

Serbian Demonstrative Pronouns (Pokazne zamenice u srpskom)

Demonstrative pronouns or *pokazne zamenice* are used as the substitute for specific nouns. Such pronouns are generally used to show (pokazati) or point to an entity or object present in the context.

Unlike English, which makes only a two-way distinction with respect to a proximity of an object relative to the speaker (eg. *this book* vs. *that book*), Serbian makes a three-way distinction, as graphically depicted below.

Table 1: Three-way distinction of demonstratives

Speaker	<i>close distance</i>	<i>medium distance</i>	<i>farther away</i>
Vidim	ovo dete	to dete	ono dete
I see	this child	that child	that child (over there)

As the table above shows, the form of a demonstrative varies depending on the location of the object in relation to the speaker (i.e. the 1st person). The demonstrative **ovo** indicates that the object is in the proximity (spatial or temporal) of the speaker. The medium distance demonstrative **to** indicates that an object is further away from the speaker. And, the distant demonstrative **ovo** indicates that an object is remote from both the speaker and the hearer.

Just like [possessive pronouns](#), demonstratives also have distinct forms for number (singular, plural), gender (feminine/masculine/neuter) as well as for case ([nominative](#), [accusative](#), [genitive](#), [dative](#), [locative](#), [instrumental](#)). The gender of the demonstrative depends on the noun it specifies. For instance:

feminine noun	masculine noun	neuter noun
ov-a knjiga 'this book'	ovaj kaput 'this coat'	ov-o ogledalo 'this mirror'
ov-e knjige 'these books'	ovi-i kaputi 'these coats'	ov-a ogledala 'these mirrors'

You can see how the demonstrative, meaning 'this' changes its final vowel depending on the gender (and also number!) of the noun. In this respect, demonstratives behave like [possessive pronouns](#) and [adjectives](#), which also 'agree' with the following noun in case, gender and number. In fact, the endings of demonstrative pronouns are identical to the endings of adjectives. Less to memorize!

Also note that unlike pronouns, demonstratives do not distinguish for person (1st, 2nd and 3rd). This is the case for common nouns too.

The following table gives a declension paradigm for the demonstrative pronoun **ovaj** 'this'. The same pattern applies to two other forms: **taj** and **onaj**.

Table 2: Declension of Serbian Demonstrative Pronouns

SINGULAR	masculine	neuter	feminine
Nominative	ovaj	ovo	ova
Accusative	ovaj/ovog*	ovo	ovu
Genitive	ovog	ovog	ove
Dative	ovom	ovom	ovoj
Locative	ovom	ovom	ovoj
Instrumental	ovim	ovim	ovom
PLURAL	masculine	neuter	feminine
Nominative	ovi	ova	ove
Accusative	ove	ova	ove
Genitive	ovih	ovih	ovih
Dative	ovim	ovim	ovim
Locative	ovim	ovim	ovim
Instrumental	ovim	ovim	ovim

*In accusative singular, **ovog** is used when it refers to an animate object and **ovaj** is used for non-animate objects.

Example: Vidim ovog čoveka "I see this man" vs. Vidim ovaj grad "I see this town"

As the table above illustrates, for many cases, the demonstrative forms are identical:

- In plural, the dative, locative and instrumental have the same forms.
- Also in singular, dative and locative forms are identical.
- In plural, gender is not distinguished for genitive, dative, locative and instrumental cases; the same forms apply to all three genders.

Some examples are given in Table 3.

The following abbreviations are used in Table 3:

fem =feminine gender	sing = singular	acc = accusative	inst =instrumental
masc =masculine gender	pl = plural	dat =dative	loc =locative
neut =neuter gender	nom = nominative	gen = genitive	

Table 3: Some examples of demonstrative pronouns used in sentences

	Serbian	English (the relevant pronoun is underlined)	Case, gender and number of the demonstrative pronoun
1.	Šta je to ?	What is <u>that</u> ?	to = nom. neut. sing.
2.	Ovo dete je lepo.	<u>This</u> child is beautiful.	ovo = nom. neut. sing.
3.	To je onaj čovek?	<u>That</u> is <u>that</u> man.	to = nom. neut. sing. onaj = nom. masc. sing.
4.	Da li si video onoga ?	Did you see <u>that (one)</u> ?	onoga = acc. masc. sing.
5.	On je video tog čoveka.	He saw <u>that</u> man.	tog = acc. masc. sing.
6.	On se plaši ove* žene.	He is afraid of <u>this</u> woman.	ove = gen. fem. sing.
7.	Mi se ne stidimo tih studenata.	We're not ashamed of <u>those</u> students.	tih = gen. masc. pl.
8.	Ja sam dao ovo onim	I gave this (to) <u>those</u>	ovo = acc. neut. sing.

	ljudima.	people.	<u>onim</u> = dat. masc. pl.
9.	One su na ovom stolu.	<u>Those</u> were on <u>this</u> table.	<u>one</u> = nom. fem. sing. ovom=loc. masc. sing.

Exercise 1 – Fill out the appropriate case forms of demonstrative pronouns in sentences below

Using the demonstratives below (underlined in the English gloss) insert their appropriate case forms. For convenience, I have indicated which case goes with which sentence.

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. genitive | 4. dative | 7. instrumental |
| 2. genitive | 5. accusative | 8. genitive |
| 3. accusative | 6. nominative | 9. accusative |

1. Ja se bojim _____	I'm afraid of <u>those</u> snakes.
2. On se setio _____	He remembered <u>this</u> .
3. Marija voli _____	Marija likes <u>these</u> songs.
4. Dragan je dao ružu _____.	Dragan gave a rose <u>to that</u> girl.
5. Da li si čula _____ ?	Did you hear <u>that</u> ?
6. _____ je star.	<u>This</u> coat is old.
6. Volim _____.	I love <u>that</u> house.
7. Marija ide sa _____.	Marija is going with <u>this</u> boy.
8. Zorica stalno sedi pored _____.	Zorica always sits by <u>that</u> window.
9. Milan stoji uz _____.	Milan is standing by <u>this</u> house.

Exercise 2 – Translate the following sentences

For this exercise you need to know both the [present tense](#) and [past tense](#). If you don't have a bi-directional Serbian-English-Serbian dictionary, you may go to the website: <http://www.krstarica.com/dictionary/> to get the words you need for this exercise.

1.	He played with these students.
2.	This lady doesn't talk to me.
3.	This summer we are going to Belgrade.
4.	This tree is tall.
5.	That man hates this neighbor.
6.	His brother doesn't like that girl.
7.	That house is big.
8.	We are singing with these people.