

Chapter Nine

Dative Case

You may be getting the idea that Greek is a morphologically complex language, and compared to English it certainly is. Compared, however, to its own linguistic ancestor, which historical linguists call *Proto-Indo-European* (or *Indo-European*, for short) Greek was quite simple. A grammar book of Indo-European would include three chapters at this point—one each for three different cases.

1) Indo-European had a case to identify the person *to* or *for* *whom* an action was taken or *for* *whom* a statement was true. It is called the **dative case**.

- The king gave gifts *to his subjects*.
- She baked cookies *for the children*.
- It is difficult *for a child* to lift that sword, but easy *for Achilles*.

In such statements Indo-European would not have used a word *to* and *for*, but would have added dative endings to the bases of the four italicized nouns in the examples.

2) Indo-European also had a case to identify an object as *a tool* used to accomplish the action of the verb. Grammarians call this case the **instrumental case**.

- She drives the nail *with a hammer*.
- Colonel Mustard killed him in the library *with a revolver*.

Indo-European would not have used a word for *with*, but would merely have put **instrumental** endings on the bases of *hammer* and *revolver*.

3) Finally, Indo-European had a case to identify something as *a place (or time) where something was located*—not a place someone was going *to* (accusative) or *from* (genitive). Grammarians call this case the **locative case**.

- Colonel Mustard killed him *in the library* with a revolver.
- The generals met *on Tuesday*.

Indo-European would not have used a word for *in* or *on*, but would merely have put **locative** endings on the bases of *library* and *Tuesday*.

Study these examples. Make sure you understand how these three different Indo-European case endings would have turned individual nouns into what we English speakers think of as meaningful *phrases*.

Dative case: Concept

Long before the earliest Greek literature the historic dative, instrumental, and locative cases had collapsed into a single case, which we grammarians might properly call the *Dative-Instrumental-Locative Case*, but which (in a rare show of good taste) we call simply the *Dative Case*.

The Radical Sense of the Dative Case

Because the dative case arose historically from three Indo-European cases, it has three radical senses: the *to, for* sense of the original *dative* case; the *with, by* sense of the original *instrumental* case; and the *in, on, at* sense of the original *locative* case.

Specific uses of the dative case

1) The **dative sense of the English word “to.”**

- He gives a gift *to the child*. (**Indirect object**)
- He tells a story *to the child*. (**Indirect object**)
- That man is similar (or kind or fair) *to the child*. (**Dative of Reference**)

The dative ending CANNOT be used to mean *to* in these senses:

- He runs *to the child*. This use conveys a notion of movement from one place to another and requires ἐς or πρὸς + accusative: *into, up to, towards*.

2) Greek can state **possession** with the verb *to be* + a dative of the person who possesses the subject.

- A bird is *to the child*

means something like *A bird is available to the child*, which effectively means *The child has or possesses a bird*. (**Dative of Possession**)

3) The **dative sense of the English word “for.”**

- She bakes cookies *for the child*. (**Indirect Object or Dative of Advantage**)
- He does a favor *for the child*. (**Indirect Object or Dative of Advantage**)
- The job is too difficult *for the child*. (**Dative of Reference**)

The dative ending CANNOT be used to mean “for” in these senses:

- He has not slept *for three days*. This sense requires the *Accusative of Extent of Time*.
- He chased us *for three miles*. This sense requires the *Accusative of Extent of Space or Distance*.

4) The **instrumental sense of the English words “with” or “by.”**

- The Amazon killed the warrior *with a sword*. (**Dative of Means or Instrument**)
- They conquered the city *by <means of> treachery*. (**Dative of Means or Instrument**)

The dative ending by itself CANNOT be used to mean *with* or *by* in the following senses:

- He is working *with other people*. This sense requires σύν + dative = *in coöperation with*.
- He is going to town *with his friend*. This sense requires μετά + genitive = *in company with*.
- He lives in the house *by the road*. This sense requires παρά + dative = *beside*.

- 5) To **answer prepositions** (especially those that express *fixed location*).

ἐν *in, within, among*

ἐπὶ (ἐπ', ἐφ' before vowels)..... *(located) on, upon*

παρά (παρ' before vowels)..... *(located, not moving) beside*

- 6) You have already learned that a few verbs take what sound to us like direct objects in the genitive rather than the accusative (e.g., ἀκούω + ἄνθρωπο/<**genitive**> = I hear a man). There are also a few verbs that take their “direct objects” (or so they sound to us) in the dative rather than the accusative. Vocabularies and lexica indicate that these verbs take **dative objects**.

The lexical entry for ἀκολουθέω (**I follow**), for example, will specify *c. dat. pers.* which is an abbreviation of the Latin for *with a dative of the person* <whom the subject is **following**>.

So, ἀκολουθέω + βασιλῆα/<**dative singular**> = I am following a king.

Why adjectives take dative endings

Dative nominal adjectives have the same uses and translations as dative nouns.

ὁ βασιλεὺς δίδωσι δῶρα τὸ/<**dative masculine plural**> καλὸ/<**dative masculine plural**>.

The king gives gifts **to the good (people)**. (*indirect object*)

As always, the trick to understanding nominal adjectives is to recognize and account for their gender and number.

Dative attributive and predicative adjectives are put into the dative only to show that they modify dative nouns. The case ending has no effect on the translation of the adjective.

Forming datives: Principles

Principle #1: Dative Singulars

- For **all nouns and adjectives of all genders**, the dative singular marker is **ι**.

The only *new* complication you will encounter is that final α/ and ο/ of 1st- and 2nd-declension forms lengthen (to η/ι and ω/ι) to distinguish them from the nominative plurals (α/ι and ο/ι). In modern printed books the ι in these dative forms is conventionally printed beneath the lengthened vowel thus: η, ω. Iotas written in this form are called **iota subscripts**.

Scribes about a thousand years ago began to write as subscripts iotas that people no longer pronounced, but which they knew had been pronounced and written centuries earlier. It is as if English printers were to begin subscripting silent *e*'s: *stor_e* for *store*. The medieval scribal tradition of subscripting iotas that had gone silent is still followed by most modern typographers. Iota subscripts appear only in the following configurations: α, η, ω.

Principle #2: Dative Plurals

- For **all 1st- and 2nd-declension nouns and adjectives** the dative plural marker is **ισι(ν)**. The only complication is that final **α/** of all 1st-declension forms lengthens to **η**. The initial **ι** of the ending is written as subscript: θυρη̑σι [θύρα/ισι(ν)].
- For **all 3rd-declension nouns and adjectives** the dative plural marker is **σι(ν)**. You should not be surprised to encounter virtually the same complications that you found in the nominative singular when the **ς** was added. In most forms the complication will be resolved in the same way. That is, the dative plural will usually be the same as the nominative singular with an **ι** added.

Forming datives: Details

Dative Singulars

1st-declension nouns: Rows 1-4

The **α/** of 1st-declension bases lengthens to **η** and **ι** is subscripted: πυλῆ (πυλά/ι).

2nd-declension nouns: Rows 5-8

The **ο/** of 2nd-declension bases lengthens to **ω** and **ι** is subscripted: θεῶ (θεό/ι).

Most 3rd-declension nouns: Rows 8-15

No complications occur in these rows. Just add **ι/**: κύλικι [κύλικ/ι].

Bases in **υ^ε/**: Row 16

Shape-shifting **υ** shifts to **ε**: πελέκει [πέλεκυ^ε/ι].

Bases in **φ/** and **εσ/**: Rows 17 and 18

Intervocalic digamma and sigma disappear, just as you should expect.

Dative Plurals

1st-declension nouns: Rows 1-4

The **α/** of the base lengthens, and the initial **ι** of the ending is subscripted: θυρη̑σι [θύρα/ισι(ν)].

2nd-declension nouns: Rows 5-8

No complications occur: θεοῖσι [θεό/ισι(ν)].

Most 3rd-declension nouns: Rows 8-15

The initial sigma of the ending **σι(ν)** produces several problems—just as the **ς** of the nominative singular did. Almost always the dative plural resolves the problem in the same way it was resolved in the nominative singular. Nominative singular, παῖς (παιδ/ς); dative plural, παισί (παιδ/σι).

Bases in **ν/** and **ρ/** display dative plurals that resolve the problematic combinations **νσ** and **ρσ** differently than their nominative singulars do:

nominative singular Ἀμαζών [Ἀμαζόν/ς], dative plural Ἀμαζοσι [Ἀμαζόνν/σι];

Chapter 9. Dative Case

nominative singular ῥήτωρ [ῥήτωρ/ς], dative plural ῥητόρσι [ῥητόρ/σι].

Bases in ϕ /: Row 17

As in the nominative singular forms, the combinations $-\eta\phi/\sigma$ and $-\omicron\phi/\sigma$ are pronounced and spelled $-\eta\upsilon\sigma$ and $-\omicron\upsilon\sigma$: βασιληῡσι; βοουσί.

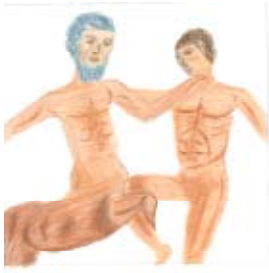
Bases in ψ /: and $\xi\sigma$ /: Rows 16 and 18

Dative plurals for these bases produce forms ending in $-\epsilon\sigma\iota$: ἄστεσι [ἄστ ψ /σι] and ξίφεσι [ξίφε σ /σι]. Intervocalic sigma is not lost in forming dative plurals. The Greeks were apparently determined to retain the entire ending $\sigma\iota$ —even where linguistic preferences (aversion to $\rho\sigma$ and intervocalic sigma, for example), might tend to eliminate the σ . Think about it: If the sigma were allowed to disappear ($/\sigma\iota/$), the dative *plural* form would be identical to the dative *singular* ($/\iota/$).

Dative forms of practice nouns

Carefully study the dative forms of the practice nouns, and review the charts from the previous three cases to refresh your memory.

Greek Before Christmas

Row 1	Ἀθήνα/	κεφαλά/	μάχα/
1 st -Declension Feminine (Long α bases)			
S: -η [ᾱ/ι]	τῇ Ἀθύνῃ	ταύτη τῇ κεφαλῇ	ἐκείνη τῇ μάχῃ
Pl: -ησι [ᾱ/ιοι]	τῇσι Ἀθύνῃσι	ταύτησι τῇσι κεφαλῇσι	ἐκείνησι τῇσι μάχῃσι
Row 2	κιθάρα/	θύρα/	ἀδικία/
1 st -Declension Feminine (Long α bases)			
S: -η [ᾱ/ι]	ταύτη τῇ κιθάρῃ	ἐκείνη τῇ θύρῃ	ἐκείνη τῇ ἀδικίᾳ
Pl: -ησι [ᾱ/ιοι]	ταύτησι τῇσι κιθάρῃσι	ἐκείνησι τῇσι θύρῃσι	ἐκείνησι τῇσι ἀδικίῃσι
Row 3	ἄμαξα/	τράπεζα/	μούσα/
1 st -Declension Feminine (Short α bases)			
S: -η [ᾱ/ι]	ἐκείνη τῇ ἁμάξῃ	τῇ τραπέζῃ	ταύτη τῇ μούσῃ
Pl: -ησι [ᾱ/ιοι]	ἐκείνησι τῇσι ἁμάξῃσι	τῇσι τραπέζῃσι	ταύτησι τῇσι μούσῃσι

Chapter 9. Dative Case

Row 4	ναύτα/	στρατιώτα/	νεανία/
1 st -Declension Masculine			
S: -η [ᾱ/ι]	ἐκείνῳ τῷ ναύτῃ	τῷ στρατιώτῃ	τούτῳ τῷ νεανίῃ
Pl: -ησι [ᾱ/ισι]	ἐκείνοισι τοῖσι ναύτησι	τοῖσι στρατιώτῃσι	τούτοισι τοῖσι νεανίῃσι
Row 5	θεό/	ἄνθρωπο/	δούλο/
2 nd -Declension Masculine			
S: -ω [ο/ι]	τούτῳ τῷ θεῷ	τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ	ἐκείνῳ τῷ δούλῳ
Pl: -οισι [ο/ισι]	τούτοισι τοῖσι θεοῖσι	τοῖσι ἀνθρώποισι	ἐκείνοισι τοῖσι δούλοισι
Row 6	θεό/	ὁδό/	ἔσοδο/
2 nd -Declension Feminine			
S: -ω [ο/ι]	ταύτῃ τῇ θεῷ	ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὁδῷ	τῇ ἐσόδῳ
Pl: -οισι [ο/ισι]	ταύτῃσι τῇσι θεοῖσι	ἐκείνῃσι τῇσι ὁδοῖσι	τῇσι ἐσόδοισι

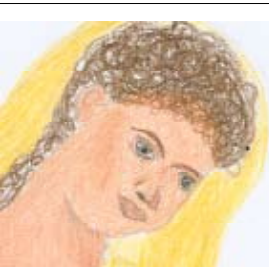
Greek Before Christmas

Row 7	δῶρο/	στάδιο/	πρόσωπο/
2 nd -Declension Neuter			
S: -ψ [ο/ι]	τούτῳ τῷ δώρῳ	ἐκείνῳ τῷ σταδίῳ	τῷ προσώπῳ
Pl: -οῖσι [ο/οῖσι]	τούτοις τοῖσι δώροισι	ἐκείνοισι τοῖσι σταδίοις	τοῖσι προσώποισι
Row 8	ἔρωτ/	παῖδ/	ὄρνιθ/
3 rd -Declension Dentals (-δ/, -τ/, -θ/) Non-neuter			
S: [-δ,τ,θ/ι]	ἐκείνῳ τῷ ἔρωτι	τούτῳ τῷ παιδί	ταύτῃ τῇ ὄρνιθι
Pl: [-δ,τ,θ/οῖσι]	ἐκείνοισι τοῖσι ἔρωσι	τούτοις τοῖσι παισὶ	ταύτησι τῇσι ὄρνισι
Row 9	σῶματ/	γράμματ/	ἄγαλματ/
3 rd -Declension Dentals (-ματ/) Neuter			
S: [-ματ/ι]	τούτῳ τῷ σώματι	τῷ γράμματι	ἐκείνῳ τῷ ἀγάλματι
Pl: [ματ/οῖσι]	τούτοις τοῖσι σώμασι	τοῖσι γράμμασι	ἐκείνοισι τοῖσι ἀγάλμασι

Chapter 9. Dative Case

Row 10	κύλικ/	σφίγγ/	θρίχ/
3 rd -Declension Palatals (-κ/, -γ/, -χ/)			
S: [-κ,γ,χ/ι]	ταύτη τῇ κύλικι	ἐκείνη τῇ σφίγγι	τῇ τριχί
Pl: ξι [-κ,γ,χ/σι]	ταύτησι τῇσι κύλιξι	ἐκείνησι τῇσι σφιγξί	τῇσι θριξί
Row 11	κύκλωπ/	γύπ/	χέρνιβ/
3 rd -Declension Labials (-π/, -β/, -φ/)			
S: [-π,β,φ/ι]	τῷ κύκλωπι	τούτῳ γυπί	ἐκείνη τῇ χέρνιβι
P: ψι [-π,β,φ/σι]	τοῖσι κύκλωψι	τούτοισι τοῖσι γυψί	ἐκείνησι τῇσι χέρνιβσι
Row 12	ῥήτορ/	μήτερ/	πύρ/
3 rd -Declension -ρ/			
S: [-ρ/ι]	ἐκείνῳ τῷ ῥήτορι	ἐκείνη τῇ μητρί	τούτῳ τῷ πυρί
Pl: [-ρ/σι]	ἐκείνοισι τοῖσι ῥήτορσι	ἐκείνησι τῇσι μητράσι	τούτοισι τοῖσι πυρσί

Greek Before Christmas

Row 13	Ἀμαζόν/	λιμέν/	ρίν/
3 rd -Declension -v/			
S: [-v/ι]	τῇ Ἀμαζόνι	ἐκείνῳ τῷ λιμένι	τούτῳ τῷ ρίνι
Pl: [-v/σι]	τῇσι Ἀμαζόσι	ἐκείνοισι τοῖσι λιμέσι	τούτοις τοῖσι ρίσι
Row 14	γέροντ/	ἐλέφαντ/	πρέποντ/
3 rd -Declension -vτ/			
S: [-vτ/ι]	ἐκείνῳ τῷ γέροντι	τούτῳ τῷ ἐλέφαντι	τῷ πρέποντι
P: -ουσι[-ον ^v τ/σι] -ασι[-αν ^v τ/σι]	ἐκείνοισι τοῖσι γέρουσι	τούτοις τοῖσι ἐλέφασι	τούτοις τοῖσι πρέπουσι
Row 15	ἀκρόπολι/	βάσι/	ὄψι/
3 rd -Declension -ι/			
S: [-ι/ι]	τῇ ἀκροπόλει	ταύτῃ τῇ βάσει	ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὄψι
Pl: [-ι/σι]	τῇσι ἀκροπόλεσι	ταύτῃσι τῇσι βάσεσι	ἐκείνῃσι τῇσι ὄψισι

Chapter 9. Dative Case

Row 16	νέκυ/	πέλεκυ ^ε /	ἄστυ ^ε /
3 rd -Declension -υ/, -υ ^ε /			
S: υι, ει [-υ, υ ^ε /ι]	τούτῳ τῷ νέκυι	τῷ πέλεκει	ἐκείνῳ τῷ ἄστει
Pl: [-υ/σι, υ ^ε /σι]	τούτοις τοῖσι νέκυσι	τοῖσι πελέκεσι	ἐκείνοις τοῖσι ἄστεσι
Row 17	βασιλῆ ^ς /	νή ^ς /	βό ^ς /
3 rd -Declension Digamma - ^ς /			
S: [- ^ς /ι, -ο ^ς /ι]	τῷ βασιλῇ	ἐκείνῃ τῇ νηί	ἐκείνῳ τῷ βοῖ
Pl: [- ^ς /σι] [-ο ^ς /σι]	τοῖσι βασιλεῦσι	ἐκείνησι τῇσι νηυσί	ἐκείνοις τοῖσι βουσί
Row 18	Σώκρατε ^ς /	τριήρε ^ς /	ξίφε ^ς /
3 rd -Declension -εσ/			
S: -ει [-εσ/ι]	τῷ Σωκράτει	ταύτῃ τῇ τριήρει	τούτῳ τῷ ξίφει
Pl: -εσι [-εσ/σι]	τοῖσι Σωκράτεσι	ταύτησι τῇσι τριήρεσι	τούτοις τοῖσι ξίφεσι

What now?

Work carefully through all the dative forms, making sure you understand the processes that occur and making lists of questions to ask your study group or your teacher. Learning the dative forms must include reviewing the other cases. Remember that you are trying to come to the point that you see the relatively simple patterns that have shaped the entire Greek noun (and adjective) system.

One thing to note in the process of review is that the endings of neuter nouns and adjectives are different from those of non-neuters in the nominative and accusative, but not in the genitive and dative.