

German Case Forms Reference

Main Functions of German Cases

Nominative

- Subjects
- Predicate nouns with *sein, bleiben, werden*
Das bin ich! 'That's me!'

Accusative

- "Direct objects" of most verbs
- Both "direct" and "indirect" objects of the verbs *fragen, kosten, lehren, nennen* and a few others
- Objects of prepositions *durch, für, gegen, ohne, um* and a few others
- Objects of "two-way" prepositions *an, auf, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen* when expressing **direction** rather than location
- Time expressions
 - "accusative of definite time" *vorige Woche* 'last week', *nächsten Dienstag* 'next Tuesday';
 - "accusative of duration" *Wir waren den ganzen Abend zu Hause.* 'We were at home all evening.'

Dative

- "Indirect objects" (recipient / beneficiary, often expressed in English by "to" or "for")
- "Direct objects" of verbs such as *antworten, begegnen, danken, folgen, gefallen, gehören, helfen, schmecken, zuhören* and many others
- Objects of the prepositions *aus, bei, mit, nach, seit, von, zu* and many others
- Objects of "two-way" prepositions *an, auf, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen* when expressing **location** rather than direction

Direct / indirect object is an English concept, not a German one.

It is more fruitful to think of objects as being either accusative or dative. A dative object is generally either a recipient / beneficiary of the action expressed by the verb, or else only

somehow involved in it. The beneficiary relationship is often expressed by "to" or "for" in English.

Genitive

- Possession
- Object of genitive prepositions such as *(an)statt, trotz, während, wegen, innerhalb / außerhalb*, and many others (especially in formal style), as well as of some archaic verbs.
- Time expressions: "genitive of indefinite time" *eines Tages*

Als 'than, as' and *wie* 'like, as' govern **no** case. Nouns and adjectives following them appear *in the same case* as the "standard" to which they are being compared:

Ich kann das viel besser als er. 'I can do that much better than he (colloquially him).' [standard in the *nominative*]

Mutti hat dich lieber als mich. 'Mom likes you better than me.' [standard in the *accusative*]

Similarly, the interrogative *was für* 'what kind' is caseless; function of the noun modified determines the case:

Was für ein Mensch bist du eigentlich? 'What kind of a person are you?' [nominative]

Was für einen Wagen hast du eigentlich? 'What kind of car do you have?' [accusative]

Definite Articles & Demonstratives ('Which one?')

The/that/those, this/these, that/those, each, such, which...

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural	
Nominative	der	das	die	die	The demonstratives <i>dies-</i> 'this', <i>jed-</i> 'each, every', <i>manch-</i> 'some', <i>solch-</i> 'such', <i>welch-</i> 'which' and a few others end are called " <i>der-words</i> " because they in the same letter as the definite article, preceded by <i>-e-</i> if it is a consonant: <i>dieser</i> Mann, <i>diese</i> Frau, <i>dieses</i> Kind
Accusative	den	das	die	die	
Dative	dem	dem	der	den	
Genitive	des	des	der	der	

Indefinite Articles & Possessives ('Which one?')

A/an, no/not any, my, your, her, his, its, our, their

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural	Possessives and <i>kein</i> 'not any' are called " <i>ein</i> -words" because they follow the same pattern as <i>ein</i> : Das ist unser Vater. Kennst du meine Mutter?
Nominative	ein*	ein*	eine	keine	
Accusative	einen	ein*	eine	keine	
Dative	einem	einem	einer	keinen	
Genitive	eines	eines	einer	keiner	

* These forms have no endings in Masc. & Neut. Nom. Sing.,
Neut. Acc Sing.

Descriptive Adjectives ('What kind?')

Adjectives take endings *whenever they precede the noun they modify* (greater detail here):

1. **Most frequent: "Weak" or "reduced" endings -e / -en, used whenever the adjective is preceded by an article or possessive with an ending**

-e all nominative singular | neuter and feminine accusative singular

-en elsewhere = all plural | all dative + genitive | masculine accusative singular

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	-e	-e	-e	-en
Accusative	-en	-e	-e	-en
Dative	-en	-en	-en	-en
Genitive	-en	-en	-en	-en

2. **Less frequent: "Strong" or "Full" endings, similar to *der, die, das*, used *unless* the adjective is preceded by an article or possessive with an ending, i.e. either there is no article or possessive, or else there is an ein-word without an ending preceding the adjective.**

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	-er	-es	-e	-e
Accusative	-en	-es	-e	-e
Dative	-em	-em	-er	-en
Genitive	-en *	-en*	-er	-er

3. ***Different from ending on *der*-words, which is -es**

Nouns

1. **Names** add -s (no apostrophe!) in the genitive, regardless of gender or number; if the name already ends in an -s or -z, only an apostrophe is added. *Martines Jacke, Hans' Handschuhe, Müllers Auto*. Names of **people** precede the noun possessed, other names typically follow: *die Zukunft Europas*.

2. Other nouns add endings as follows (simplified for brevity):

- **Dative Plural.** All nouns must end in -n (unless the plural ending is -s); add one if necessary *die Berge ~ in den Bergen*, but *die Autos ~ mit den Autos*.
- **Genitive Singular of Masculine and Neuter** nouns. All non-weak nouns (see below) end in -s (add -es after -s, -z, -sch, and in formal style for all one-syllable nouns) *des Wagens, des Tisches, des Mann(e)s*
- **Many masculine nouns** referring to human beings (those ending in -ist, -ent, -e [many nationalities end in -e], plus some others) are called **weak nouns**. They end in -n for all combinations of case and number except nominative singular:

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
der Student	die Studenten	der Herr	die Herren	der Schotte	die Schotten
den Studenten	die Studenten	den Herrn	die Herren	den Schotten	die Schotten
dem Studenten	den Studenten	dem Herrn	den Herren	dem Schotten	den Schotten
des Studenten (no -s!)	der Studenten	des Herrn (no -s!)	der Herren	des Schotten (no -s!)	der Schotten

- **Masculine nouns** which end in -e and **do not refer to human beings** end in -ns in the genitive singular and in -n for all other combinations of case and number except nominative singular:

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
der Name	die Namen
den Namen	die Namen
dem Namen	den Namen
des Namens	der Namen

- Consequently, nouns have up to four distinct forms as follows:

Class of Nouns	# of Forms	Distribution
<i>Feminine</i>	2 or 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Singular forms are like the dictionary entry (No genitive ending!) ○ The plural form is always different from the singular ○ Dative plural adds -n if necessary
<i>Masculine and Neuter</i> (except weak)	2 - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Singular forms except genitive are like dictionary entry

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Genitive adds <i>-(e)s</i> ○ Plural adds ending unless the noun ends in <i>-en, -el, -er</i> ○ Dative plural adds <i>-n</i> if necessary
<i>Weak Masculine</i> <i>referring to humans</i>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nominative singular is like dictionary entry ○ All other singular and all plural forms add <i>-(e)n</i>
<i>Weak Masculine</i> <i>referring to things</i>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nominative singular is like dictionary entry ○ Genitive singular adds <i>-ns</i> ○ Other singular and all plural forms add <i>-n</i>

3. Dictionaries cite the nominative singular forms of nouns, and use conventions to help you derive the other forms. Typically each noun entry is followed by its **gender**, then by the **genitive singular ending**, then by the **nominative plural ending**. A "-" with an umlaut means to umlaut the preceding full vowel, and by itself "-" means the noun takes no ending in the corresponding form.

Wagen <i>m.</i> -s, -	<i>nom sg</i> der Wagen <i>gen sg</i> des Wagens <i>nom pl</i> die Wagen
Apfelsine <i>f.</i> -, -n	<i>nom sg</i> die Apfelsine <i>gen sg</i> der Apfelsine <i>nom pl</i> die Apfelsinen
Ergebnis <i>n.</i> -ses, -se	<i>nom sg</i> das Ergebnis <i>gen sg</i> des Ergebnisses <i>nom pl</i> die Ergebnisse (<i>dat pl</i> den Ergebnissen)
Junge <i>m.</i> -n, -n	<i>nom sg</i> der Junge <i>acc / dat / gen sg</i> den / dem / des Jungen <i>nom / acc / dat / gen pl</i> die / die / den / der Jungen

Personal Pronouns

	1st Sing	1st Pl	2nd Sing	2nd Pl	2nd Formal	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
	<i>I</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>y'all</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>they</i>
	<i>me</i>	<i>us</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>y'all</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>them</i>
	<i>my</i>	<i>our</i>	<i>your</i>	<i>y'all's</i>	<i>your</i>	<i>his</i>	<i>its</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>their</i>
Nominative	ich	wir	du	ihr	Sie	er	es	sie	sie
Accusative	mich	uns	dich	euch	Sie	ihn	es	sie	sie
Dative	mir	uns	dir	euch	Ihnen	ihm	ihm	ihr	ihnen
Possessive Pronoun*	mein	unser	dein	euer	Ihr	sein	sein	ihr	ihr

*The possessive pronouns have endings which reflect the case, gender and number of the "noun possessed."
See Indefinite Articles above.

Interrogative Pronouns

Nominative	Accusative	Dative	Genitive
wer	wen	wem	wessen
<i>who</i>	<i>whom</i>	<i>whom</i>	<i>whose</i>

Notes

1. As in English, there are no special interrogative forms for feminine or plural.
2. If the person asked about is the object of a preposition, the preposition must be brought to the front of the sentence too, as in formal English:

Auf wen wartest du? 'For whom are you waiting?'

(Conversational English: 'Who are you waiting for?')

3. These interrogative pronouns are used for questions (direct and indirect) only. Relative Pronouns explained here.

The Four German Cases

Part 1: Summary

Summary | Nominative | Accusative | Dative | Genitive
 Werfall | Wenfall | Wemfall | Wesfall
 Nominativ | Akkusativ | Dativ | Genitiv

English also has cases, but they are only apparent with pronouns, not with nouns, as in German. When "he" changes to "him" in English, that's exactly the same thing that happens when **der** changes to **den** in German (and **er** changes to **ihn**). This allows German to have more flexibility in word order, as in the examples below, in which the nominative (subject) case is **red**:

Der Hund beißt den Mann. The dog bites the man.

Den Mann beißt der Hund. The dog bites the man.

Beißt der Hund den Mann? Is the dog biting the man?

Beißt den Mann der Hund? Is the dog biting the man?

Since English does not have the same case markers (**der/den**), it must depend on word order. If you say "Man bites dog" in English, rather than "Dog bites man," you change the meaning. In German the word order can be changed for emphasis (as above)—without altering the basic meaning.

The following charts show the four cases with the **definite article** (der, die, das), the **indefinite article** and the **third-person pronouns** (er, sie, es). Changes from the nominative (subject) case are indicated in **red**.

For more about each case, see the links below.

Definite Articles (the)				
Fall Case	Männlich Masculine	Weiblich Feminine	Sächlich Neuter	Mehrzahl Plural
<i>Nom</i>	der	die	das	die
<i>Akk</i>	den	die	das	die
<i>Dat</i>	dem	der	dem	den
<i>Gen</i>	des	der	des	der
Indefinite Articles (a/an)				
Fall Case	Männlich Masculine	Weiblich Feminine	Sächlich Neuter	Mehrzahl Plural
<i>Nom</i>	ein	eine	ein	keine*
<i>Akk</i>	einen	eine	ein	keine*
<i>Dat</i>	einem	einer	einem	keinen*
<i>Gen</i>	eines	einer	eines	keiner*
* Note: <i>keine</i> is the negative of <i>eine</i> , which has no plural form. But <i>keine</i> (no/none) can be used in the plural: "Er hat keine Bücher." (He has no books.) - "In Venedig gibt es keine Autos." (In Venice there are no cars.)				

The Germanic word for each case reflects how that case functions in the use of forms of **wer** (who): **der Werfall** (nom.), **der Wenfall** (acc.), **der Wemfall** (dat.) and **der Wesfall** (gen.). For more details about each case and to read articles related to the cases, see the links below.

Syntactic functions - English and German (Results from in-class work)

In class, we talked about criteria for establishing the function of phrases. Are they subjects, objects, adjuncts? Taking the list provided in Aarts (2001) as a starting point, we then wondered whether the same criteria apply in German as well. The following rough generalizations could be drawn:

Subjects

As in English, subjects seem to be obligatory in German. Also, subjects seem to be mostly NPs.

They tend to be the first NP of a sentence, as in English, but we also found that word-order is freer in German.

Hence, this does not seem to be a very reliable criterion.

Subjects also agree with the verb in German, even to a larger degree, as German verbs have more inflectional endings (*ich gehe, du gehst, er geht* etc.).

Generally, subject and verb also switch positions in German questions, compare *Du gehst* and *Gehst du?*

However, this can be obscured by the fact that subjects do not necessarily precede the verb (*Gestern ging ich nach Hause*), so the above generalization needs to be qualified: They switch position if the subject precedes the verb in the relevant statement from which the question is formed.

Last, and maybe most importantly: Subjects are (always?) in the nominative case in German.

Direct Objects

Direct objects are typically NPs in German as well.

They are required by transitive verbs.

In a "normal" sentence (whatever that might mean), the direct object follows the verb (*Ich sehe dich*). Again, however, note that German is pretty liberal when it comes to rearranging phrases (compare e.g. *Dich habe ich gestern gesehen*).

As in English, the Direct Object becomes the Subject of the

sentence in passivization.

Typically, Direct Objects are in the accusative case in German.

Indirect Objects

In German, as in English, Indirect Objects are typically NPs that occur in front of a Direct Object, although word-order seems to be a bit freer, especially when the object NPs are expressed by pronouns (*ihn/ihm, sie/ihr*).

They seem to require a ditransitive verb (but see below). Indirect Objects cannot become subjects in passivization (compare English!).

Indirect Objects are in the dative case in German.

The Big Problem

Several of you noticed a slight problem with the Direct/Indirect Object distinction. How should we classify the Object in *Das Buch gehört mir* or *Ich half ihm*? The verbs are transitive (not ditransitive), so we should classify the Objects as Direct Objects. On the other hand, the Object is in the dative case, which we said is typical of Indirect Objects. But Indirect Objects should always be accompanied by a Direct Object; there is no Direct Object in these sentences. So what can we do?

Maybe the semantic criteria help. Aarts mentions that Direct Objects are typically *Patients* or *Themes* and that Indirect Objects are *Goals/Receivers* or *Beneficiaries*. This again would suggest that they are Indirect Objects -- the Object is the beneficiary of help or the receiver of the book. We probably need more evidence to decide how to classify such transitive dative objects. Alternatively, the whole Direct/Indirect distinction might be inappropriate for German.

We will look at some further evidence right at the beginning of next week's session. Have a look at exercise (6) on the handout already. This exercise contains examples that are problematic for criteria of establishing subjecthood in German (see above). Several examples could receive two different alternative analyses, both of which have their

merits and their shortcomings. Try to think of such different analyses, which we will then discuss in class.

Grammar Theme: Direct objects and Indirect Objects in German

Instructions: Fold this paper lengthwise between German and English.

1. Circle the **subject (Nominative Case)**.
 2. Describe a rectangle around the **direct object (Accusative Case)**.
 3. Underline the **indirect object (Dative Case)**.
 4. Attempt to translate the sentence in the space below each sentence.
 5. Check the English translation on the other side.
 6. Attempt to translate the sentence from English to German below each sentence..
 7. Check the German translation on the other side.
- Note subject-verb agreement; e.g. **Ich leihe** dir Geld.
 - Watch for stem-changing verbs (these occur *only* in the the *second and third person singular*; e.g. Er **empfiehlt** mir das Restaurant)
 - Word order: Verb is second element (Ich **leihe** dir Geld)
 - Word order: **Indirect object** precedes the **direct object**; e.g. Ich leihe **dir** **Geld**.
 - Word order: if *both* objects are pronouns, the **direct object** precedes the **indirect object** (Ich leihe **es** **dir**. I loan it to you.)

Viel Glück und Spaß!

German	English
Ich leihe dir Geld.	I lend you money
Du leihst mir Geld.	You lend me money
Ich bringe dir den Kuchen.	I bring you the cake
Du bringst mir den Kuchen.	You bring me the cake
Er beantwortet ihr die Frage.	He answers to her the question
Sie beantwortet ihm die Frage.	She answers to him the question
Ich empfehle ihm das Restaurant.	I recommend the restaurant to you

Er empfiehlt mir das Restaurant.	He recommends the restaurant to me
Die Großmutter erzählt den Kindern das Märchen.	The grandmother tells the fairy tale to the children
Die Kinder erzählen der Großmutter das Märchen.	The children tells the fairy tale to the grandmother
Ich schicke den Eltern ein Päckchen.	I send a packet to the parents
Die Eltern schicken mir ein Päckchen.	The parents send me a packet
Der Vater erlaubt dem Sohn das Rauchen.	The father allows smoking to the son
Ich verspreche dem Freund Hilfe.	I promise help to the friend
Der Freund verspricht mir Hilfe.	The friend promises me help

Case in German

Introduction to the Nominative, Accusative & Dative

The subject of a sentence is in the nominative case.

The direct object is in the accusative case.

The indirect object is in the dative case.

What is Case?

**1. Do you
see he?**

**2. Her is me
sister.**

**3. Him
mother
knows you
neighbor.**

**4. Us buy
this gift for
they.**

**5. Her buys
they this
gift.**

If these sentences don't sound right to you, that's because you understand the function of grammatical "case," even if the term is new to you. Some words can indicate only a "doer" performing the action of the verb, a subject. Other words can only indicate the "one-done-onto" receiving the action of the verb, or object.

When we talk about "case," we describe how we express ideas of "do-ers" or "done-onto's," or subjects and objects. Case describes the function of a noun or pronoun.

Some words can function in more than one "case": "you" and "it" can be both subjects and objects: "You love it. It loves you." How do you know which one is doing the loving and which one is being loved in these sentences? Word order and the verb ending tell us which is the nominative, the subject, the do-er, the lover. The verb ending will be a valuable clue in German, too, but we won't be able to depend on word order because German word order follows different rules. To figure this out in German we have to learn about "case."

English uses the same pronouns for various kinds of objects: . German, however makes distinctions among the various kinds of objects (direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions) and uses different cases for them.

To illustrate, let's correct the sentences on the left, and translate the corrections into German.

1. Do you see he? → Do you see him?

→ Siehst du ihn?

The subject is the do-er in a sentence (e.g. "you see," "he sees").
The subject can only be a word in the nominative case.
The pronoun "**he**" can only function as a subject.
The word "he" is nominative.

The object receives the action of the verb.
(The viewer views the object. The hearer hears the object. The buyer buys the object. The lover loves the object.)
The object is accusative.
The do-er or subject of "1. Do you see . . . ?" is "**you**," not "**he**."
To complete this question we need a word that can work as an object.
"1. Do you see h---?" needs an object word that is masculine as well.
The pronoun "**him**" indicates a singular masculine object.
The word "**him**" fits the sentence because it is accusative.

Nominative: A word like "he" functioning as the subject.

Accusative: A word like "him" functioning as the direct object.

Every sentence has a subject and a predicate. The subject is nominative. Every sentence needs a nominative element.

2. Her is me sister. → She is my sister.

→ Sie ist meine Schwester.

"**Her**" can be a pronoun object, as in
"Do you know her? Send her a card. He got it for her."

"**Her**" can be a possessive adjective, as in
"**Her** mother is your neighbor."

"**Her**" is not nominative, however: it cannot be the subject.
The pronoun for a singular feminine subject is "**she**."

The difference between "she" and "her" is a difference of case. "She" is nominative, and "her" is not. The word "her" has other functions: it can be either a pronoun object, or a possessive adjective. The word "her"

cannot be the subject, because it is not nominative.

There are different kinds of objects. The direct object receives the action of the verb. Prepositions also take objects.

3. Us buy this gift for they. → We buy this gift for them.

→ *Wir kaufen dieses Geschenk für sie.*

When we examined sentence 2, we saw that "her" could not function as the subject, because it is not nominative.

Here, notice that there are two objects in the sentence: one is a direct object: "**gift/Geschenk**," the other the object of the preposition "**for/für**."

Both of these objects are in the accusative case.

We correct the sentence with a pronoun to indicate the object of the preposition "**for/für**." The word "**they**" can function only as the subject or do-er. It is nominative and cannot function as an object.

By the way, can you describe the other correction to sentence 3 in terms of case?

In English, we use the same words for the direct object, the object of a preposition or an indirect object.

In German, we use different words for these different kinds of objects.

Her buys they this gift. → She buys them this gift.

→ *Sie kauft ihnen dieses Geschenk.*

The nominative word "**they**" clearly doesn't fit here. The function of the word we need is **indirect object**, the one who "benefits" from the subject's action on the direct object.

The beneficiary of this buying = the **indirect object** = **them**.

subject	predicate	indirect object	direct object
nominative	verb	dative	accusative
do-er	action	to / for	done-onto

		whom?	
She	buys	them	gift

When "them" can be restated as "for them" or "to them," it is an indirect object.

We describe the function of the **indirect object** as **dative case** in German.

The ideas expressed by the prepositions "to" and "for" are strongly associated with the dative.

The words "to" and "for" are "built into" the dative.



The facade of the Reichstag in Berlin, dedicated "to the German people."

She buys them this gift. → She buys this gift for them.

In English, a pronoun like "**them**" can function both as accusative and dative object.

In German, however, we use different words to distinguish accusative and dative objects.

A. *Sie kauft dieses Geschenk für sie.* ↔ B. *Sie kauft ihnen dieses Geschenk.*

She buys this gift for them. ↔ She buys them this gift.

The English word "them" is expressed in sentence A as "sie," while in sentence B it is "ihnen."

Because in sentence A, "them" is the object of the preposition "for," or "für," German requires the use of the accusative case.

Because in sentence B, "them" expresses an indirect object, German requires the use of the dative case.

The subject of a sentence is in the nominative case.

The direct object is in the accusative case.

The indirect object is in the dative case.

Predicate Nominative

"It is I."

Sie ist meine Schwester.

In the sentences above, "it" and "I," "sie" and "Schwester" are all in the nominative case.

This is because the verb in the sentence is "to be" or *sein*.

sein to be			
singular		plural	
<i>ich bin</i>	I am	<i>wir sind</i>	we are
<i>du bist</i>	you are (singular intimate)	<i>ihr seid</i>	you are (plural intimate)
<i>er / sie / es ist</i>	he / she / it is	<i>sie sind</i>	they are
<i>Sie sind</i> you are (non-intimate, singular & plural)			

Sein (to be) functions as an equalizer (=) in terms of case.
 "Sister" in sentence 2 is not an object. (The verb "is" is not an action being done to "sister" by "she.")
 The word "sister" is called a predicate nominative.
 To put it in simple terms, when the verb is *sein*, think $N = N$, where N indicates nominative case, and = indicates a form of "*sein*."

Nominative =(is) Nominative

Subject: Nominative Case	Of: Genitive
Introduction to Nominative, Accusative and Dative	<u>The Genitive Case</u> Possession Link a Noun to a Noun
Direct Object: Accusative Case	To or For: Dative Case
<u>Other Uses of the Accusative</u> Accusative Prepositions Moving across Boundaries	<u>Other Uses of the Dative</u> Indirect Object Dative Verbs Dative Prepositions Location in Space and Time
<u>Prepositions with Accusative or Dative</u> Accusative for Destination Dative for Location in space or time	<u>Predicate Nominative</u>
<u>Student's Table of Cases in German</u>	<u>Reference Table of Cases in German</u>

Other Uses of the Accusative

Accusative prepositions

durch, für, gegen, ohne, um

The following list of prepositions always is followed by the accusative case.
They are called the accusative prepositions.

***durch* through**

Er geht durch den Garten.
He walks through the garden.

***für* for**

Kauf das Geschenk für sie.
Buy the gift for her.

***gegen* against**

Der Demokratiker ist gegen den Republikaner.
The Democrat is against the Republican.

***ohne* without**

Viele Menschen leben ohne einen Computer.
Many people live without a computer.

***um* around**

Wir fahren um die Universität.
We are driving around the university.

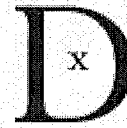
Prepositions taking either Accusative or Dative

an, auf, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen

an, auf, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen



"From here to there."
Use the Accusative Case when the preposition describes motion across a boundary, or from one place to another.



"X marks the spot"
in space and time. Use the Dative Case when the preposition indicates location.

with the accusative

This group of prepositions is followed by the accusative when they express a change of location.

Hänge das Bild an die Wand.

Hang the picture on the wall. (It wasn't on the wall before.)

Stell die Weinflasche auf den Tisch.

Put the wine-bottle on the table. (It wasn't on the table before.)

Parken Sie das Auto hinter das Haus.

Park the car behind the house.

Wir gehen ins Kino.

We're going to the movies (literally, into the movie-theater).

Hänge die Lampe über den Tisch.

Hang the lamp over the table.

Fahr den Wagen vor das Haus.

Drive the car in front of the house.

Setz dich zwischen ihn und mich.

Sit down between him and me

In the sentences above, the prepositions are followed by the accusative because the prepositional phrases indicate a **destination, or a change in location.**

with the dative

This group of prepositions always takes the dative when used in a time expression answering the question *Wann?* (when?) (*am Montag, im Juni, vor einer Woche*).

When used in reference to space, the dative is used to indicate a location (not a change of location, which requires accusative).

<i>Das Bild hängt an der Wand.</i>	The picture is hanging on the wall. (no change in location)
<i>Die Weinflasche steht auf dem Tisch.</i>	The wine-bottle is (standing) on the table.
<i>Das Auto steht hinter dem Haus.</i>	The car is (standing) behind the house.
<i>Der Film im Kino ist sehr gut.</i>	The movie in the theater is very good.
<i>Die Lampe hängt über dem Tisch.</i>	The lamp is (hanging) over the table.
<i>Der Wagen steht vor dem Haus.</i>	The car is (standing) in front of the house.
<i>Du sitzt zwischen ihm und mir.</i>	You are sitting between him and me.

In these sentences, the prepositions are followed by the dative, because the prepositional phrases do not indicate a **change** in location, but simply a location.

To summarize:

change in location? use accusative
no change in location? use dative
***Wann?* use dative**

an, auf, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen



"From here to there!"
Use the Accusative Case when the preposition describes motion across a boundary, or from one place to another.



"X marks the spot" in space and time. Use the Dative Case when the preposition indicates location.

[Click here to practice this topic.](#)

Subject: Nominative Case	Of: Genitive
Introduction to Nominative, Accusative and Dative	The Genitive Case Possession Link a Noun to a Noun
Direct Object: Accusative Case	To or For: Dative Case
Other Uses of the Accusative Accusative Prepositions Moving across Boundaries	Other Uses of the Dative Indirect Object Dative Verbs Dative Prepositions Location in Space and Time
Prepositions with Accusative or Dative Accusative for Destination Dative for Location in space or time	Predicate Nominative
Student's Table of Cases in German	Reference Table of Cases in German

Other Uses of the Dative

Dative Prepositions

aus, außer, bei, mit, nach, seit, von, zu

The following prepositions are always followed by the dative case.

They are the dative prepositions.

aus from

Ich komme aus den Vereinigten Staaten.

I come from the United States.

Ihre Jacke ist aus grüner Seide.

Her jacket is made of green silk.

außer except for, besides

Außer ihm denken wir alle so.

Except for him, we all think so.

bei with, near, at, at the home of

Die Party ist bei mir.

The party's at my house.

Meine Mutter arbeitet bei einer großen Firma.

My mother works for a big company.

mit with, by

Kommst du mit uns?

Are you coming with us?

Nein, ich fahre mit dem Taxi.

No, I'm going by taxi.

nach after, to, according to

Nach der Klasse gehen wir ins Kaffeehaus.

After class we're going to the coffeehouse.

Nächsten Sommer fahre ich nach Deutschland.

Next summer I'm going to Germany.

Diesem Artikel nach ist das falsch.

According to this article, that's wrong.

seit for, since

Ich studiere deutsch seit zwei Monaten.

I've been studying German for two months.

Der Patient wartet schon seit einer Stunde.

The patient has been waiting for an hour already.

von of, from, by

Greta ist eine Freundin von meiner Schwester.

Greta is a friend of my sister.

Hier ist ein Buch von Günter Grass.

Here's a book by Günter Grass.

zu to, at

Ich bin zu Weihnachten zu Hause.

I am at home at Christmas.

Komm zu mir.

Come to me.

For another use of the dative after prepositions, see the preceding section, "Prepositions taking either Accusative or Dative."

Dative verbs

A number of verbs are called "dative verbs" because they require a dative object, rather than an accusative one.

Often these verbs can be translated with the idea of "to" or "for," which are the ideas associated with the dative.

For example:

<i>helfen</i> to help, to give help to	<i>Du hilfst mir.</i> You help me.
<i>danken</i> to thank, to give thanks to	<i>Ich möchte Ihnen danken.</i> I'd like to thank you.
<i>folgen</i> to follow	<i>Folge mir!</i> Follow me!
<i>gratulieren</i> to congratulate, to give congratulations to	<i>Ich gratuliere Ihnen!</i> I congratulate you!
<i>gefallen</i> to be pleasing to	<i>Der Film gefällt meinem Vater nicht.</i> The movie is not pleasing to my father. (Better translated as: My father does not like the movie.)
<i>gehören</i> to belong to	<i>Wem gehört dieses Buch?</i> To whom does this book belong?
<i>glauben</i> to believe, to give credence to	<i>Ich glaube ihnen nicht. Ihm habe ich noch nie geglaubt.</i>

	I don't believe them. Him, I never have believed.
<i>passieren, geschehen</i> to happen to	<i>Was ist dir denn passiert?</i> <i>Geschieht das dir oft?</i> So what happened to you? Does that happen to you often?
<i>zuhören</i> to listen to	<i>Ich habe euch zugehört; jetzt hört mir doch zu.</i> I listened to you (guys); now listen to me.

When you learn a new verb, it is best to learn if it is a dative verb as well.
If a verb is a dative verb, practice it with dative objects.

[Return to top of page](#)

Subject: Nominative Case	Of: Genitive
Introduction to Nominative, Accusative and Dative	The Genitive Case Possession Link a Noun to a Noun
Direct Object: Accusative Case	To or For: Dative Case
Other Uses of the Accusative Accusative Prepositions Moving across Boundaries	Other Uses of the Dative Indirect Object Dative Verbs Dative Prepositions Location in Space and Time
Prepositions with Accusative or Dative Accusative for Destination Dative for Location in space or time	Predicate Nominative
Student's Table of Cases in German	Reference Table of Cases in German

Genitive Case



Sign pointing the way to the Reichstag, the seat of the Lower House of the German Parliament

The genitive case is associated with "of." It is the case of possession.

It usually links a noun to another noun.

The genitive can be linked to a subject, an object, an indirect object, a dative object, the object of a preposition or another genitive.

genitive with subject:	<i>Das Büro meines Vaters ist hier.</i> My father's office (the office of my father) is here.
genitive with direct object	<i>Möchtest du das Büro meines Vaters sehen?</i> Would you like to see my father's office?
genitive with indirect object	<i>Wir schicken der Mutter unseres Freundes ein Geschenk.</i> We're sending a gift to our friend's mother.
genitive with dative object	<i>Wir helfen der Mutter unseres Freundes.</i> We're helping our friend's mother.
genitive with the object of a preposition:	<i>Wir kaufen ein Geschenk für die Mutter unseres Freundes.</i> We're buying a gift for our friend's mother. <i>Wir übernachten bei der Familie unseres Kollegen.</i> We're spending the night at the home of our colleague's family.
genitive with genitive	<i>Hier ist die Adresse des Vaters des Kindes.</i> Here is the child's father's address. (This doesn't sound any better in German than it

does in English. Just as in English, Germans would prefer to say: *Hier ist die Adresse von dem Vater des Kindes.* Here is the address of the child's father.)

Prepositions with the Genitive

(an)statt, innerhalb, außerhalb, trotz, während, wegen

These prepositions are followed by the genitive.
For most of them, the definition includes the idea "of," which we associate with the genitive.

***anstatt* instead of (often shortened just to "*statt*")**

Anstatt des Bieres habe ich Wein bestellt.

Instead of beer, I ordered wine.

***trotz* in spite of**

Trotz des Wetters war der Urlaub schön.

In spite of the weather, the vacation was nice.

***während* during, in the course of**

Wir besuchen euch während der Ferien.

We're visiting you during the holidays.

***wegen* because of**

Das Haus gefällt uns wegen seiner guten Lage.

We like the house because of its good location.

***innerhalb* inside of, within**

Innerhalb der Stadt gibt es vier Universitäten.

Within the city there are four universities.

***außerhalb* outside of**

Außerhalb seines Landes ist der Sänger nicht wohl-bekannt.

Outside of his country, the singer is not well-known.

[Click here to practice using genitive prepositions.](#)

Subject: Nominative Case	Of: Genitive
<u>Introduction to Nominative, Accusative and Dative</u>	<u>The Genitive Case</u> Possession Link a Noun to a Noun
Direct Object: Accusative Case	To or For: Dative Case
<u>Other Uses of the Accusative</u> Accusative Prepositions Moving across Boundaries	<u>Other Uses of the Dative</u> Indirect Object Dative Verbs Dative Prepositions Location in Space and Time
<u>Prepositions with Accusative or Dative</u> Accusative for Destination Dative for Location in space or time	<u>Predicate Nominative</u>
<u>Student's Table of Cases in German</u>	<u>Reference Table of Cases in German</u>