

## A1 EINHEIT 12 GRAMMAR

The main point of grammar introduced in this unit is answering the question *wo?*- where? Normally one answers the question 'where' with a prepositional phrase. The examples of answers to the question are, of course, endless *ó* behind the barn, in the street, under the table, on the sofa, etc. In German, the object of a preposition answering the question *wo* is in the dative case.

In English, an object of a preposition is in the objective case. Most of the time we are completely unaware of this fact. 'The dog' remains 'the dog' whether it is the subject, direct object, indirect object, or object of the preposition. *ó* The dog licked my face. I can't find the dog. Give the dog a bone. I need to go for a walk with the dog.

Only when dealing with pronouns do we have to be aware of what we are doing in English. You would say, 'He licked my face' but wouldn't say, 'I need to go for a walk with he.'

Unlike English, in German there are plenty of opportunities for making a mistake. Prepositions fall into four categories *ó* those always followed by the accusative case, those always followed by dative case, those always followed by the genitive case, and those that can be followed by the dative or accusative depending on the verb. The prepositions that provide *Ortsangaben* (location, or statements of place) *ó* in other words, prepositions that answer the question *wo* almost all fall into the last category. When they answer the question *wohin* (where to), they are followed by the accusative case. When they answer the question *wo* (where), they are followed by the dative case.

Examples of verbs that answer the question *wo* are *sein* (to be), *stehen* (to stand), *liegen* (to lie), *sitzen* (to sit). It is easy to see that the prepositional phrase following these verbs will answer the question, 'where.' *Ich* am in the kitchen. *Ich* am sitting on the couch.

Prepositions that fall into this category are: *in, auf, neben, vor, hinter, unter, an* (at, on (a vertical surface)), *zwischen* (between). *Bei* (by (among its many meanings)) also answers the question *wo*. However, *bei* is always followed by the dative case no matter what the verb is.

Remember, the singular forms of the dative are as follows: *der* and *das* change to *dem*, *die* changes to *der*. A number of contractions are possible but the combinations *in dem* and *an dem* should always be expressed as contractions *ó* *im* and *am*.

*Ich bin im Lehrerzimmer. Was hast du in der Tasche? Er steht an der Wand.*  
*Wir stehen vor der Schule. Wir sitzen alle am Tisch.*

The dative plural definite article is *den*. Unless the plural ends in *s*, dative plural nouns get an *n*. - *Die Bleistifte liegen hinter den Computern.*

