

The Serbian Accusative Case: Endings and Usage

The accusative endings for the three possible classes of Serbian nouns are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The accusative case of Serbian nouns

SINGULAR	Class I (masculine: ending in a consonant in nominative) 'window'	Class I (neuter: ending in -o or -e in nominative) 'village'	Class II (feminine: ending in -a in nominative) 'woman'	Class III (feminine: ending in a consonant in nominative) 'love'
Accusative	prozor Jovana (John)	selo	žen-u	ljubav
PLURAL	'windows'	'villages'	"women"	'loves'
Accusative	prozor-e	sel-a	žen-e	ljubav-i

If you compare [noun case endings](#) in Table 1, you'll notice the **following pattern**:

1. The accusative case ending for Class I singular nouns is the same as the nominative case ending (zero ending). For example, 'prozor' and 'selo' are nominative forms and also accusative forms.
2. However, this rule doesn't apply to animate nouns (nouns denoting humans and animals). Rather, for animate masculine singular nouns, the accusative case ending is the same as the genitive case ending. For example, 'Jovana' is accusative case form and also the genitive case form.

When to use the accusative case in sentences?

- Most frequently, accusative case is used when it is a **direct object of a transitive verb**.

Table 2: Some examples of accusative nouns as direct objects of verbs

	Serbian	English
1.	Ja perem prozor .	I'm washing the window.
2.	Ja perem prozore .	I'm washing the windows.
3.	Ja vidim moje selo .	I see my village.
4.	Ja vidim moja sela .	I see my villages.
5.	Ja znam Jovana .	I know John.
6.	Ja čitam ove knjige .	I'm reading these books.

Table 3: A list of verbs that take direct object (accusative case)

Ditransitive verbs (dative, accusative)		Transitive verbs	
dati 'give'	odbiti 'refuse'	čekati 'wait'	pevati 'sing'
deliti 'share'	ostaviti 'leave'	čitati 'read'	pipati 'touch'
doneti 'bring'	pisati 'write'	čuti 'hear'	pisati 'write'
dozvoliti 'allow'	pokloniti 'donate'	čuvati 'keep'	pitati 'ask'
dugovati 'owe'	poslati 'send'	deliti 'share'	piti 'drink'
govoriti 'talk'	ponuditi 'offer'	dobiti 'get'	prati 'wash'
isplatiti 'pay'	prodati 'sell'	držati 'hold'	primiti 'receive'
javiti 'announce'	pozajmiti 'lend, borrow'	gledati 'watch'	saznati 'find out'
kazati 'tell'	reći 'tell'	jesti 'eat'	svirati 'play'

obećati 'promise'	verovati 'believe'	kriti 'hide'	tražiti 'seek'
odneti 'take away'		kuvati 'cook'	videti 'see'
		mrzeti 'hate'	voleti 'love'
		naći 'find'	znati 'know'
		peći 'bake'	

For your convenience, I split the transitive verbs into **ditransitive verbs** (verbs taking two objects, one in **the accusative and the other in dative case**) and monotransitive verbs (verbs taking just one direct object in the accusative case).

Accusative case is also used as an object of some prepositions:

- prepositions: **u** 'in', **na** 'on/at', **po** 'by, through', **za** 'for', **pred** 'in front', **nad** 'above, over', **pod** 'under', **među** 'among', **uz** 'alongside, by, upward, up', **niz** 'downward, down', **kroz** 'through'. When used with these prepositions, the accusative case indicates the **destination or goal of a movement or action expressed by a verb** (examples 1-10) or it indicates **time duration** (examples 11-13).

Table 4: Some examples of accusative nouns as objects of prepositions

	Serbian	English
1.	Ja ulazim u kuću.	I am entering the house.
2.	Ja idem u Beograd.	I am going to Belgrade.
3.	Stavila je mleko u frižider.	She put the milk in the refrigerator
4.	Veверica se popela na krov.	The squirrel climbed onto the roof.
5.	Išla sam po vodu.	I went to (fetch) water.
6.	Ja idem za Ameriku.	I am going to America.
7.	Došao je pred kuću.	He came to the front of the house.
8.	Kiša se sručila nad grad.	The rain poured on the town.
9.	Ja sam se sakrila pod drvo.	I hid under the tree.
10.	Ona je izašla među ljude.	She came out among the people.
11.	Milica se penje uz stepenice.	Milica is climbing up the stairs.
12.	Milan silazi niz stepenice.	Milan is going down the stairs.
13.	Voz prolazi kroz tunel.	The train is passing through the tunnel.
14.	Dolazim na leto.	I am coming in the summer.
15.	Došao je pred leto.	He came before the summer.
16.	On čeka Mariju celu noć.*	He's been waiting for Maria all night.

*Note, that in example 16, we have two nouns that have accusative case: **Mariju** and **celu noć**. The first noun is a direct object and the second one denotes duration of time.

To ask questions about the accusative case (direct object), like 'Whom/What do you see?' you use the following **interrogative pronouns in the accusative case**:

Koga 'whom' **Šta** 'what'

Table 5: Some examples of questions that ask about the accusative object

Serbian	English
Question: Koga vidiš? Answer: Vidim Milana.	Whom do you see? I see Milan.
Question: Šta vidiš? Answer: Vidim prozor.	What do you see? I see the window.

And now some exercises! If you get stuck or are not sure you got it right, please [email](#) me for help.

Exercise 1 – Fill out the accusative case forms in the sentences below

Using the nouns below (given in nominative, or dictionary form), please insert the appropriate accusative forms in the following sentences. For convenience, I have indicated which noun goes with which sentence.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1., 2., 6. knjiga 'book' | 6. kolač 'cake' | 9. film 'movie' |
| 3. sudovi 'dishes' | 7. muzika 'music' | 10. Kraljevo (town in Serbia, neuter gender) |
| 4. veš 'laundry' | 8. Dragan (male name) | 11. vreme 'time' |
| 5. ručak 'lunch' | 9. bioskop 'cinema' | 12. kuća 'house' |

1. Danas sam kupila _____	Today I bought a <u>book</u>
2. Hoću da čitam tu _____	I want to read that <u>book</u>
3. Ali, prvo moram oprati _____	But, first, I have to wash the <u>dishes</u>
4. I onda, moram oprati _____	And then, I have to wash the <u>laundry</u>
5. Onda moram skuvati _____	Then, I need to cook <u>lunch</u>
6. I moram peći _____	And I have to bake a <u>cake</u>
7. Kada čitam _____, volim da slušam _____	While I read <u>a book</u> I like to listen to <u>music</u>
8. Videla sam _____ danas.	I saw <u>Dragan</u> today.
9.. Uveče idem u _____ da gledam _____	In the evening, I am going to the <u>cinema</u> to watch a <u>movie</u>
10. Sutra, putujem u _____	Tomorrow, I'm traveling to <u>Kraljevo</u> .
11. Moram da stignem na _____.	I have to arrive on <u>time</u>
12. Dejan je prodao _____	Dejan sold (his) <u>house</u> .

Exercise 2 – Translate the following sentences

For this exercise you need to know both the [present tense](#) and [past tense](#). **The boldface nouns require the accusative case.** If you don't have a bi-directional Serbian-English-Serbian dictionary, you may go to the website: <http://www.krstarica.com/dictionary/> to get the words you need for this exercise. Please note that for nouns, a dictionary will only give you the nominative case forms.

1.	He told me this story .
2.	They waited for the train .
3.	I am going to Niš .
4.	The children came to the front of the movie theater .
5.	What did you buy?
6.	Whom did Marija meet?
7.	I'm going to Serbia in the winter .
8.	Bob was studying Serbian .
9.	Mary speaks Serbian well.