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Nouns

NOUNS – L6.4: THE GENITIVE CASE

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Video Lesson:

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WHAT IS THE GENITIVE CASE?

The **genitive case** shows belonging or possession.

It is used in noun-noun constructions.

We also use the genitive after certain verbs, prepositions, and adjectives.

The question for the genitive case is "Wessen?" (Whose?)

THE GENITIVE CASE – EXAMPLES

- „Das Pferd **des Reiters** ist weiß.“

→ Whose horse is white? → **Des Reiters!**

→ Noun-noun construction → **Genitive**

- „Während **des Spiels** verletzt er sich.“

The preposition "während" requires **the genitive case** → **des Spiels**

DECLENSION IN THE GENITIVE CASE

We have to change all articles according to the case:

	Definite Article	Indefinite Article
Masculine	des Mann es	eines Mann es
Feminine	der Frau	einer Frau
Neuter	des Kind es	eines Kind es
Plural	der Eltern	- Eltern

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GENITIVE CASE

Nouns that are either masculine or neuter require the ending "s" or "es".

Nouns that end in -s, -ß, -x, -z: ("-es" MUST be used)

- "der Platz" – "des Platz**es**"

Monosyllabic nouns: (Just an "-s" is ok, but "-es" usually sounds better)

- "der Mann" – "des Mann**(e)s**"

For all other nouns: just "-s".

- "der Ventilator" – "des Ventilator**s**"

USE OF THE GENITIVE CASE

Use: To Indicate Belonging or Possession

We show belonging or possession with the help of noun-noun constructions.

„**Das Pferd des Reiters** ist weiß.“



1. Noun = Subject → **Nominative** 2. Noun= Owner of the 1. Noun → **Genitive**

**Tip:**

You can avoid using the genitive case in noun-noun constructions by adding the preposition "von" between the nouns and putting the second verb in the dative case.

„**Das Pferd des Reiters** ist weiß.“ // The rider's horse is white.

= „**Das Pferd von dem Reiter** ist weiß.“ // The horse of the rider is white.

This is similar to English, where both are possible. Latin languages also use this type of construction with "von".

Noun-Noun Constructions with Proper Nouns

Because there is no article, we have to signal the genitive differently:

- „**Holgers** Pferd ist weiß.“

The proper noun goes to the front and requires the ending "-s".

If the proper noun ends in s, ß, x or z, an apostrophe is needed:

- „**Hans'** Pferd ist weiß.“

Use: After Prepositions

- „Wegen **der Krankheit** kann er nicht arbeiten.“

The preposition "wegen" requires the use of the genitive case.

The most important genitive prepositions are:

- während, wegen, trotz, innerhalb, außerhalb, oberhalb, unterhalb, aufgrund, anstelle, (an)statt



Remember:

Like the accusative case and dative case, the preposition rule always applies no matter which case the verb would typically require.

Use: After Certain Verbs

Something, someone (etwas oder jemanden): gedenken, bedürfen, Herr werden

- „Wir **gedenken** **der Toten**.“
- „Wir **bedürfen** **der Hilfe**.“
- „Wir **werden** **der Situation Herr**.“

To someone, something (jemanden einer Sache): anklagen, bezichtigen, überführen, beschuldigen, verdächtigen

- „Man klagt **ihn** **der Korruption** an.“
- „Man verdächtigt **ihn** **des Verbrechens**.“
- „Man beschuldigt **ihn** **des Verrats**.“

Something (reflexive) (sich einer Sache): brüsten, erinnern, erfreuen, enthalten, schämen

- „Ich erinnere mich **der alten Zeiten**.“
- „Ich schäme mich **meiner schlechten Aussprache**.“
- „Ich erfreue mich **des Lebens**!“

Use: With Certain Adjectives

- bewusst:** „Ich bin mir **meines Fehlers** bewusst.“
fähig: „Du bist **des Mordes** nicht fähig.“
gewiss: „Sie ist sich **des Erfolges** gewiss.“
sicher: „Du kannst **dir meiner Unterstützung** sicher sein!“

Also: "überdrüssig", "verdächtig", "würdig", "bedürftig"

The adjective always comes after the noun and remains in its basic form.

GOOD NEWS FOR GERMAN STUDENTS:

If you are now thinking: How can I learn all this stuff? Adjectives, verbs, prepositions... **Don't worry! The genitive case isn't used very often anymore.**

You can often avoid the use of the genitive (and therefore having to know the genitive rules) by using prepositions instead:

- „Ich erinnere mich **der alten Zeiten**.“ ⇒ „Ich erinnere mich an *die alten Zeiten*.“

We can use the preposition "an" to outsmart the genitive case. The noun then follows the preposition in the accusative case. So the case always depends on which word (here, the preposition) comes before the noun.

You can also avoid the noun-noun constructions by using the preposition "von".

- „Das Pferd **des Reiters** ist weiß.“ → „Das Pferd von **dem Reiter** ist weiß.“



Attention

But be careful: In noun-noun constructions, the genitive is still used since the sentence sounds better when using the genitive case. But both are grammatically correct!

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