#)[F](#)[G](#)[H](#)[I](#)[J](#)[K](#)[L](#)[LJ](#)[M](#)[N](#)[NJ](#)[O](#)[P](#)[R](#)[S](#)[Š](#)[T](#)[U](#)[V](#)[Z](#)[Ž](#)

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** (**donesē**, **donio**, **donijela**) v.p. *bring A (to DL)* § [65](#)

· **donesen** pass. adj. *brought*

doprinos m *contribution*

doprinositi («) ~ **doprinijeti** (**doprinese**, **doprinio**, **doprinijela**) v.p. *contribute (to DL)*

dopust m *vacation* (**na**ː act.)

dopuštati («) ~ **dopustiti** («) v.p. *allow* (A); **da**... *allow* (DL) *to*... (see also:

dozvoljavati)

· **dopušten** pass. adj. *allowed*

doručak (**doručk-**) m *breakfast* (**na**ː act.)

dosadan (**dosadn-**) adj. *boring*

dosta adv. *enough; quite a lot*

· **dosta je** DL G = DL *has enough of G*

dostupan (**dostupn-**) adj. *accessible*

· **dostupnost** f *accessibility*

dovoditi («) ~ **dovesti** (**doveđe**, **doveo**, **dovela**) v.p. *bring A (to DL)* § [65](#)

· **doveđen** pass. adj. *brought*

dovoziti («) ~ **dovesti** (**doveze**, **doveo**, **dovela**) v.p. *bring, drive A / se*² (to DL) § [65](#)

dovršavati ~ **dovršiti** v.p. *complete A* (see also: **završavati**)

· **dovršen** pass. adj. *completed*

dozvola f *permission*

dozvoljavati («) ~ **dozvoliti** («) v.p. *allow* (A) (see also: **dopuštati**)

drag adj. (comp. **draži**) *dear*

drugачije / **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*

dugačak (**dugačk-**) adj. (no comp.) *long*

duh m^a *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.

dvorište n *courtyard, yard* (**na**ː / **u**ː l/d)

· **dvorišni** rel. adj.

dvostruk adj. (no comp.) *double*

DŽ

džamija f *mosque*

džem m *jam*

džep m *pocket*

· **džepni** rel. adj.

Đ

đak m^a (N-pl **đaci**) *pupil*

· **đački** rel. adj.

đon m *sole* (of e.g. shoe)

E

ekipa f *team, crew*

· **ekipni** rel. adj.

ekran m (TV) *screen* (**na**ː l/d)

električan (**električn-**) adj. *electric*

emitirati («) impf. *emit, broadcast* (A)

Englez m^a *Englishman*

· **Engleskinja** f *Englishwoman*

· **Engleska** f (adj.) *England*

· **engleski** adj. *English*

eno pres. (+G) *there's G (over there)!* §

[22](#)

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

[K](#)

[L](#)

[LJ](#)

[M](#)

[N](#)

[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

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**ː act.)

· **fakultetski** rel. adj.

fen m *hairdryer*

film m *movie, film* (**na**ː media, l/d)

· **filmski** rel. adj.

fin adj. *subtle, fine*

· **finoća** f *refinement*

Francuz m^a *Frenchman*

· **Francuskinja** f *Frenchwoman*

· **Francuska** f (adj.) *France*

· **francuski** adj. *French*

frizer m^a *hairdresser*

· **frizerka** f

· **frizerski** rel. adj.

· **frizerski salon** *hairdresser's*

frižider m (colloq.) *fridge* (used almost always, although Standard is **hladnjak**)

G

galeb m (colloq. inland) *mid-day meal, usually when at work* {colloq. coast:

marenda; Standard: **užina**}

gaće f pl. *underpants*

· **gaćice** f pl. *panties*

gadan (gadn-) adj. *nasty, disgusting*

gađati impf. *aim* (at A)

galama f *fuss, uproar*

galeb m^a (N-pl **galebovi** / rare **galebi**) *gull, seagull*

garaža f *garage*

· **garažni** rel. adj.

gasiti ~ u- («) v.p. *extinguish* A; se² *smother*

gazda m^a *landlord, owner* (of a shop, bar etc.)

· **gazdarica** f

gdje adv. *where* § [15](#) {M: **đe, gđe**}

glad f *hunger*

· **gladan** (gladn-) adj. *hungry*

glas m *voice*

glasan (glasn-) adj. *loud*

· **glasnoća** f *loudness*

glava f *head*

· **glavni** adj. *capital, main, principal*

gledati ~ po- v.p. *watch* A

· **gledan** pass adj. *watched*

gluh adj. (no comp.) *deaf*

· **gluhocā** f *deafness*

glumac (glumc-) m^a *actor*

· **glumica** f *actress*

· **glumački** rel. adj.

glup adj. (comp. **glupliji**) *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**ː l/d)

golem adj. (no comp.) *enormous, gigantic*

golub m^a (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, gorio, gorjela**), also **goriti** ~ iz- («) v.p. *burn*

gospodar m^a *master*

· **gospodarica** f *mistress*

gospodin m^a *mister* (polite title) [g.] § [72](#)

· **gospođa** f *madam* [gđa]

· **gospođica** f *miss* [gđica]

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

[K](#)

[L](#)

[LJ](#)

[M](#)

[N](#)

[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

gost m^a (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.
govor m *speech*
 · **govorni** 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)
građanin m^a (N-pl **građani**) *citizen, city dweller*
 · **građanka** f
 · **građanski** adj. *civil*
grah m *bean(s)*
grana f *branch*
 · **granski** 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*
grijež m (N-pl **grijesi** / **grijevovi**) *sin*
griješiti ~ **po-** («) v.p. *err, make mistake, sin*
grijati (**grije**) ~ **za-** / **z-** v.p. *warm up* A / **se**² (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 / **se**² (to peel "skin", orange, potato...; for *onions*: **ljuštiti**)
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*
 · **gustoća** f *density*
gušter m^a *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 (**hladn-**) adj. *cold*
 · **hladno je** DL = DL *is cold*
 · **hladnoća** f *cold*
hladiti ~ **o-** («) v.p. *cool* A; *make* A *cooler*; **se**² *cool* + mediopass. (opposite: **grijati**)
hladnjak m (formal) *fridge* (rare; usually colloq. **frižider** m is used)

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
G
[H](#)
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[LJ](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[NJ](#)
[O](#)
[P](#)
[R](#)
[S](#)
[Š](#)
[T](#)
[U](#)
[V](#)
[Z](#)
[Ž](#)

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 / **se**²
 · **hranjiv** adj. *nutritious*

hrpa f *pile, heap*

Hrvat m^a *Croat* (person)
 · **Hrvatica** f
 · **hrvatski** adj. *Croatian*
 · **Hrvatska** f (adj.) *Croatia*

hvala f *thank you* (polite word)

hvatati ~ **uhvatiti** v.p. *catch* (A)

I

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 m^a *player*
 · **igračica** f

igračka f *toy*

igrati ~ **od-** v.p. *play* A (sport); **se**² (s I) *play* (with I); also mutual **se**²

ili conj. *or* § [55](#)

imati impf. (negative: **nemati**) *have* A (used also in existential constructions)

ime (imen-) n (pl **imen-**) *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 («) ~ **iskoristiti** («) 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](#)
 · **ispravljen** pass. adj. *corrected*

ispravak (ispravk-) 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*

ispuštati («) ~ **ispuštiti** («) v.p. *drop* A, *emit* A (gas, sound)
 · **ispušten** pass. adj. *left out, dropped*

isti adj. (no comp.) *same*

isticati (ističe) ~ **istaći** (istakne, istakao, istakla) / **istaknuti** (istakne) v.p. *emphasize* A; **se**² *stand out*
 · **istaknut** pass. adj. *distinguished, standing out*

istina f *truth*

istinit adj. *true*

istok m *east* (**na** I/d)
 · **istočni** adj. *eastern*

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
H
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[LJ](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[NJ](#)
[O](#)
[P](#)
[R](#)
[S](#)
[Š](#)
[T](#)
[U](#)
[V](#)
[Z](#)
[Ž](#)

istraži**ivati** (-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 m^a/f *refugee*
 · **izbjeglički** adj.
izbliza adv. *closely, from close distance*
izbor m *choice*
 · **izbori** m pl. *elections* (na" act.)
izbrisati perf. → **brisati**
 · **izbrisan** 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 ~ **izaći** (**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*
izmišljati («) ~ **izmisлити** 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*
iznenadivati (-uje «) ~ **iznenaditi** («) v.p. (s l) *surprise* A / **se²** (with l)
 · **iznenaden** pass. adj. *surprised*
 · **iznenađenje** n *surprise*
iznimka f *exception*
izračunati perf. → **računati**
 · **izračunat** pass. adj. *calculated, computed*
izradivati (-uje «) ~ **izraditi** 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
izvještaj m *report*
izvlačiti («) ~ **izvući** (**izvuće**, *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)
 · **izvođen** 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 (**izvrsn-**) adj. *excellent*
izvršavati («) ~ **izvršiti** («) v.p. *execute, complete* A

J

ja (+) pron. *I* (1st. pers. sg.) § [22](#), [34](#)
jabuka f *apple*
 · **jabučni** adj.

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jadan (**jadn-**) adj. *miserable*
jadnik m^a *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*
jeftin adj. *cheap* (opposite: **skup**)
jelen m^a *deer*
jelo n *meal, dish*
jelovnik 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.
jež m^a *hedgehog; (sea) urchin*
još 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 m^a *hero*
 · **junakinja** f
 · **junački** adj.

jutro n *morning*
 · **jutros** adv. *this morning* § 18
 · **jutrošnji** adj. *this morning's* § 76
jug m *south* (**na**ː 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 (**kašlje**) impf. *cough*
kat m *floor* (in a buiding, e.g. first, second; ground floor: **prizemlje**) {B/S: **sprat**} § 31
katkad adv. *from time to time*
kava f *coffee* (**na**ː act.) {B/S: **kafa**}
kazna f *penalty, punishment*
kazati (**kaže**) impf. (**da...**) *tell* (DL) (*that...*)
kažnjavati («) ~ **kazniti** v.p. (**na**ː 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**) ~¹ **kihnuti** (**kihne**) v.p. *sneeze*

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kino n *cinema* {B/S: **bioskop**}

kip m *statue*

kipući adj. (no comp.) *boiling*

kiseo (kisel-) / **kisel** adj. *sour, acidic*
 · **kiseljina** f *acid*

kiša f *rain* (**na**ː met.)
 · **kišni** adj. *rainy*

kišiti impf. *rain* (much more often:
padati + **kiša**)

kladiti se² ~ **o-** v.p. (s l) (**da...**) *bet (with l) (that...)*

klinac (klinc-) m^a (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*
 · **kokošji** rel. adj.

kolač m *cake*

kolica n pl. *cart; wheelchair*

količina f *quantity*

kolik adj. (no comp.) *how big*

koliko adv.q. *how much/many* § [8](#), [40](#)

kolodvor m *main (train, bus) station* (**na**ː l/d)
 · **kolodvorski** rel. adj.

kolovoz m (formal) *August* {B/S: **avgust**} § [31](#)
 · **kolovoški** adj.

koljeno n *knee* § [27](#)

komad m *piece* [**kom.**] {S: **parče** (**parčet-**) n} § [47](#)

konačno adv. *finally, eventually*

konj m^a (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 m^a *user*
 · **korisnica** f
 · **korisnički** rel. adj.

korist f *utility, effect, use*

koristan (korisn-) adj. *useful*

koristiti ~ **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**)

koža f *skin, leather*
 · **kožni** rel. adj.

krasti (krade, krao) ~ **u-** («) v.p. (**od G**) *steal* (A) (from G)

krađa f *theft*

kraj m *end; part of land* (**na**ː l/d)
 · **na kraju** *finally*
 · **krajnji** rel. adj. *ultimate*

kralj m^a *king*
 · **kraljica** f *queen*
 · **kraljevski** rel. adj.

krasan (krasn-) adj. *splendid, wonderful*

kratak (kratk-) adj. (comp. **kraći**) *short*

krava f *cow*
 · **kravlji** 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. **krivlji**) *wrong; guilty* § [79](#); *curved*

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

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[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

krivac (**krivc-**) m^a *culprit, guilty one*

kriviti ~ **o-** («) v.p. A *blame*

križ m *cross* {B/S: **krst**}

· **križni** rel. adj.

krov m *roof* (**na**ː l/d)

· **krovni** rel. adj.

krpa f *rug*

krug m *circle*

· **kružni** rel. adj. *circular*

kruh m *bread*

· **krušni** rel. adj.

k^{ru}mpir m *potato* (also often: **k^{ro}mpir**)

kruna f *crown*

· **krunski** rel. adj.

krupan (**krupn-**) adj. *massive, sturdy*

krv f *blood*

· **krvni** rel. adj.

krvav adj. *bloody, covered with blood*

kucati ~ **po-** v.p. (**na** A) *knock (on A)*

kuća f *house*

· **kućni** rel. adj.

kuhar m^a *cook, chef*

· **kuharica** f (also means *cookbook*)

· **kuharski** rel. adj.

kuhati ~ **s-** v.p. *cook* (A); mediopass.

kuhinja f *kitchen*

· **kuhinjski** rel. adj.

kum m^a *godfather; wedding witness*

· **kuma** f *godmother*

kuna f *marten; Croatian money* [**kn**]

kupac (**kupc-**) m^a *customer, buyer*

kupati ~ **o-** («) v.p. *bathe* A / **se**²

· **kupaće** (**gaćice** / **gaće**) *swimming*

briefs § [80](#)

· **kupaći** (**kostim**) *bathing costume* § [80](#)

kupovati (**kupuje**) ~ **kupiti** v.p. (**od** G)

buy (A) (*from* G)

· **kupljen** pass. adj. *bought*

kušati impf. *taste* A

kut m (N-pl also **kutevi**) *angle; corner*

{B/S: **ugao** (**ugl-**)}

· **kutni** rel. adj.

kutija f *box*

kvar m *breakdown, defect*

kvariti ~ **po-** («) v.p. *spoil* A; **se**² *get spoiled, break* (e.g. car)

L

labud m^a (N-pl **labudovi**, rare **labudi**) *swan*

· **labuđi** 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-**)}

· **lakoća** f *ease*

lanac (**lanc-**) m *chain*

· **lančan** rel. adj.

lav m^a *lion*

· **lavica** f

· **lavlji** rel. adj.

laž f *lie*

lažan (**lažn-**) adj. *fake*

led m *ice*

· **leden** adj. *icy*

leđa n pl. *back* (body part), *backside*

· **leđni** rel. adj.

leptir m^a *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:

lijegati)

lice n *face* {B/S: also *person*}

lječiti ~ **iz-** («) v.p. *heal* (A)

· **lječen** pass. adj. *treated*

liječnik m^a *physician*

· **liječnica** f

· **liječnički** rel. adj.

lijek m (N-pl **lijekovi**) *medicine, drug*

lijen adj. *lazy* {S: **lenj**}

· **lijenost** f *laziness*

lijep adj. (comp. **ljepši**) *beautiful, nice*

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

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[G](#)

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[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

lijepiti ~ **za-** («) v.p. (**za** A1) *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 (**lipnj-**) m (formal) *June* {B/S: **jun / juni**} § [31](#)

lisica f *fox*

· **lisac** (**lisc-**) m^a

· **lisički** 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** (**oktobr-**)}

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*

lopov m *thief*

· **lopovski** rel. adj.

lopta f *ball*

loš adj. *bad*

lov m *hunt*

lova f (slang) *money*

lovac (**lovč-**) m^a *hunter*

loviti ~ **u-** («) v.p. *hunt, catch* (A)

lud adj. (comp. **luđi**) *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*

luralica m^a/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*; I: **lito**}

· **ljetni** rel. adj.

· **ljetos** adv. *this summer*

· **ljetošnji** rel. adj. *this summer's*

ljetoovati (**ljetuje**) impf. *spend summer*

ljubav f (I also **ljubavju**) *love*

· **ljubavni** rel. adj.

ljubazan (**ljubazn-**) adj. *polite, gentle*

· **ljubaznost** f *gentleness*

ljubičast adj. (no comp.) (Std) *violet* {colloq.: **lila**}

ljubiti ~ **po-** («) v.p. *kiss* A

· **ljubljen** pass. adj. *kissed; beloved*

ljudi m pl. (G-pl **ljudi**) *men, people*

(used as pl. of **čovjek**)

· **ljudski** rel. adj. *human*

ljuljačka f *swing* (**na** I/d)

ljuljati ~ **za-** («) v.p. *swing, sway* A / **se**²

ljuštiti ~ **o-** («) v.p. *husk, scale, peel* (see also: **guliti**)

ljuska f *scale; shell* (of e.g. egg, onion; sea shell: **školjka**)

ljut adj. *hot* (taste), *spicy; angry*

· **ljut na** A pred. *angry with* A

ljutiti ~ **na-** («) v.p. **se**² (**na** A) *be angry* (with A); *make* A *angry, provoke*

M

mač m *sword*

mačić m^a *kitten* {B/S: **mače** (**mačet-**)}

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
[H](#)
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[R](#)
[S](#)
[Š](#)
[T](#)
[U](#)
[V](#)
[Z](#)
[Ž](#)

mačka *f* **cat**

· **mačak** (**mačk-**) *m*^a

· **mačji** *rel. adj.*

magarac (**magarc-**) *m*^a **donkey**

· **magarica** *f*

· **magareći** *rel. adj.*

magla *f* **fog, mist**

· **maglovit** *adj. foggy*

mahati (**maše**) *impf. wave (to DL)*

majica *f* (**T**)-**shirt**

majka *f* (**DL majci**) **mother**

majmun *m*^a **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)*

· **manjina** *f* **minority**

marenda *f* (*colloq. coast*) **small meal**
(**na**ː *act.*) {*colloq. inland: galebac*; *Std: užina*}

marka *f* (*postal*) **stamp; mark**
(*currency*); **brand**

maslac *m* **butter** {*colloq./B/S: putar*
(**putr-**)}

maslina *f* **olive**

· **maslinov** *rel. adj.*

· **maslinast** *olive-colored*

mast *f* **grease, fat**

mastan (**masn-**) *adj. fatty*

· **masnoća** *f* **fat** (e.g. in food)

maziti ~ **po-** («) *v.p. pet, gently stroke*
*A; se*² **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 *m*^a **bear**

· **medvjedica** *f*

· **medvjeđi** *rel. adj.*

· **medvjeđa usluga** *disservice*

među *prep. (+ l) among*

međunarodni *adj. (no comp.)*

international

međutim *adv. however*

mesnica *f* **meat shop**

meso *n* **meat**

· **mesni** *rel. adj.*

metla *f* **broom**

mi (+) *pron. 1st pers. pl., we* § 22, 34

micati (**miće**) ~ **maknuti** (**makne**) *v.p.*
*move A / se*²

· **maknut** *pass. adj. moved, removed*

mijenjati ~ **izmijeniti** («) / **promijeniti**
(«) *v.p. change, exchange A/se*²

miješati ~ **iz-** («) / **pro-** («) *v.p. mix, stir*
(*A*); *se*² (**u**ː *A*) *interfere (with A)*

· **miješan** *pass. adj. mixed, assorted*

minuta *f* **minute** [**min.**] {*B/S: also*
minut}

· **minutni** *rel. adj.*

mir *m* **peace**

· **miran** (**mirn-**) *adj. peaceful*

miris *m* **smell**

· **mirisan** (**mirisn-**) *adj. having pleasant*
scent

mirisati (**miriše**) ~ **za-** *vp. (na*ː *A)*
*smells (of A); po*ː *DL smell like DL*

mirovati (**miruje**) *impf. rest, be still*

mirovina *f* (*Std*) **pension**; {*colloq./B/S:*
penzija} (see also: **umirovljenik**)

· **mirovinski** *rel. adj.*

misa *f* **mass** (*Christian ritual*)

misao (**misl-**) *f* (*I also mišlju*) **thought**

misлити *impf. (o DL) think (about DL);*
da... think that...

· **mišljenje** *n* **opinion**

miš *m*^a **mouse**

· **mišji** *rel. adj.*

mišić *m* **muscle**

· **mišićni** *rel. adj.*

· **mišićav** *adj. muscular*

mjehurić *m* **bubble**

mjenjačnica *f* **exchange office**

mjera *f* **measure**

· **mjerni** *rel. adj.*

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

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[L](#)

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M

[N](#)

[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

mjeriti ~ **iz-** v.p. *measure* A
mjesec m (G-pl **mjeseci**) *moon; month* [mj.]
 · **mjesečni** rel. adj. *monthly*
mješavina f *mixture*
mlad adj. (comp. **mlađi**) *young*
 · **mladost** f *youth*
 · **mladi** m pl. (adj.) *young people*
mladić m^a *young man, boyfriend* {colloq. NW: **dečko**}
mlaz m (N-pl **mlazovi** / **mlazevi**) *jet*
 · **mlazni** rel. adj.
mlijeko n *milk*
 · **mliječni** rel. adj.
mljeti (**melje**) ~ **sa-** v.p. *mill, grind* A
 · **mljeven** pass. adj. *ground*
mnogo adv. *a lot, many*
 · **množina** f *plural* (in grammar)
močiti ~ **s-** v.p. *wet* A; **se**² *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*
molba f *plea; application*
moliti ~ **za-** («) v.p. (**da...**) *kindly ask* A (to...); **se**² (DL) (**da...**) *pray* (to DL) (to...); **molim** is used as *please* in communication
molitva f *prayer*
momak (**momk-**) m^a (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 m^a *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)*
mrak m *darkness*
mrav m^a (N-pl **mravi**) *ant*
 · **mravlji** rel. adj.
mreža f *net, mesh* {I: **mriža**}
 · **mrežni** rel. adj.
 · **mrežast** adj. *net-like*
mrkva f *carrot* {S: also **šargarepa**}
mrlja f *spot, stain*
mršav adj. *thin* (person, animal), *skinny*
mrtav (**mrtv-**) adj. (no comp.) *dead*
mrziti ~ **za-** («) *hate* A {E: **mrzeti** (**mrzi**)} § 32
 · **mržnja** f *hate*
mudar (**mudr-**) adj. *wise*
 · **mudrost** f *wisdom*
muha f *fly* {HL: **muva**}
muka f *suffering*
munja f *lightning*
muški adj. (no comp.) *masculine, male*
 · **muškost** f *masculinity*
mušterija m^a/f *client*
muž m^a *husband*

N

na“ 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. (+ I) *above*
nada f *hope*
nadati se² impf. **da...** *hope that...* § 59;
hope for DL

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naginjati (**naginje**) ~ **nagnuti** (**nagne**)
v.p. *incline* A; mediopass.
· **nagnut** pass adj. *tilted, not horizontal or vertical*
naгло adv. *suddenly*
nagrada f *prize, award*
· **nagradni** rel. adj.
nagrađivati (-uje «) ~ **nagraditi** («) v.p.
award A; mediopass;
· **nagrađen** pass adj. *awarded*
nahrniti («) perf. → **hraniti**
· **nahranjen** pass. adj. *fed*
naivan (**naivn-**) adj. *gullible, naive*
· **naivnost** f *gullibility*
nakon prep. (+ G) *after*
nalaziti ~ **naći** (**nađe, našao, našla**) v.p.
find A; **se**² *be located, be found* (+ some place) § **42**
· **nađen** pass. adj. *found*
namjera f *intention*
· **namjeran** (**namjern-**) adj. *intentional*
namjeravati («) impf. *intend to-INF*
namještaj m (no pl.) *furniture*
naočale f pl. *glasses* {S: **naočare** f pl.}
· **sunčane naočale** *sunglasses*
naopako adv. *upside down*
napisati (**napiše**) perf. → **pisati**
· **napisan** pass. adj. *written*
napokon adv. *finally, at last*
napor m *strain, effort*
naporan (**naporn-**) adj. *arduous, grueling, difficult*
napuniti perf. → **puniti**
· **napunjen** pass. adj. *filled up*
napuštati («) ~ **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.

naručivati (-uje «) ~ **naručiti** («) v.p. (od G) *order* (A) (*from* G) (e.g. to order food, goods; for military orders:
zapovijedati, naredivati)
· **naručen** pass. adj. *ordered*
narudžba f *commission, order*
naselje n *settlement, newly built part of a city*
nasilan (**nasiln-**) adj. *violent*
· **nasilje** n *violence*
naslov m *title*
nastajati (**nastaje**) ~ **nastati** (**nastane**)
v.p. *come into being* § **52**
nastavljati ~ **nastaviti** v.p. *continue* (to-INF) § **60**
· **nastavak** (**nastavk-**) m *continuation, sequel*
nastup m *performance, act*
nastupati («) ~ **nastupiti** («) v.p. *act, come into effect*
naticati (**natiče**) ~ **nateći** (**nateče, pres-3pl nateku; natekao, natekla**) v.p. *swell*
· **natečen** pass. adj. *swollen*
natpis 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 **nebesa / neba**) *sky* (na” l/d)
· **nebeski** rel. adj.
nećak m^a *nephew*
· **nećakinja** f *niece*
nedavni adj. *recent*
nedavno adv. *recently*
nedjelja f *Sunday* {B/S: also *week*)
· **nedjeljni** rel. adj.

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nedostajati (nedostaje) impf. *lack, miss* (who or what is missing is in N; one who feels it is in DL) § [23](#)

nedostatak (nedostatk-) m *lack, shortage; imperfection*

negdje adv. *somewhere* § [41](#)

nejasan (nejasn-) 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** {**imati**}

nemoguć adj. *impossible*

nemoj verb having only imperative, used for prohibitions § [53](#)

neobičan (neobičn-) adj. *unusual*

nepoznat adj. *unknown*

nepravda f *injustice*

nepravilan (nepraviln-) adj. *irregular*

· **nepravilnost** f *irregularity*

neprestano adv. *constantly*

neprijatelj m^a *enemy*

· **neprijateljski** rel. adj.

nered m *mess, disarray, chaos*

nesposoban (nesposobn-) adj. *incompetent*

· **nesposobnost** f *incompetence*

nesreća f *accident* {**nesreća**}

nesretan (nesretn-) adj. *unhappy; unlucky*

nestajati (nestajem) ~ nestati

(**nestane**) v.p. *disappear*

nestrpljiv adj. *impatient*

nešto (neč- +) pron. *something* § [41](#)

netko (nek- +) pron. *somebody* {colloq./B/S: **neko**} § [41](#)

neugodan (neugodn-) adj.

inconvenient, unpleasant

· **neugodnost** f *inconvenience, something unpleasant*

nevidljiv adj. *invisible*

nezaboravan (nezaboravn-) adj.

unforgettable

nezgoda adj. *accident*

ni / niti conj. *neither* (negation of **i**)

nigdje adv. *nowhere* § [41](#)

nijedan (nijedn-) 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*

· **noćasnji** 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**}

nokat (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 m^a *journalist*

· **novinarka** f

· **novinarski** rel. adj.

nož m *knife*

nuditi ~ **po-** v.p. *offer* A (to DL)

nužan (nužn-) adj. *necessary*

· **nužnost** f *necessity*

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
[H](#)
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[LJ](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[NJ](#)
[O](#)
[P](#)
[R](#)
[S](#)
[Š](#)
[T](#)
[U](#)
[V](#)
[Z](#)
[Ž](#)

NJ

njega *f care*

njegov *pass. 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 / **se**²

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.*

oba *number both* § 30

obadva *number (colloq.) both* § 30

obavijest *f notice, information*

obaviještavati («) ~ **obavijestiti** («) *v.p.*
da... *inform (A) that...; (o* *DL) informs*
(A) *(about L)*

· **obaviješten** *pass. adj. informed,*
notified

obećavati (« / often *pres-3 obećaje*) ~
obećati *v.p. (da...) promise (DL) (to...)*

· **obećan** *pass. adj. promised*

· **obećanje** *n promise*

običaj *m tradition, custom*

objavljivati (-uje «) ~ objaviti («) *v.p.*
publish A (to DL); da... proclaim (to DL)
(that...) (see also: **izdavati**)

· **objavljen** *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 («) ~ **obučiti (obuće, pres-3pl**
obuku; obukao, obukla) *v.p. put on A*
(clothes); *dress A / se*² (opposite:

svlačiti) § 8

oblik (oblik-) *m shape*

obožati / obožiti *perf. → božati*

· **obožan / obojen** *pass. adj. colored*

obožavati («) *impf. adore, worship* A

· **obožavanje** *n adoration*

obožavatelj *m³ 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*

obučiti *perf. → oblačiti*

· **obučen** *pass. adj. dressed, trained*

ocat (oct-) *m vinegar* {colloq. *coast:*
kvasina; S: *sirće* *n (sirćet-)*}

ocjena *f grade (in school), assessment*
(in Croatia, grades are 1-5, where 5 is
the highest grade)

očekivati (-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

odabrati (odabere) *perf. → birati*

· **odabran** *pass. adj. chosen*

odakle *adv. where from* § 21

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

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[P](#)

[R](#)

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[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

odbijati («) ~ **odbiti** (**odbije**) v.p. *refuse*
 A; *repel* A (an attack)
 · **odbijen** pass. adj. *refused, not accepted*
odgađati («) ~ **odgoditi** («) v.p.
postpone A; mediopass.
 · **odgođen** pass. adj. *postponed*
 · **odgodiv** adj. *which can be postponed*
odgovarati («) ~ **odgovoriti** («) v.p.
answer DL; *suit, fit* DL;
 · **odgovarajući** pres. adj. *suitable*
odgovor m *answer*
odjeća f (no pl.) *clothes* § 30
odjednom adv *suddenly*
odlaziti ~ **otići** (**ode**, **otišao**, **otišla**) v.p.
leave (from a place) § 42
odletjeti (**odletim**, **odletio**, **odletjela**)
 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*
odrasti perf. → **rasti**
 · **odrasao** (**odrasli**-) adj. *grown-up*
odsjeći perf. → **sjeći**
 · **odsječen** 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

oglas m *ad*
ograda f *fence, barrier*
ograničavati («) ~ **ograničiti** v.p. *restrict*
 A
 · **ograničen** pass. adj. *restricted,*
confined; narrow-minded
ogrebat perf. → **grebat**
 · **ogreban** pass. adj. *scratched*
ogroman (**ogromn-**) adj. *huge*
oguliti («) perf. → **guliti**
 · **oguljen** pass. adj. *peeled*
ohladiti («) perf. → **hladiti**
 · **ohladen** pass. adj. *chilled*
oko prep. (+ G) *around; (+ A) about*
 (time)
oko n *eye* (as pl. **oči** f pl.) § 27
 · **očni** rel. adj.
okolo prep. (+ G) *around*
okretati (**okreće**) ~ **okrenuti** (**okrene**)
 v.p. *turn* A / **se**²
 · **okrenut** pass. adj. *turned*
okrutan (**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 ~¹ **osjetiti** v.p. *feel* (A); *da... feel*
that...
osjetljiv *sensitive*
 · **osjetljivost** f *sensitivity*
oslobađati («) ~ **osloboditi** («) v.p. *free*
 A / **se**²
 · **osloboden** pass. adj. *freed, set free*
osnivati («) ~ **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**}
osobina f *characteristic*

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ostajati (ostaje) ~ **ostati** (ostane) v.p.

remain, stay § [52](#)

· **ostali** adj. (often as pron.) *rest*

osudjivati (-uje «) ~ **osuditi** («) v.p. (na⁻ A1) *sentence, judge* (A) (to A1)

· **osuđen** pass. adj. *sentenced, condemned*

osvećivati (-uje «) **se**² ~ **osvetiti se** («) v.p. *revenge* (to DL)

osveta f *revenge*

osvježavati («) ~ **osvježiti** v.p. *freshen, refresh* A / **se**²

· **osvježen** pass. adj. *refreshed*

· **osvježenje** n *refreshment*

oštar (oštr-) adj. *sharp*

· **oštrina** f *sharpness*

otac (oc-) m^a (N-pl **očevi**, sometimes **oci**) *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 / **se**²

· **otkriven** pass. adj. *discovered; uncovered*

otok m *island* (na⁻ l/d) {B/S: **ostrvo**}

· **otočni** rel. adj.

otpor m *resistance*

otporan (otporn-) adj. *tough, resistant, sturdy*

· **otpornost** f *toughness, immunity*

otvarati («) ~ **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-) m^a (N-pl **ovnovi**)

· **ovčji** rel. adj.

ozbiljan (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)

ožujak (**ožujk-**) 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*

pametn (**pametn-**) 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.

par m *pair* § [47](#)

par adv. *couple* § [45](#)

para f *steam*

· **parni** rel. adj.

parkiralište n *parking lot*

parkirati («) ~ **s-** v.p. *park* (vehicle) (A)

pas (**ps-**) m^a *dog*

· **pseći** adj.

· **pasji** rel. adj.

patiti ~ **pro-** («) v.p. *suffer*

· **patnja** f *suffering*

patka f *duck*

· **patak** (**patk-**) m^a

· **pačji** rel. adj.

pauk m^a *spider*

paziti impf. *take care, be careful*

· **pažnja** f *care, attention*

· **pažljiv** adj. *careful*

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

[K](#)

[L](#)

[LJ](#)

[M](#)

[N](#)

[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

pčela *f bee*
peč *f stove, furnace*
pečí (**peče**, *pres-3pl* **peku**; **pekao**, **pekla**) ~ **js-** (») *v.p. bake (A)*;
 mediopass.
 · **pečen** *pass. adj. baked*
pečnica *f oven*
penjati (**penje**) **se**² ~ **popeti** (**popne**)
se² *v.p. (na`` A) climb (A)*
pero *n feather*
 · **perje** *n coll. feathers*
pet *number 5*
peta *f heel*
petak (**petk-**) *m Friday*
piće *n (usually no pl.) drink*
pijesak (**pijesk-**) *m sand*
 · **pješčan** *rel. adj.*
pile (**pilet-**) *n (as pl. pilići) chicken*
 · **pileći** *rel. adj.*
pisac (**pisc-**) *m^a 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 *m^a poet*
 · **pjesnikinja** *f*
 · **pjesnički** *rel. adj. poetic*
pješice (also: **pješke**) *adv. by foot, on foot*
pjevač *m^a singer*
 · **pjevačica** *f*
 · **pjevački** *rel. adj.*
pjevati ~ **ot-** ~ **za-** *v.t. sing (A) (to DL)*
plahla *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*
plavi *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``** *I victory over I*
pobjednik *m^a winner*
 · **pobjednica** *f*
 · + **nad``** *I over I*
pobjeđivati (**-uje** «) ~ **pobjediti** («) *v.p. (u`` DL) win (in DL); (u`` DL) beat A (in DL)*
 · **pobjeđen** *pass. adj. beaten (in a play)*
pobjeći *perf. → bježati*
početak (**početak-**) *m beginning (na`` l/d)*
počinjati (**počinje**) ~ **početi** (**počne**) *v.p. begin, start; start to INF (opposite: prestajati, završavati) § 52*

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
[H](#)
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[LJ](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[NJ](#)
[O](#)
[P](#)
[R](#)
[S](#)
[Š](#)
[T](#)
[U](#)
[V](#)
[Z](#)
[Ž](#)

pod m *walking surface, floor (story:*

kat)

pod prep. (+ l) *under (location); (+ A) under (destination)* § [37](#)

podne (podnev-) n *noon*

· **podnevni** rel. adj.

podsjecati ~ **podsjetiti** v.p. (na A1) *remind (A) (of A1); da... remind (A) to...*

pogađati («) ~ **pogoditi** («) v.p. *hit A; guess (A) (opposite: promašivati)*

· **pogođen** pass. adj. *hit, affected*

pogled m *look, view*

pogledati perf. → [gledati](#)

pogodak (pogotk-) m *hit (music hit: hit)*

pogriješiti («) perf. → [griješiti](#)

pojesti (pojede, pojео) perf. → [jesti](#)

· **pojedен** 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)*

poklopac (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) ~ **pomoći (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 m^a *assistant, aid, helper*

· **pomoćnica** f

pomorac (pomorc-) m^a *seaman*

ponavljati («) ~ **ponoviti** («) v.p. *repeat, do again A; mediopass;*

· **ponovljen** pass. adj. *done again*

· **ponovljiv** adj. *repeatable*

ponijeti (ponese, ponio, ponijela) perf. *take A (with oneself)* § [65](#)

ponoć f *midnight*

· **ponoćni** rel. adj.

ponos m *pride*

ponosan (ponosn-) adj. *proud*

popravak (popravk-) m *repair*

popis m *list*

popiti (popije) perf. → [piti](#)

· **popijen** pass. adj. *drunk (intoxicated: pijan)*

popravlјati ~ **popraviti** v.p. *mend, fix, repair A; mediopass. improve* § [79](#)

· **popravljen** pass. adj. *repaired*

posao (posl-) m (N-pl *poslovi*) *job, business*

· **poslovni** adj. *business*

poseban (posebn-) adj. *special, extraordinary (opposite: običan)*

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

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[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

posjećivati (-uje «) ~ **posjetiti** v.p. *visit* A

poslati (**pošalje**) 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 m^a *postman*

· **poštarica** f

pošten adj. *honest, fair*

· **poštenje** n *fairness, integrity*

pošteno adv. *fairly, justly; to great extent, thoroughly*

poštovati (**poštuje**) impf. *respect* A

· **poštovan** pass. adj. *respected* (used in letters to address people) § 72

· **poštovanje** n *respect* (used also as greeting)

potonuti (**potone**) perf. → **tonuti**

potpis m *signature*

potpisivati (-uje «) ~ **potpisati**

(**potpiše**) v.p. *sign* A / *se*²

· **potpisan** pass. adj. *signed*

potvrda f *receipt, confirmation*

potvrđivati (-uje «) ~ **potvrditi** («) v.p. *confirm* A

· **potvrđen** pass. adj. *confirmed*

povećalo n *magnifying glass*

povećavati («) ~ **povećati** v.p. *enlarge, increase, make bigger* A; mediopass; (opposite: **manjivati**)

· **povećan** pass. adj. *enlarged*

povesti (**poveđe, poveo**) perf. *take* A (*person/animal*) § 65

povesti (**poveže, 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 / *se*²

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*); *se*² *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 m^a *president*

· **predsjednica** f

· **predsjednički** rel. adj.

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predstava f *show, theatre play*
predstavljati ~ **predstaviti** v.p.
represent A § [60](#)
 · **predstavljen** pass. adj. *represented*
pregled m *inspection; (medical) examination*
pregledavati («) ~ **pregledati** *browse, examine* A
 · **pregledan** pass. adj. *examined (medically)*
prehlada f *cold (disease)*
 · **prehlađen** adj. *having cold*
prekid m *interruption, break*
prekidati («) ~ **prekinuti** (**prekine**) v.p.
interrupt A / **se**²
 · **prekinut** 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 m^a *friend*
 · **prijateljica** f
 · **prijateljski** adj.
 · **prijateljstvo** n *friendship*
prije adv. *earlier; (+ G) before* § [49](#)
 · **prijašnji** rel. adj. *former*
prijedlog m *proposal*
prijetiti impf. *threaten* (DL)
 · **prijetnja** f *threat*
prijevod m *translation*
prijevoz m *transport*
primjer m *example*
 · **na primjer** *for example* [npr.] § [42](#)
princ m^a (I **princem**, N-pl **prinčevi**)
prince
 · **princeza** f *princess*
pripadati ~ **pripasti** (**pripadne, pripao**)
 v.p. *belong to* DL
pripremati («) ~ **pripremiti** («) v.p.
prepare A / **se**²
 · **pripremljen** pass. adj. *prepared*
priprema f *preparation* (incl. food)
priroda f *nature*
 · **prirodan** (**prirodn-**) adj. *natural*
pristajati (**pristaje**) ~ **pristati** (**pristane**)
 v.p. (**da...**) *agree (to...); (na" A) agree (with A); dock* (for ships) § [52](#)
pritisak (**pritisak-**) 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 m^a *professor*
 · **profesorica** f
 · **profesorski** rel. adj.
prognoza f *forecast*
progutati perf. → **gutati**
 · **progutan** pass. adj. *swallowed*

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proizvod m *product*

proizvoditi («) ~ **proizvesti** (**proizvede**, **proizveo**) v.p. *produce* A; mediopass. § [65](#)

· **proizveden** pass. adj. *produced, made*

· **proizvodnja** f *production*

prolaz m *passage, way through*

prolaziti ~ **proći** (**prođe**, **prošao**, **prošla**) v.p. pass § [42](#)

· **prošao** (**prošl-**) adj. (no comp.) *past*

· **prošlost** f *past*

proljeće n *spring* (season)

· **proljetni** rel. adj.

promijeniti («) perf. → [mijenjati](#)

· **promijenjen** pass. adj. *changed*

· **promjenjiv** adj. *inconstant, variable*

promašiti (-uje «) ~ **promašiti** v.p. *miss* (A)

· **promašen** pass. adj. *missed, failed*

promet m *traffic* {B/S: **saobraćaj**}

promjena f *change*

pronaći ~ **pronaći** (**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 m^a *prophet*

prosinac (**prosinc-**) m (formal) *December* {B/S: **decembar** (**decembr-**)} § [31](#)

· **prosinački** rel. adj.

proslava f *celebration*

prošli adj. *past, former*

prošlost f *past*

protiv adv. *against* (+ G)

protivnik m^a *adversary, rival*

· **protivnica** f

· **protivnički** rel. adj. *rival*

provditi («) ~ **provesti** (**provede**, **proveo**) v.p. *spend* A (a period of time); **se**² *have time* (usually fun) (spend money: **trošiti**) § [65](#)

· **proveden** pass. adj. *spent*

prozor m *window* {colloq. coast:

poništra}

prsa n pl. *chest, breasts*

· **prsn** rel. adj.

prst m (N-pl **prsti**) *finger* § [27](#)

prsten m (N-pl **prsteni** / **prstenovi**) *ring*

prtljaga f (no pl.) *luggage* {S: **prtljag** 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*

· **ptičji** rel. adj.

pucati impf. *shoot* (from a gun); *crack*

puhati ~ **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.

puštati ~ **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 m^a *passenger, traveler*

· **putnica** f

· **putnički** rel. adj.

putovati (**putuje**) ~ **do-** («) ~ **ot-** v.t. *travel*

putovnica f *passport* {B/S: **pasoš**}

puž m^a *snail*

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
[H](#)
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[LJ](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[NJ](#)
[O](#)
[P](#)
[R](#)
[S](#)
[Š](#)
[T](#)
[U](#)
[V](#)
[Z](#)
[Ž](#)

R

rabljen adj. (no comp.) *used*

račun m *bill, receipt*

računalo n (formal) *computer*

računati ~ **iz-** v.p. *compute, calculate* (A); **se**² *count, have importance* (impf. only); **na**² *count on A* (impf. only); (to count: **brojati**)

rad m *work* (**na**² act.)

· **radni** rel. adj.

raditi ~ **napraviti** v.p. *work; do, function*

radio (radij-) m *radio* (**na**² media)

· **radijski** rel. adj.

rado adv. *used to express that some action is liked*

· **radost** f *joy*

radnik m^a *worker*

· **radnica** f

· **radnički** rel. adj.

rađati ~ **roditi** v.p. *give birth* (to A); mediopass.

· **rođen** pass. adj. *born*

· **rođenje** n *birth*

· **rađanje** n *childbirth, parturition*

rame (ramen-) m (pl **ramen-**) *shoulder*

rani adj. *early*

raspoložen adj. *in mood*

· **raspoloženje** n *mood*

raspored m *schedule, positioning*

· **na**² + A/DL *scheduled*

raspravljati ~ **raspraviti** v.p. (o DL) *discuss* (DL)

rast m *growth*

rastajati (rastaje) **se**² ~ **rastati** (**rastane**) **se**² 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 I) (**preko** G) (o DL) *talk* (to I) (over G) (about DL) (see also: **govoriti**)

razgovor m *conversation* (**na**² act.)

· **razgovorni** rel. adj. *conversational, colloquial*

razumjeti (**razumije**) impf. *understand* A; mutual **se**²

· **razumijevanje** n *understanding*

razmak m *distance, gap*

razmišljati («) ~ **razmisliti** v.p. (o DL) *consider, ponder* (DL); *think deeply* (about DL)

razvijati ~ **razviti** (**razvije**) v.p. *develop* A / **se**²

· **razvijen** pass. adj. *developed*

razvoj m *development*

· **razvojni** rel. adj.

reći (**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**²) 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: **sjeći**) {I: **rizati**}

riba f *fish*

· **riblji** rel. adj.

ribar m^a *fisherman*

· **ribarski** rel. adj.

riječ f (I also **riječu**) *word*

rijedak (**rijetk-**) adj. (comp. **rjeđi**) *rare, sparse*

· **rijetko** adv. *rarely, seldom*

· **rijetkost** f *rarity*

rijeka f *river*

· **riječni** rel. adj.

riža f *rice* {S: **pirinač**}

rječnik m *dictionary*

[A](#)[B](#)[C](#)[Č](#)[Ć](#)[D](#)[DŽ](#)[Đ](#)[E](#)[F](#)[G](#)[H](#)[I](#)[J](#)[K](#)[L](#)[LJ](#)[M](#)[N](#)[NJ](#)[O](#)[P](#)[R](#)[S](#)[Š](#)[T](#)[U](#)[V](#)[Z](#)[Ž](#)

rješavati («) ~ **riješiti** v.p. *solve* A;
mediopass.
· **riješen** pass. adj. *solved*
· **rješenje** n *solution*
· **rješiv** adj. *solvable*
rob m^a *slave*
· **robinja** f
· **ropski** rel. adj.
· **ropstvo** n *slavery*
rod m *kin*
· **u rodu** pred. *related*
roditelj m^a *parent*
· **roditeljski** rel. adj.
· **roditeljski sastanak** *parent-teacher meeting*
rođendan m *birthday; birthday party* (na^o act.)
· **rođendanski** rel. adj.
roniti impf. *dive*
roštilj m *grill, barbecue* (na^o act.)
roza adj. indecl. (no comp.) (colloq.)
pink {Std: **ružičast**; S: **roze**}
rub m *edge, margin* (na^o l/d)
· **rubni** rel. adj. *marginal*
ručak (**ručk-**) m *main meal of the day, eaten at midday or early afternoon; dinner* (na^o act.)
ručati ~ **po-** v.p. *have lunch*
ručnik m *towel* {colloq. coast: **šugaman**; B/S: **peškir**}
rugati se² ~ **na-** («) v.p. *mock* DL
rujan (**rujn-**) 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*
· **ružnoća** f *ugliness*
ružičast adj. *pink*

S

s^o (sa^o in certain positions) prep. (+ l)
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 / **se**²
· **sagnut** pass. adj. *bent* (body)
sajam (**sajm-**) m (N-pl **sajmovi**) *fair* (na^o 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 impf. *dream* (A / CC); **o** DL
dream of DL
sapun m *soap*
sastajati (**sastaje**) **se**² ~ **sastati** (**sastane**) **se**² v.p. (s^o l) *meet* (l)
sastanak (**sastank-**) m *meeting* (na^o act.)
sat m *hour* (N-pl **sati**); *clock* (N-pl **satovi**)
· **satni** rel. adj.
savijati («) ~ **savinuti** (**savine**) v.p. *bend* A / **se**²
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*

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selo n *village*
 · **na** + A/DL *to/at countryside*
 · **seoski** rel. adj.
seljak m^a *villager*
 · **seljanka** 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 m^a *son*
sinoć adv. *last evening*
 · **sinoćnji** / **sinoćni** 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*
siv adj. (comp. **sivlji**) *gray* (for hair: **sjed**)
siječanj (**siječnj-**) m (formal) *January* {B/S: **januar**} § [31](#)
 · **siječanjski** rel. adj.
sjeći (**siječe**, pres-3pl **sijeku**, **sjekao**, **sjekla**) ~ **od-** (») v.p. (**na** A1) *cut* (A) (to A1)
sjed adj. (no comp.) *gray, white* (hair)
silaziti ~ **sići** (**siđe**, **sišao**, **sišla**) v.p. *climb down, descend*
sjećati 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)
sjediste n *seat*

sjena f *shadow, shade*
sjever m *north* (**na** I/d)
 · **sjeverni** adj. *northern*
skakati (**skače**) ~ **skočiti** v.p. *jump*
skidati ~ **skinuti** (**skine**) v.p. *take off* A (clothes, something hanging) / **se**²; (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. **skuplji**) *expensive*
 · **skupoća** f *deariness, high prices*
skupljati ~ **skupiti** v.p. *collect* A; **se**² *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; **se**² *agree*
slamati ~ **slomiti** v.p. (**na** A1) *break* (A) (to A1)
 · **slomljen** pass. adj. *broken*
slan adj. *salty*
 · **slanost** 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)
 · **slavlje** n *celebration, feast*
sličan (**sličn-**) adj. *similar, alike*
 · **sličnost** f *similarity*
slijediti impf. *follow* (A) (used literally; see also: **pratiti**)

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
[H](#)
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[LJ](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[NJ](#)
[O](#)
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slijep adj. (no comp.) *blind*
 · **sljepoća** *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 m^a *elephant*
 · **slonica** *f*
složiti perf. → **slagati**
 · **složen** adj. *assembled; complex*
slučaj m (N-pl **slučajevi**) *accident; case*
 (in law, medicine)
 · **slučajan** (**slučajn-**) adj. *accidental*
 · **slučajnost** *f chance, randomness*
sluga m^a (domestic) *servant*
 · **sluškinja** *f*
slušati ~ **po-** v.p. *listen* (to A)
služiti impf. *serve* DL; **se**² I *use* I
sljedeći adj. (no comp.) *next*
smeće n (no pl.) *trash, waste*
smeđ adj. (no comp.) *brown*
smetati ~¹ **za-** («) v.p. *obstruct,*
discomfort (DL)
 · **smetnja** *f disturbance, interference*
smijati (**smije**) **se**² impf. (DL) *laugh* (at
 DL)
smijeh m *laughter*
smiješan (**smiješn-**) adj. (comp.
smješniji) *funny*
smišljati ~ **smisliti** v.p. *contrive, devise,*
make a plan
 · **smišljen** pass. adj. *premeditated,*
devised
smjer m *direction*
smočiti perf. → **močiti**
smrt *f death*
 · **smrtni** rel. adj.
 · **smrtonosan** (**smrtonosn-**) adj. *deadly*
snaga *f force, strength*

snalaziti se² ~ **snaći** (**snađe**, **snašao**,
snašla) **se**² v.p. *manage, find a way* §
42
snažan (**snažn-**) adj. *strong* (also: **jak**)
snijeg m (N-pl **snjegovi**) *snow*
 · **sniježni** 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)
spašavati («) ~ **spasiti** v.p. *rescue, save*
 A
 · **spašen** pass. adj. *rescued, saved*
spavati ~ **zaspiti** (**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; **se**² *get ready*
 · **spremljen** pass. adj. *stored, prepared*
spreman (**spremn-**) adj. *ready,*
prepared
spuštati ~ **spustiti** v.p. *lower, take*
down A; **se**² *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*
sretan (**sretn-**) adj. *happy; lucky* {I:
sritan, B/S: **srećan**}
sretati (**sreće**) ~ **sresti** (**sretne**, **sreo**)
 v.p. *encounter, come across* A; **se**²
mutual

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srijeda f *Wednesday*

srpanj (srpnj-) m (formal) *July* {B/S: **jun** / **juni**} § [31](#)

· **srpanjski** adj.

stablo n (G-pl **stabala**) *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 (staln-) adj. (no comp.) *permanent*

· **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*

stavljati ~ staviti v.p. *put* A (dest) § [60](#)

stizati (stiže) ~ 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*

stoljeće 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-) m^a *foreigner*

· **strankinja** f

stranica f *page* (**na** l/d)

strast f *passion*

strašan (strašn-) adj. *terrible*

strašiti ~ pre- («) v.p. *scare* A; **se**² *get scared*

stric m^a *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 m^a *expert*

struja f *current; electricity*

· **strujni** adj. *electric*

studen i (adj.) (formal) *November* {B/S: **novembar (novembr-)**} § [31](#)

student m^a *university student*

· **studentica** f

· **studentski** rel. adj.

stup m *column, pillar*

stvar f *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**}

· **suhoća** f *dryness*

suknja f *skirt* {colloq. inland/S: **šos** (N-pl **šosevi**)}

sukob m *conflict*

sumnja f *suspicion*

sumnjati ~ po- («) v.p. (**da...**) *suspect* (*that...*)

sumnjiv adj. *suspicious*

sumrak m *dusk*

sunce n *sun* (**na** met.)

· **sunčan** adj. *sunny*

sunčati ~ o- v.p. *sunbathe* A / **se**²

super adj., adv. indecl. (no comp.) (colloq.) *great, awesome*

suprotan (suprotn-) adj. (no comp.) *opposite*

· **suprotnost** f *opposite*

suprug m^a *spouse*

· **supruga** f

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

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[NJ](#)

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susjed m^a *neighbor* {R/B/S: **komšija** m^a}

· **susjeda** f {R/B/S: **komšinica**}

· **susjedstvo** n *neighborhood* {R/B/S: **komšijluk**}

susret m *encounter*

suša f *drought*

sutra adv. *tomorrow* {M: **sjutra**}

· **sutrašnji** rel. adj. § [76](#)

suza f *tear* (drop)

svadba f *wedding* (na[~] act.)

svađati se² ~ **po-** v.p. *quarrel* (the perf. verb can be also used with A instead of se²)

svađa 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](#)

svijati ~ **svinuti** (**svine**) v.p. *bend* A / se²

· **svinut** pass. adj. *bent*

svijet m (N-pl **svjetovi**) *world* (na[~] l/d)

· **svjetski** rel. adj.

svijetao (**svijetl-**) 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 ~ **svući** (**svučē**, **svukao**, **svukla**)

v.p. *undress, take off* A / se²

svojstvo n *characteristic*

svrha f *purpose*

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šaka f *fist*

šala f *joke*

šalica f *mug, cup* (thick, with handle) {B/S: **šolja**}

šaliti se² impf. *joke*

šapa f *paw*

šaptati (**šapće**) ~ **šapnuti** (**šapne**) v.p. (da...) *whisper* (to DL) (*that...*)

šaren adj. *party-colored, motley* § [11](#)

šator m *tent*

šav m *seam, stitch*

šećer m *sugar*

šef m^a *boss*

· **šefica** f

šest number 6

šešir m *hat*

šetati (**šeće** / **šeta**) ~ **pro-** («) v.p. (se²) *stroll; walk* A (e.g. *a dog*)

· **šetnja** f *stroll, leisurely walk*

šibica f *match* (to light a fire)

šiljak (**šiljk-**) m *spike, sharp end*

šipka f (G-pl **šipki**) *metal rod, bar*

širiti ~ **ra-** («) / **pro-** («) v.p. *spread, widen* A; se² N *spread, get wider*; (to spread butter, cream: **mazati**)

širok adj. (comp. **širi**) *wide*

· **širina** *width*

šišmiš m^a *bat* (flying animal)

šivati (**šije** / **šiva**) ~ **sašiti** (**sašije**) v.p. *sew* (A)

škakljati (**škaklje**) ~ **po-** («) v.p. *tickle* A

škare f pl. *scissors* {B/S: **makaze** f pl.}

škola f *school*

· **školski** rel. adj.

školjka f *shell, clam*

šlapa f (colloq. NW) *house slipper* {Std: **papuča**}

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

[K](#)

[L](#)

[LJ](#)

[M](#)

[N](#)

[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

šlag m (colloq.) *whipped cream*
šminka f *make-up*
šminkati ~ **na-** v.p. *put make-up on A / se*²
šofer m^a (colloq.) *driver* (esp. *bus driver*) {Std: **vozač**}
 · **šoferski** rel. adj.
špaga f *rope*
špek m (colloq. inland) *bacon* {Std: *slanina*}
štakor m^a *rat* {B/S: **pacov**}
štap m *pole, rod*
 · **štapić** m *stick*
štedjeti (also **štediti**) (**štedi**, **štedio**, **štedjela**) ~ **u-** («) v.p. (**u** DL) *saves* (money) (A) (*in* DL)
štednjak m *stove*
štene (**štenet-**) n *puppy* (as pl. **štenad** f coll.)
šteta f *damage, harm*
štetan (**štetn-**) adj. *harmful*
 · **štetnost** f *harmfulness*
štititi ~ **za-** («) v.p. (**od** G) *protect* (A) (*from* G)
što (č- +) pron. *what* § [28](#)
šuma f *forest*
 · **šumski** rel. adj.
šunka f (G-pl **šunki**) *ham*
šupalj (**šuplj-**) adj. (no comp.) *hollow*
 · **šupljina** f *cavity*
šutjeti (also **šutiti**) (**šuti**, **šutio**, **šutjela**) ~ **za-** («) v.p. (**o** DL) *be silent* (about DL)
 · **šutnja** f *silence*

T

tad(a) adv. *then*
 · **tadašnji** rel. adj. § [76](#)
taj (t-) adj. (no comp.) *that* § [18](#)
tajan (**tajn-**) adj. *secret*
 · **tajnost** f *secrecy*
tajna f (G-pl **tajni**) *secret*
takav (**takv-**) adj. *such*

tako adv. *like that, so* § [18](#)
također conj. *as well* § [67](#)
tama f *darkness*
taman (**tamn-**) adj. *dark*
tamo adv. *there, that way*
tanak (**tank-**) adj. (comp. **tanji**) *thin* (used for things)
tanjur m *plate* {colloq. coast: **pjat** / **pijat**; B/S: **tanjir**}
tata m^a *dad*
tava f *pan*
tavan m *attic* (**na** l/d)
 · **tavanski** rel. adj.
tečaj m (N-pl **tečajevi**) *course; exchange rate* {B/S: **kurs**}
 · **tečajni** rel. adj.
teći (**teče**, *pres-3pl* **teku**, **tekao**, **tekla**) impf. *flow*
tek adv. *no earlier than* § [9](#)
tekuć adj. (no comp.) *liquid, flowing*
 · **tekućina** f *liquid*
telefon m *phone* (**na** act.)
 · **telefonski** rel. adj.
telefonirati («) impf. *phone* (DL)
televizija f *television* (**na** media)
televizor m *TV* (set)
tenisica f *sneaker shoe* (usually pl.) {R/B/S: **patika**}
teta f *mother's sister, aunt; (children's) any non-related woman*
težak (**tešk-**) adj. (comp. **teži**) *heavy; difficult*
 · **teškoća** f *difficulty*
 · **težina** f *weight*
ti (+) pron. *you* (2nd pers. sg.) § [12](#), [22](#), [34](#)
tih adj. (comp. **tiši**) *quiet, silent*
 · **tišina** f *silence*
tijelo n *body*
 · **tjelesni** rel. adj.
tijesan (**tjesn-**) adj. *very narrow, not fitting*
tijesto n *pastry*

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
[H](#)
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[LJ](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[NJ](#)
[O](#)
[P](#)
[R](#)
[S](#)
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[T](#)
[U](#)
[V](#)
[Z](#)
[Ž](#)

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 / **se**²
trg *m* *square* (in city) (**na** l/d)
trgati ~ **po-** («) / **s-** v.p. *tear* A
trgovina *f* *shop; commerce*
trgovac (**trgovc-**) *m*^a *shopkeeper*
 · **trgovkinja** *f*
 · **trgovački** 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* (**na** l/d) {colloq. NW: **plac**; colloq. coast: **pjaca**; B/S: **pijaca**}
tu adv. *there, here*

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
[H](#)
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[LJ](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[NJ](#)
[O](#)
[P](#)
[R](#)
[S](#)
[Š](#)
T
[U](#)
[V](#)
[Z](#)
[Ž](#)

tući (**tuće**, *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**ː act.)
tuš m *shower* (to wash body)
tuširati («) ~ **o-** v.p. *shower A* / **se**² (to wash; for heavy rain: **pljuštati**)
tužan (**tužn-**) 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**)
 · **tvrdoga** f *hardness*
tvrditi impf. **da...** *assert, claim* (to DL) *that...*

U

uː 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 m^a/f *murderer*
ubojstvo n *murder*
učenik m^a *pupil, student* (at university: **student**)
 · **učenica** f
 · **učenički** rel. adj.
učitelj m^a *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; **se**²
naː A *get used to* A
udarac (**udarc-**) m *blow, kick*
udarati ~ **udariti** v.p. *smack, kick* (A)
udavati (**udaje**) **se**² ~ **udati** **se**² v.p. (**za**ː 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*
uho n (as pl. **uši** f pl.) *ear* § 27
 · **ušni** rel. adj.
uhvatiti perf. → **hvatati**
 · **uhvaćen** pass. adj. *caught*
ujak m^a *mother's brother*
 · **ujna** f *wife of ujak*
uključivati (**-uje** «) ~ **uključiti** («) v.p.
include A; *switch A on*; (opposite: **isključivati**)
 · **uključen** pass. adj. *turned on*; *included*
ukrasti (**ukrade**, **ukrao**) perf. → **krasti**
 · **ukraden** pass. adj. *stolen*
ulaz m *entrance*
 · **ulazni** rel. adj.
ulaziti ~ **ući** (**uđe**, **ušao**, **ušla**) v.p. (**u**ː 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.
umarati («) ~ **umoriti** («) v.p. *tire, exhaust A*; **se**² *get tired*; (opposite: **odmarati**)
umirati (**umire**) ~ **umrijeti** (**umre**, **umro**, **umrla**) v.p. *die*
umirovljenik m^a (formal) *pensioner*
 {colloq./B/S: **penzioner**}
 · **umirovljenica** f
 · **umirovljenički** rel. adj.
umivati («) ~ **umiti** (**umije**) v.p. **se**²
wash face; A *wash A's face*
umjesto conj./prep. *instead of* § 67
umjetan (**umjetn-**) adj. *artificial* {B/S:
vještački}

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umjetnik m^a *artist*

· **umjetnica** f

· **umjetnički** rel. adj.

umjetnost f *art*

umor m *fatigue*

umoran (**umorn-**) adj. *tired*

uništavati («) ~ **uništiti** v.p. *destroy* (A);
mediopass; (opposite: **stvarati**)

· **uništen** pass. adj. *destroyed*

unuk m^a *grandson* § 75

· **unuka** f *granddaughter*

unutar prep. (+ G) *within, inside*

unutra adv. *inside*

· **unutrašnji** rel. adj. *inner*

· **unutrašnjost** f *interior*

upitnik m *questionnaire; 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*

urar m^a *watchmaker* {B/S: **časovničar**}

ured m *office*

· **uredski** rel. adj.

uredan (**uredn-**) adj. *tidy*

· **urednost** f *neatness, tidiness*

uređaj m *device*

uredjivati (-uje «) ~ **urediti** («) v.p. *put to order, tidy* A / **se**²; mediopass;

· **uređen** pass. adj.

uskoro adv. *soon*

Uskrs m *Easter*

· **uskrсни** / **uskršnji** rel. adj.

uspjivati («) ~ **uspjeti** (**uspije**, **uspio**,

uspjela) v.p. *succeed* (to INF); u^ː DL
succeed in DL § 60

uspjeh m *success*

uspješan (**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**) ~ **ustati** (**ustane**) v.p.
(**se**²) *stand up* § 52

usudjivati (-uje «) **se**² ~ **usuditi** («) **se**²
v.p. *dare* (to INF)

usvajati («) ~ **usvojiti** («) v.p. *adopt* A

· **usvojen** pass. adj. *adopted*

ušteđjeti / **ušteđiti** perf. → **štedjeti**

· **ušteđen** pass. adj. *saved* (money)

utakmica f *match* (in sports)

utjecaj m *influence*

· **utjecajan** (**utjecajn-**) adj. *influential*

utorak (**utork-**) m *Tuesday*

utroba f *bowels, intestine*

uvjet m *condition, requisite* {B/S:
uslov}

uvjeravati («) ~ **uvjeriti** v.p. (**da...**)
convince A / **se**² (*that...*)

· **uvjeren** pass. adj. *confident*,
convinced

uz^ː prep. (+ G) *by, close to*

uzak (**usk-**) adj. (comp. **uži**) *narrow*

uzalud adv. *in vain*

uzaludan (**uzaludn-**) adj. *futile*

uzbuđjivati (-uje «) ~ **uzbuditi** («) v.p.
excite A; **se**² *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** f) *rope*

užitak (**užitk-**) m *pleasure*

uživati («) impf. (**u**^ː DL) *enjoy* (DL)

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[Dž](#)

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[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

[K](#)

[L](#)

[Lj](#)

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[N](#)

[Nj](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

V

vaditi ~ **iz-** v.p. (iz G) *pull out, extract* A (from G)

vaga f *scale, device for weighting*

vagati (**važē**) ~ **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: **napolje**}

· **vanjski** rel. adj. *outer* {R/B/S: **spoljni**} § 76

vani adv. *out* (location) {R/B/S: **napolju**}

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*

· **većinski** rel. adj.

veličina f *size*

velik adj. (comp. **veći**) *big*

veljača f (formal) *February* {B/S: **februar**} § 31

veseliti se² ~ **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**, **vidio**, **vidjela**) impf./perf.

see A (see also: **gledati**); mediopass.

· **viđen** 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)

visina 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 (**vjern-**) adj. *faithful*

· **vjernost** f *fidelity, loyalty*

vjernik m^a *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*

vjetar (**vjetr-**) m (N-pl **vjetrovi**) *wind*

· **vjetrovit** adj. *windy*

vlada f *government*

vladati ~ **za-** («) v.p. *rule* (over I); **se**² *behave*

vлага f *moisture*

vlak m *train* {B/S: **voz**}

vlast f *rule* (**na** act.)

vlažan (**vlažn-**) adj. *moist*

· **vlažnost** f *humidity*

voće n (no pl.) *fruit, fruits*

· **voćni** rel. adj.

voćka f *fruit-tree*

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voda *f* *water*

vodič *m*^a *guide*; *m* *conductor* (of electricity)

voditi *impf.* *lead* (A)

vodopad *m* *waterfall*

vođa *m*^a *leader*

vojnīk *m*^a *soldier*

· **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!*); **se**² *drive* (or *ride*, someone else could be steering)

vraćati *˜ vratiti* *v.p.* *return* A / **se**²

· **vraćen** *pass. adj.* *returned*

vrag *m*^a *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*

vruć *adj.* (no comp.) *hot*

· **vrućina** *f* *heat*

vući (**vuče**, *pres-3pl* **vuku**; **vukao, vukla**)

· **po-** («) *v.p.* *pull* A (opposite: **gurati**);

se² *trudge*

vuk *m*^a *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; **se**² *have fun*

zabijati («) *˜ zabiti* (**zabije**) *v.p.* *hammer in* A

· + **gol** *strike a goal*

· **zabijen** *pass. adj.* *hammered in*

zaboravljati *˜ zaboraviti* *v.p.* *forget* A / INF / CC; § [69](#)

· **zaboravljen** *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; **se**² *spend time at some place*

zagrada *f* *bracket* (in writing, math)

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

[K](#)

[L](#)

[LJ](#)

[M](#)

[N](#)

[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

zagrliti v. perf. → **grliti**

· **zagrljen** pass. adj. *hugged*

zagrljaj m *hug*

zahod m *toilet* (na² act.) [WC]

· **zahodski** rel. adj.

zahtijevati («) impf. (od² G) *demand* (A) (from G); (od² G) **da...** *demand* (from G) *that...*

zahtjev m *demand*

zahvalan (zahvaln-) adj. *thankful, grateful*

zahvaljivati (-uje) ~ **zahvaliti** («) v.p. (za² A) *thank* (DL) (for A)

zaista adv. *really* (similar: **stvarno**)

zajednički adj. *shared, common, not private*

zajedno adv. *together* (also: **skupa**)

zaključavati («) ~ **zaključati** v.p. *lock* (A) (opposite: **otključavati**)

· **zaključan** pass. adj. *locked*

zaključak (zaključk-) m *conclusion*

zaključivati (-uje) ~ **zaključiti** («) v.p. **da...** *conclude that...; conclude* (A)

zakon m *law*

· **zakonit** adj. *lawful*

zaljev m *bay*

zamatati («) ~ **zamotati** v.p. *wrap, bind* A; (opposite: **odmatati**)

· **zamotan** pass. adj. *wrapped*

zamrziti («) inch. → **mrziti**

zanimati («) impf. *be interesting to* A; **se² za** A *show interest in* A

zanimljiv adj. *interesting*

zao (zl-) adj. (no comp.) *evil*

zapad m *west* (na² l/d)

· **zapadni** adj. *western*

zapovijed f *command*

zapovijedati («) ~ **zapovjediti** 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

zarada f *profit*

zarađivati (-uje) («) ~ **zaraditi** («) v.p. *earn* (A)

· **zarađen** pass. adj. *earned*

zastava f *flag*

zašto adv. *why* § 50

zato adv. *therefore, for that reason* § 50

zatvarati («) ~ **zatvoriti** («) v.p. *close* A; mediopass; (opposite: **otvarati**)

· **zatvoren** pass. adj. *closed, locked up*

zatvor m *prison; constipation*

· **zatvorski** rel. adj.

zativorenik m^a *prisoner*

· **zativorenica** f

· **zativorenički** rel. adj.

zaustavljati ~ **zaustaviti** v.p. *stop* A / **se²** (opposite: **pokretati**)

· **zaustavljen** pass. adj. *stopped*

zauzimati ~ **zauzeti** (**zauzme**) v.p.

occupy A; **se² za** A *promote* A

· **zauzet** pass. adj. *occupied*

zavoljeti («) inch. → **voljeti**

završavati («) ~ **završiti** («) v.p. *complete* (A)

· **završen** pass. adj. *completed, finished*

zbog prep. (+ G) *because of* G, *due to* G § 50

zdrav adj. *healthy*

· **zdravlje** 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 m^a *daughter's husband*

zgrada f *building*

zid m *wall*

· **zidni** rel. adj.

zidar m^a *bricklayer, mason*

· **zidarski** rel. adj.

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

[K](#)

[L](#)

[LJ](#)

[M](#)

[N](#)

[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

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 *m^a scientist* {B/S: **naučnik**}

· **znanstvenica** *f* {B/S: **naučnica**}

zmija *f snake*

· **zmijski** rel. adj.

zora *f dawn*

zrak *m air (na² 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 *m^a dentist*

· **zubarica** *f* {B/S: **zubarka**}

· **zubarski** 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*

· **zvjezdan** rel. adj. *starry*

zvoniti ~ **po-** («) *v.p. ring*

zvono *n bell, ring* (on door)

zvučati (zvući) ~ **za-** («) *v.p. (kao...) sound (like...)*

zvuk *m sound*

· **zvučni** adj.

Ž

žaba *f frog*

· **žablji** rel. adj.

žalba *f complaint*

žaliti impf. (**za²** 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*

· **žeđ** *f thirst*

želudac (želudc-, želuc-) *m stomach*

· **želučan** rel. adj.

želja *f wish*

željeti (želi, želio, željela) ~ **za-** *v.p. wish, desire* A; *wish to* INF

· **željen** pass. adj. *desired*

željeznica *f railway*

· **željeznički** 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 (za² A) marry** (A) (a woman); **se² get married** (see also: **udati**)

ženski adj. *female, feminine*

· **ženska** *f* (adj.) (slang) *girlfriend, woman*

žetva *f harvest*

žica *f wire*

Židov *m^a 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**)

[A](#)

[B](#)

[C](#)

[Č](#)

[Ć](#)

[D](#)

[DŽ](#)

[Đ](#)

[E](#)

[F](#)

[G](#)

[H](#)

[I](#)

[J](#)

[K](#)

[L](#)

[LJ](#)

[M](#)

[N](#)

[NJ](#)

[O](#)

[P](#)

[R](#)

[S](#)

[Š](#)

[T](#)

[U](#)

[V](#)

[Z](#)

[Ž](#)

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*

· **životinjski** 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: **požurjvati**)

žut adj. (comp. **žući**, **žutiji**) *yellow*

žvakati (**žvaće**) ~ **sa-** («) v.p. *chew* (A)

[A](#)
[B](#)
[C](#)
[Č](#)
[Ć](#)
[D](#)
[DŽ](#)
[Đ](#)
[E](#)
[F](#)
[G](#)
[H](#)
[I](#)
[J](#)
[K](#)
[L](#)
[LJ](#)
[M](#)
[N](#)
[NJ](#)
[O](#)
[P](#)
[R](#)
[S](#)
[Š](#)
[T](#)
[U](#)
[V](#)
[Z](#)
Ž

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
²	second-position word (also called <i>enclitic</i>)
..	word pronounced with the following word (also called <i>proclitic</i>)
~	verb aspect pair (or triplet)
~~	verb aspect pair, with a perf. inchoative verb
~ ¹	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
<u>a</u>	stressed vowel
A	accusative case (the object case)
A- <i>pl</i>	accusative case in plural
adj.	adjective
DL	dative/locative case
DLI- <i>pl</i>	dative/locative/instrumental case in plural
fem.	feminine (gender)
G	genitive case
G- <i>pl</i>	genitive case in plural
I	instrumental case
<i>imper-2</i>	imperative form of a verb, 2nd pers. singular
<i>imper-xpl</i>	imperative form of a verb, xth person ($x = 1, 2$), plural
impf.	imperfective (verb)
<i>inf</i>	infinitive (dictionary form of a verb)
masc.	masculine (gender)
N	nominative case (the default case)
N- <i>pl</i>	nominative case in plural
neut.	neuter (gender)
<i>past-y</i>	past participle of a verb, gender y ($y = m, f, n$)
perf.	perfective (verb)
plur.	plural
<i>pres-x</i>	present form of a verb, xth person ($x = 1, 2, 3$)
<i>pres-xpl</i>	present form of a verb, xth person ($x = 1, 2, 3$), plural
sing.	singular
V	vocative case

Index

accusative case [03](#), [05](#), [06](#), [07](#), [13](#), [14](#), [25](#), [27](#), [49](#), [73](#)
adjectives [10](#), [11](#), [14](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#), [29](#), [33](#), [35](#), [44](#), [57](#), [61](#), [63](#), [80](#), [82](#), [83](#), [88](#)
adverbs [04](#), [06](#), [08](#), [18](#), [80](#), [76](#)
clauses [50](#), [56](#), [59](#), [62](#), [69](#), [70](#), [71](#)
conditional [39](#), [70](#)
conjunctions [25](#), [43](#), [67](#), [77](#)
dative/locative case [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [22](#), [23](#), [27](#), [32](#), [36](#), [46](#), [64](#), [73](#), [74](#)
gender [10](#), [13](#), [14](#), [24](#), [29](#), [88](#)
genitive case [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), [44](#), [45](#), [46](#), [88](#)
imperative [53](#), [71](#)
impersonal expressions [08](#), [23](#), [24](#), [25](#), [32](#), [45](#), [64](#), [71](#)
infinitive [32](#), [38](#), [53](#)
instrumental case [35](#), [36](#)
locations [15](#), [20](#), [21](#), [41](#), [76](#)
negation [04](#), [08](#), [13](#), [41](#), [45](#), [67](#)
 ‘empty’ [54](#), [69](#), [77](#)
numbers [09](#), [30](#), [31](#), [47](#), [68](#), [90](#)
particle **se**² [07](#), [16](#), [25](#), [34](#), [64](#), [71](#), [79](#)
passive [61](#), [64](#), [79](#)
perfective verbs [37](#), [38](#), [40](#), [50](#), [54](#), [56](#), [69](#), [81](#), [86](#)
phase verbs [52](#), [60](#)
plural [13](#), [25](#), [29](#), [44](#)
polite expressions [12](#), [72](#)
possession [14](#), [16](#), [19](#), [20](#)
prepositions [09](#), [21](#), [33](#), [34](#), [50](#), [55](#)
present tense [02](#), [03](#), [06](#), [08](#), [12](#), [25](#)
pronouns [13](#), [22](#), [34](#), [41](#)
pronunciation [01](#), [02](#), [09](#)
questions [03](#), [06](#), [08](#), [09](#), [15](#), [20](#), [26](#), [28](#), [49](#), [56](#), [57](#), [59](#)
stress [12](#), [15](#), [25](#), [44](#), [61](#), [84](#), [A7](#)
time [09](#), [21](#), [49](#), [51](#), [54](#), [58](#), [81](#)
verb families [42](#), [52](#), [60](#), [65](#), [86](#)
word order [07](#), [08](#), [16](#), [22](#), [23](#), [34](#), [38](#), [50](#), [56](#), [A5](#)

Keys to Exercises

Where more than one answer is possible, they are listed separated with slashes (e.g. **stvarno / zaista**).

02. a) **zijeva** b) **Plačem** 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) **kavu** 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) **u** 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) **Igram** 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) **gladno** h) **dosta / prilično** i) **kratak** j) **je** k) **teška** l) **jako / vrlo** m) **slatka** n) **Lubenica** o) **je** p) **kao** q) **med**
13. a) **ju / je** b) **čujem** c) **Vas** d) **Ona** e) **me** f) **ga** g) **pozna** 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**
14. 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) **moj** p) **stan** q) **hladnu** r) **pizzu**
15. 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) **jugu** o) **na** p) **ručku**
16. 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) **mojoj** r) **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) koncerta 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) spavala 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) Svrbile / 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) ključeve g) Psi h) Putnici i) Noževi j) moji k) počeci / 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) voćni d) ratni
34. a) nije b) kod c) tebe d) smo e) kod f) nje g) se h) njega i) Kolači j) su k) vas
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
38. 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
39. a) Čitao b) bih c) bi d) se e) igrao
40. a) Pit b) ćemo 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) tvoju 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) **dodeš** c) **da** d) **nas** e) **nazoveš** f) **ih** g) **otvore** h) **da** i) **je** j) **ljet** 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) **primljena** 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) **Nagovorila** g) **nas** h) **je** i) **gledamo / pogledamo** j) **Propustili**