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LOCATIVE CASE (-DA)

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

The locative case (-DA) expresses location and answers the question "Where?" (Nerede?).

It is used to say that someone or something is in, on, or at a place. It is also used for points in time, such as clock times and years.

The suffix has four regular forms: -da, -de, -ta, -te.

1. Forms of the Locative Suffix

The suffix changes according to vowel harmony and the voicing of the final consonant.

Possible forms:

- -da
- -de
- -ta
- -te

2. Vowel Harmony (a / e selection)

Check the last vowel of the noun:

- a, ı, o, u → a → -da / -ta
- e, i, ö, ü → e → -de / -te

Examples:

- oda → odada (in the room)
- yol → yolda (on the road)
- ev → evde (at home)
- göl → gölde (in the lake)

3. Voicing Rule (d / t selection)

If the noun ends with a voiceless consonant (f, s, t, k, ç, ş, h, p), use -ta / -te.

If it ends with a vowel or a voiced consonant, use -da / -de.

Turkish students remember the eight voiceless consonants with the phrase "Fıstıkçı Şahap". Its consonants are exactly these sounds: F, S, T, K, Ç, Ş, H, P. For how each letter sounds, see the Turkish alphabet lesson.

No consonant softening: The locative suffix begins with a consonant, so the last consonant of the noun stays the same.

- kitap → kitapta (not kitabda)
- sepet → sepette (not sepedde)

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This is different from the accusative case, where kitap becomes kitabı. Learners often carry that change over to the locative by mistake.

4. Examples by Suffix Form

-da

- oda → odada (in the room)
- yol → yolda (on the road)
- okul → okulda (at school)

-de

- ev → evde (at home)
- şehir → şehirde (in the city)
- göz → gözde (in the eye)

-ta

- kitap → kitapta (in the book)
- sınıf → sınıfta (in the classroom)
- park → parkta (in the park)

-te

- sepet → sepette (in the basket)
- market → markette (at the market)
- otobüs → otobüste (on the bus)

5. Meaning: in / on / at

The locative corresponds to the English prepositions "in", "on", and "at". Turkish uses one suffix where English chooses between separate words.

Examples:

- Ben evdeyim. (I am at home.)
- Kitap masada. (The book is on the table.)
- O okulda. (He/She is at school.)
- Kedi sandalyede. (The cat is on the chair.)

6. Proper Nouns and the Apostrophe

With names of people, cities, and countries, the suffix is separated by an apostrophe. The same vowel and consonant rules apply.

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- İstanbul → İstanbul'da (in Istanbul)
- Ankara → Ankara'da (in Ankara)
- Türkiye → Türkiye'de (in Türkiye)
- Ahmet → Ahmet'te (at Ahmet's / with Ahmet)

Example: Kitap Ahmet'te. (Ahmet has the book.)

7. Locative with Personal Endings

Locative forms combine with personal endings to express "to be" in a place.

- Ben evdeyim. (I am at home.)
- Sen evdesin. (You are at home.)
- O evde. (He/She is at home.)
- Biz evdeyiz. (We are at home.)
- Siz evdesiniz. (You are at home. plural or formal)
- Onlar evde / evdeler. (They are at home.)

Buffer letter -y-: The locative always ends in a vowel, so the endings for "I" and "we" take a -y- before them: evde + im → evdeyim, okulda + ız → okuldayız.

8. Negative and Question Forms

To make the sentence negative, use değil with the personal ending.

- Evde değilim. (I am not at home.)
- Ali okulda değil. (Ali is not at school.)

For yes/no questions, use mi (mı, mu, mü) with the personal ending. It is written as a separate word.

- Evde misin? (Are you at home?)
- Öğretmen sınıfta mı? (Is the teacher in the classroom?)

9. Locative in Questions

Use nerede? to ask for a location.

- Neredesin? → Evdeyim. (Where are you? → I'm at home.)
- Kitap nerede? → Masada. (Where is the book? → On the table.)
- Onlar nerede? → Parkta. (Where are they? → In the park.)

Useful answers: burada (here), şurada (there, nearby), orada (there).

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10. Pronouns with the Locative

Personal pronouns take the locative directly. O, bu, and şu add an -n- before the suffix.

- ben → bende
- sen → sende
- o → onda
- biz → bizde
- siz → sizde
- onlar → onlarda
- bu → bunda, şu → şunda

With a pronoun, the locative often means "to have something with you" or "to be in someone's hands".

- Kitap bende. (I have the book. Literally: The book is on me.)
- Anahtar sende mi? (Do you have the key?)

11. Locative for Time

The locative also marks when something happens.

- saat üçte (at three o'clock)
- saat yedide (at seven o'clock)
- 2026'da (in 2026)

Examples:

- Saat yedide kalkıyorum. (I get up at seven.)
- Ders saat onda başlıyor. (The lesson starts at ten.)

12. Common Locative Expressions

- evde (at home)
- işte (at work)
- mutfakta (in the kitchen)
- üniversitede (at the university)
- yemekte (at dinner)
- dışarıda (outside)

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Examples

- Köpek bahçede. (The dog is in the garden.)
- Saat duvarda. (The clock is on the wall.)
- Öğretmen sınıfta. (The teacher is in the classroom.)
- Araba garajda. (The car is in the garage.)
- Biz parkta yürüyoruz. (We are walking in the park.)

Notes

- Four forms: -da, -de, -ta, -te
- The last vowel selects a / e
- The last consonant selects d / t
- No consonant softening: kitapta, sepette
- Proper nouns take an apostrophe: İstanbul'da
- Used for place and for time

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