

The Genitive Case

A. Formation

1. The characteristic genitive endings for **der-** and **ein-**words are **-es**, **-er**, **-es**, **-er**.
2. Masculine and neuter singular nouns add **-s** if more than one syllable, **-es** if one syllable, e.g. **des Mannes**, **meines Bruders**.
3. Proper names (**Barbara**, **Europa**, **Greenfield**, **Deutschland**) simply add **-s**, whatever their gender, e.g. **Europas Städte**, **Barbaras Buch**.
4. Adjective endings are **-en** (after **der-** or **ein-**words) or **-en**, **-er**, **-en**, **-er** (if unpreceded), e.g. **meines guten Freundes**, **meiner guten Freunde**, **guter Freunde**.
5. Special masculine nouns (**Herr**, **Student**, **Tourist**, etc.) have **-n** or **-en** in the genitive, e.g. **des Touristen**, **Herrn Lemons**.
6. The genitive of the interrogative pronoun **wer** is **wessen**, “whose”.
7. The genitive forms of the relative pronoun are: **dessen**, **deren**, **dessen**, **deren**, “of whom, of which, whose”.

B. Usage

1. To indicate POSSESSION (“apostrophe s” in English, or “of”).
2. To indicate INDEFINITE TIME (**eines Tages**, “one day”).
3. With the PREPOSITIONS (**an**)**statt**, “instead of”, **trotz**, “in spite of”, **während** “during”, and **wegen** “on account of, because of.”

C. Substitutes for the Genitive

1. In everyday spoken and written German, and where there would be awkwardness in a long series of genitives, the construction **von** + DATIVE is used: **das Haus meines Vaters** OR **das Haus von meinem Vater**. Note also the verb **gehören** + DATIVE, “to belong to”.

D. Special Genitive Constructions

1. To translate a series of genitives from German to English, e.g.

Der Hund des Bruders eines Verwandten meiner Tante...

first change to “of” constructions:

The dog of the brother of a relative of my aunt...

then change to “apostrophe s” constructions where necessary:

My aunt's relative's brother's dog...

2. When translating from English to German do the reverse:

My rich uncle's girlfriend's car...

The car of the girlfriend of my rich uncle...

Das Auto der Freundin meines reichen Onkels.

3. The special construction “one of the (superlative) noun(s)” uses **einer, eine, ein(e)s** followed by the GENITIVE PLURAL:

one of my best friends...

einer meiner besten Freunde...

one of the longest books...

eins der längsten Bücher...

E. Express in German

1. That's my doctor's house. His brother's wife is a friend of mine.
2. If Matt's girlfriend were only here!
3. Can you tell me the name of a good lawyer [**r Anwalt**]?
4. One of the most beautiful cathedrals in Germany is in Cologne.
5. We have never seen Mr. Lemon's wife.
6. My best friend's mother lived in Berlin during the war [**r Krieg**].
7. That's the man whose daughter you met.
8. Whose car is [use **stehen**] in front of our house?