

## The Serbian Dative Case: Endings and Usage

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

**Table 1: The dative case of Serbian nouns**

	<b>Class I</b> (masculine: ending in a consonant in nominative) 'window'	<b>Class I</b> (neuter: ending in -o or -e in nominative) 'village'	<b>Class II</b> (feminine: ending in -a in nominative) 'woman'	<b>Class III</b> (feminine: ending in a consonant in nominative) 'love'
<b>SINGULAR</b>				
<b>Dative</b>	prozor- <b>u</b>	sel- <b>u</b>	žen- <b>i</b>	ljubav- <b>i</b>
<b>PLURAL</b>	'windows'	'villages'	"women"	'loves'
<b>Dative</b>	prozor- <b>ima</b>	sel- <b>ima</b>	žen- <b>ama</b>	ljubav- <b>ima</b>

In the plural, all noun classes, except Class II, have the same ending: **-ima**. The Class II plural nouns have the ending **-ama**. It's getting easy!

Also, **in both singular and plural**, the dative case endings are the same as the [instrumental case endings](#). So, you can memorize the endings for one case and you'll automatically know the ending for another case. Two for the price of one!

### When to use the dative case in sentences?

- Most frequently, dative case is used when a noun is an **indirect object of a ditransitive verb** (examples 1-3 in Table 2), or as an object of a 'reflexive' verb, i.e. a verb that takes the reflexive pronoun **se** (examples 6-9).

In all the examples below, a **noun in dative case is a recipient or benefactor** of an action denoted by a verb. That's the basic meaning of the dative case, as expressed by the name itself: dati 'give'.

**Table 2: Some examples of dative nouns as indirect objects of verbs**

	<b>Serbian</b>	<b>English</b>
1.	Ja dajem olovku <b>Mariji</b> .	I'm giving a pencil to <u>Marija</u> .
2.	Ja sam poslao poklon <b>Jovanu</b> .	I sent a present to <u>Jovan</u> .
3.	Ja sam poklonio <b>Nataši</b> cveće.	I gave flowers to <u>Nataša</u> .
4.	Marija se nada <b>Jovanu</b> .	Marija is expecting <u>Jovan</u> .
5.	Nedostaješ mi.	You are missed <u>by me</u> (equivalent of 'I miss you'.)
6.	On se približava <b>Beogradu</b> .	We're approaching <u>Belgrade</u> .
7.	Divimo se <b>Mariji</b> .	We admire <u>Maria</u> .
8.	Radujemo se <b>tvom dolasku</b> .	We look forward to <u>your arrival</u> .
9.	Ona se zahvalila <b>profesoru</b> .	She thanked the <u>professor</u> .

**Table 3: A list of verbs that take the indirect object in the dative case**

Ditransitive verbs (dative, accusative)		Transitive verbs	'se' verbs
dati 'give'	odbiti 'refuse'	laskati 'flatter'	diviti se 'admire'
deliti 'share'	ostaviti 'leave'	narediti 'order'	dopadati se 'please, like'
doneti 'bring'	pisati 'write'	nazdraviti 'toast'	nadati se 'hope, expect'
dozvoliti 'allow'	pokloniti 'donate'	nedostajati 'miss'	približiti se 'approach'
dugovati 'owe'	poslati 'send'	savetovati 'advise'	radovati se 'look forward, rejoice'
govoriti 'talk'	ponuditi 'offer'	pomoći 'help'	udvarati se 'court, romance'
isplatiti 'pay'	prodati 'sell'	pretiti 'threaten'	ukloniti se 'dodge'
javiti 'announce'	pozajmiti 'lend, borrow'	prkositi 'defy'	zahvaliti se 'thank'
kazati 'tell'	reći 'tell'	pripadati 'belong'	zameriti se 'antagonize, quarrel'
obećati 'promise'	verovati 'believe'	ugoditi 'please, accommodate'	
odneti 'take away'			

For your convenience, I split the transitive verbs into **ditransitive verbs** (verbs taking two objects, one in the **accusative and the other in the dative case**) and monotransitive verbs (verbs taking just one indirect object in the dative case), and transitive **'se' verbs**, i.e. verbs that always occur with the reflexive pronoun **se** 'self'.

- In addition to being used with verbs that take indirect objects, the dative case may be used with **motion verbs (verbs of going)**. The meaning of the dative case here is to express the idea of **seeing or visiting a place or person**, as seen in examples in Table 4.

**Table 4: Some examples of dative nouns with motion verbs**

	Serbian	English
10.	Ja idem <b>kući</b> .	I'm going home.
11.	Oni su otišli <b>svojim kućama</b> .	They went to their (respective) homes.

**The dative case is also used as an object of some prepositions:**

- prepositions: **k**, **ka**, and **prema** 'towards, to', indicating a **direction or course of movement or action**.
- prepositions: **saglasno** 'according, pursuant', **shodno** 'in accordance with, in conformity with', **slično** 'like', **suprotno** 'counter, against', **nasuprot** 'counter, against', **uinat** 'in spite, in defiance'.

**Table 5: Some examples of the dative case as the object of a preposition**

	Serbian	English
1.	Idem <b>prema školi.</b>	I'm going to the school.
2.	Autobus ide <b>ka školi.</b>	The bus is going to the school.
3.	Dete trči <b>k majci.</b>	A child runs to its mother.
4.	<b>Saglasno tome</b> , mi smo doneli odluku.	In accordance with this, we have made the decision.
5.	On je to uradio <b>uinat Mariji.</b>	He did this in defiance of Maria.

To ask questions about the dative case (indirect object), such as 'To whom did he give a book?' we use the following **interrogative pronouns in the dative case**:

**Kome** 'to whom'      **Čemu** '(about) what'

**Table 6: Some examples of questions that ask about the dative object**

Serbian	English
Question: <b>Kome</b> si dala knjigu? Answer: Dala sam <b>Mileni.</b>	To whom did you give the book? I gave (it) to Milena.
Question: <b>Čemu</b> se nadaš? Answer: Nadam se <b>dobrim ocenama.</b>	What are you hoping for? I'm hoping for good grades.
Question: <b>Prem čemu</b> ideš? Answer: Idem prema <b>cilju.</b>	Toward what are you going? I am going toward the goal.

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 dative case forms in sentences below

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

- |                         |                       |                               |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. kuća 'home/house'    | 4. Dragan (male name) | 6. Mara (female name)         |
| 2. Zorica (female name) | 5. majka 'mother'     | 7. Sanja (female name)        |
| 3. Milan (male name)    | 5. Jovanu             | 8. dobro vreme 'good weather' |
|                         |                       | 9. brat 'brother'             |

1. Danas idem _____	Today I'm going <u>home</u> .
2. Milan je poklonio knjigu _____	Milan gave a book to <u>Zorica</u>
3. Ona se zahvalila _____	She thanked <u>Milan</u> .
4. Ona se raduje _____	She is looking forward to (seeing) <u>Dragan</u>
5. Uinat _____ ona je otišla k _____	In defiance to (her) <u>mother</u> , she went to <u>Jovan</u>
6. On je dao čokoladu _____	He gave chocolate to <u>Mara</u>
7. Milan je sedeo nasuprot _____	Milan sat opposite <u>Sanja</u>
8. Nadam se _____	I'm looking forward to <u>good weather</u>
9. Marija je poslala pismo _____	Marija sent a letter to (her) <u>brother</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 dative case.** The words in parentheses (e.g., 'her', 'our') mean that you don't need to translate them since they are optional.

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. Note that for nouns, a dictionary will only give you the nominative case forms.

1.	Zorica sent a letter to <b>Bob</b> .
2.	Sneža gave a book to (her) <b>boss</b> .
3.	They are driving to the <b>airport</b> .
4.	You are hoping (to see) the <b>professors</b> .
5.	He defied <b>his parents</b> .
6.	<b>To whom</b> did Branka write?
7.	I'm going to <b>my relatives</b> .
8.	The house belongs to <b>Aleksandar</b> .