



My Short Croatian Grammar

Moja mala hrvatska gramatika

CROATIAN

HRVATSKI

Nouns

Capitalisation

In Croatian, nouns are written in lower case letters: *rjiba* – fish, *more* – sea. Upper case is used for:

- a) **proper nouns:** *Marko Marulić*, b) **nationalities:** *Nijemac* – the German, c) **countries:** *Hrvatska* – Croatia, and d) **place names:** *Vela Luka*, *Ševerin na Kupi* (Prepositions are always in lower case).

If proper nouns and titles are compounds of two or more parts, only the first word is written in upper case letters, e.g. a) **geographical names:** *Plitvička jezera* – Plitvice Lakes, *Dugi otok*, b) **institutions:** *Hrvatsko narodno kazalište* – Croatian National Theatre, c) **addresses:** *Zagrebačka ulica* – Zagreb Street.

Noun Gender

Croatian has three genders: masculine, feminine and neuter. Gender is determined by the last letter of the word in the nominative singular:

- **masculine:** most nouns that end in a **consonant:** *dan* – day, *muzej* – museum, *otac* – father.
- **feminine:** most words ending in **-a:** *kuća* – house, *soba* – room, *majka* – mother.
- **neuter:** words ending in **-o** or **-e:** *mjesto* – place, *sunce* – sun, *dijete* – child.
- **Careful!** There are some **feminine words** that end in a **consonant:** *noć* – night, *obitelj* – family. They have their own **i-declension**. Qualifying adjectives and pronouns are given the standard feminine forms: *duga noć* – long night, *moja obitelj* – my family.

Nouns in Croatia do not have articles: *hotel* – a hotel, the hotel.

Natural and grammatical gender

In Croatian, the natural (sexus) gender and grammatical (genus) gender are generally the same, but not always. Male persons and names ending in **-a**, and some masculine terms of endearment ending in **-e** and **-o** are declined like feminine nouns, even though the natural gender is masculine: *tata* – dad, *kolega* – colleague, *Nikola*, *Stipe*, *Anto*. Possessive pronouns and adjectives are declined according to the natural gender: *moj tata* – my dad, *dobar kolega* – a good colleague.

Singular and Plural

Most nouns have both singular and plural forms. The single and plural endings for nouns are:

	N	Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.	
m.	-	-i	<i>prozor</i>	<i>prozori</i>	window	
f.	-a	-e	<i>žena</i>	<i>žene</i>	woman	
n.	-o/	-a	<i>selo</i>	<i>sela</i>	village	
	-e	<i>more</i>	<i>mora</i>	sea		
f. (i)	-	-i	<i>ljubav</i>	<i>ljubavi</i>	love	

Some nouns **only have plural forms:** *hlače* (f.Pl.) – trousers, *vrata* (n.Pl.) – door, *naočale* (f.Pl.) – glasses. Some nouns are **only used in the singular:** *voda* – water, *mlijeko* – milk, *jug* – South.

Some masculine nouns change in their plural forms:

- **Monosyllabic masculine nouns take -ov- or -ev-** (after palatal consonants: *-ć, -đ, -đ, -j, -lj, -nj, -š, -ž, -c*, sometimes *-r*) before the plural endings:

Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.
<i>grad</i> - city	<i>gradovi</i>	<i>nož</i> - knife	<i>noževi</i>

- **Sibilization (k/g/h + -i -> -ci, -zi, -si):**

Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.
<i>rječnik</i> – dictionary	<i>rječnici</i>	<i>sugrup</i> – husband	<i>sugruzi</i>
<i>orah</i> – walnut	<i>orasi</i>		

- **Mobile a** (an unstressed **a** is lost):

Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.
<i>metar</i>	<i>metri</i>	<i>čamac</i> – boat	<i>čamci</i>

- The consonant **t** is lost (the mobile **a** disappears + **sibilization:** *k/g/h + -i -> -ci, -zi, -si*):

Sg.	Pl.
<i>zadatak</i> - task	<i>zadaci/zadaci</i>

Irregular plurals:

Sg.	Pl.
<i>čovjek</i> – man, person	<i>ljudi</i>
<i>dijete</i> – child	<i>djeca</i>

Noun Cases

Nouns change according to their case and number. The Croatian language has seven cases: Nominative, Genitive, Dative, Accusative, Vocative, Locative, and Instrumental. The **Nominative** indicates that a word is the subject of a sentence. It answers the questions *who?*, *what?* (*tko?*, *što?*). The **Genitive** indicates possession or that something is a part of or an amount of something. It answers the questions *whose?*, *of what?* (*koga?*, *čega?*). The **Dative** expresses a goal or an intention. It indicates that something is being given to someone. It answers the questions *to whom?*, *to what?* (*komu?*, *čemu?*). The **Accusative** indicates the object or destination in the sentence. It answers the questions *whom?*, *what?* (e.g. *do I see?*) (*koga?*, *što?* *vidim*). The **Vocative** is used when addressing someone directly. It is the same as the Nominative **except** in the masculine and feminine singular. The **Locative** denotes position or a place where an action takes place and is only used with a preposition: *na* – on, *o* – over, *po* – to, *pri* – with, by and *u* – in. The **Dative** and the **Lokative** have the same endings. The **Instrumental** refers to the instrument or means, or in whose company an action is performed. It stands alone after certain verbs or after the following prepositions: *s/sa* – with, *među* – under, between, *nad* – over, *pod* – under, *pred* – in front of, before, *za* – behind, to; e.g.: *Vozim se vlakom.* – I am going by train. *Vozim se s bratom.* – I am going with my brother.

Noun Declension

The grammatical gender of nouns determines how they are declined. The three main types are the **a-**, **e-** and **i-**Declensions (they are named after the vowel ending in the Genitive Singular).

1. Nouns following the a-Declension

- **Masculine nouns ending in a consonant:**

Sg.	day	passenger	the German
N	<i>dan</i>	<i>putnik</i>	<i>Nijemac</i> ⁴
G	<i>dana</i>	<i>putnika</i>	<i>Nijemca</i>
D	<i>danu</i>	<i>putniku</i>	<i>Nijemcu</i>
A	<i>dan</i>	<i>putnika</i> ¹	<i>Nijemca</i> ¹
V	<i>dane</i>	<i>putniče</i> ²	<i>Nijemče</i> ²
L	<i>danu</i>	<i>putniku</i>	<i>Nijemcu</i>
I	<i>danom</i>	<i>putnikom</i>	<i>Nijemcem</i> ⁵

Pl.			
N	<i>dani</i>	<i>putnici</i> ³	<i>Nijemci</i>
G	<i>dana</i>	<i>putnika</i>	<i>Nijemaca</i> ⁴
D	<i>danima</i>	<i>putnicima</i>	<i>Nijemcima</i>
A	<i>dane</i>	<i>putnike</i>	<i>Nijemce</i>
V	<i>dani</i>	<i>putnici</i>	<i>Nijemci</i>
L	<i>danima</i>	<i>putnicima</i>	<i>Nijemcima</i>
I	<i>danima</i>	<i>putnicima</i>	<i>Nijemcima</i>

¹Animate G=A, ²palatalisation, ³sibilization, ⁴mobile -a-, ⁵after palatal consonants (-ć, -đ, -đ, -j, -lj, -nj, -š, -ž, -c, sometimes -r) there is an -e instead of an -o.

Some nouns ending in **-e, -i, -o** or **-u** are **masculine** and are declined as such: a) names: *Mario*, *Tom*, b) internationalisms: *auto*, *radio*, *kupe*, *taksi*, *tabu*, c) masculine words with changes in their word stems (*-I* → *-o*): N *posao* - G *posla* – work, job.

Animate masculine nouns (people or animals) have the same form in the Genitive and Accusative Singular. All other masculine nouns are **inanimate** and have the same form in the Nominative and Accusative Singular.

	animate G = A	inanimate N = A		
Sg.	brother	friend	table	city
N	<i>brat</i>	<i>prijatelj</i>	<i>stol</i>	<i>grad</i>
G	<i>brata</i>	<i>prijatelja</i>	<i>stola</i>	<i>grada</i>
A	<i>brata</i>	<i>prijatelja</i>	<i>stol</i>	<i>grad</i>

This rule also applies to the qualifying adjectives and pronouns.

- **Neuter ending in -o or -e:**

Sg.	place	sea	name
N	<i>mjesto</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>ime</i>
G	<i>mjesta</i>	<i>mora</i>	<i>imena</i> ²
D	<i>mjestu</i>	<i>moru</i>	<i>imenu</i>
A	<i>mjesto</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>ime</i>
V	<i>mjesto</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>ime</i>
L	<i>mjestu</i>	<i>moru</i>	<i>imenu</i>
I	<i>mjestom</i>	<i>morem</i> ¹	<i>imenom</i>

¹After a palatal consonant (-ć, -đ, -đ, -j, -lj, -nj, -š, -ž, -c, -r) there is -em, ²Word stem extension -en-.

2. The e-Declension

- **Feminine nouns ending in -a:**

Sg.	river	teacher	pear
N	<i>rijeka</i>	<i>učiteljica</i>	<i>kruška</i>
G	<i>rijeke</i>	<i>učiteljice</i>	<i>kruške</i>
D	<i>rijeci</i> ¹	<i>učiteljici</i>	<i>kruški</i>
A	<i>rijeku</i>	<i>učiteljicu</i>	<i>krušku</i>
V	<i>rijeko</i>	<i>učiteljice</i> ²	<i>kruško</i>
L	<i>rijeci</i> ¹	<i>učiteljici</i>	<i>kruški</i>
I	<i>rijekom</i>	<i>učiteljicom</i>	<i>kruškom</i>

¹Sibilization, ²after a palatal consonant (-ć, -đ, -đ, -j, -lj, -nj, -š, -ž, -c, sometimes -r) there can sometimes also be the ending -e, ³mobile -a-, ⁴the ending -i is possible if there are two consonants before the ending.

Nouns referring to male persons and masculine names ending in **-a** as well as male terms of endearment ending in **-e** and **-o** are declined according to the e-Declension.

3. The i-Declension

- **Feminine nouns ending in a consonant:**

Sg.	evening	night	Pl.
N	<i>večer</i>	<i>noć</i>	<i>večeri</i> <i>noći</i>
G	<i>večeri</i>	<i>noći</i>	<i>večeri</i> <i>noći</i>
D	<i>večeri</i>	<i>noći</i>	<i>večerima</i> <i>noćima</i>
A	<i>večer</i>	<i>noć</i>	<i>večeri</i> <i>noći</i>
V	<i>večeri</i>	<i>noći</i>	<i>večeri</i> <i>noći</i>
L	<i>večeri</i>	<i>noći</i>	<i>večerima</i> <i>noćima</i>
I	<i>večeri</i>	<i>noći/</i>	<i>večerima</i> <i>noćima</i>
		<i>noću</i>	

Exceptions

Some nouns are not declined in Croatian. These include feminine proper names that do not end in **-a:** *Karin*, *Ani*, *Renate*.