

DATIVE CASE (-A)

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

The dative case (-A) expresses direction and movement toward a place, person, or goal. It answers “Where to?” / “To whom?” (Nereye? / Kime?)

The suffix has two forms: -a and -e, selected through vowel harmony.

1. Forms of the Dative Suffix

- -a
- -e

Only vowel harmony determines which form is used.

2. Vowel Harmony (a / e selection)

Check the last vowel of the noun:

- a, ı, o, u → a → -a
- e, i, ö, ü → e → -e

Examples:

- oda → odaya (to the room)
- yol → yola (to the road)
- ev → eve (to the house)
- köy → köye (to the village)

3. Buffer Consonant (y)

If the noun ends in a vowel, insert -y- before the suffix.

Examples:

- araba → arabaya (to the car)
- anne → anneye (to the mother)
- oda → odaya
- köprü → köprüye

4. Meaning: “to / toward”

The dative expresses physical movement toward a destination.

Examples:

- Okula gidiyorum. (I am going to school.)
- Eve dönüyor. (He/She is returning home.)
- Parka yürüyoruz. (We are walking to the park.)

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5. Dative with Verbs of Motion

Common verbs that take the dative:

- gitmek (to go)
- gelmek (to come)
- yürümek (to walk)
- koşmak (to run)
- dönmek (to return)
- ulaşmak (to reach)

Example:

- İşe gidiyorum. (I am going to work.)

6. Dative with Abstract Goals

The dative can indicate non-physical targets such as people, abstract concepts, or objectives.

Examples:

- Çocuğa yardım ediyor. (He/She is helping the child.)
- Soruna çözüm arıyoruz. (We are looking for a solution to the problem.)
- Başarıya ulaştı. (He/She reached success.)

7. Examples by Form

-a

- yol → yola (to the road)
- oda → odaya (to the room)
- okul → okula (to the school)

-e

- ev → eve (to the house)
- şehir → şehre (to the city)
- köy → köye (to the village)

8. Common Expressions

- eve gitmek (to go home)
- işe başlamak (to start work)
- okula dönmek (to return to school)
- parka yürümek (to walk to the park)
- arkadaşa söylemek (to tell a friend)

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Examples

- Okula gidiyorum. (I am going to school.)
- Eve dönüyor. (He/She is returning home.)
- Parka yürüyoruz. (We are walking to the park.)
- Arkadaşıma yazıyorum. (I am writing to my friend.)
- Köye gidiyorlar. (They are going to the village.)
- Odaya giriyorum. (I am entering the room.)
- Annemle dedeme gidiyoruz. (We are going to my grandfather with my mother.)
- Çocuğa yardım ediyor. (He/She is helping the child.)
- Şehre taşıyor. (He/She is moving to the city.)
- İşe koşuyor. (He/She is running to work.)

Notes

- Two forms: -a / -e
- Selected through vowel harmony
- Use -y- after nouns ending in a vowel
- Expresses physical or abstract direction
- Some two-syllable words drop the narrow vowel in the second syllable when a vowel-initial suffix is added.

şehir → şehre

burun → buruna değil, burna

ağız → ağıza değil, ağza

- Some nouns ending in p, ç, t, or k soften this final consonant to b, c, d, or ğ when a vowel-initial suffix is added.

çocuk → çocuğa

kitap → kitaba

ağaç → ağaca

sokak → sokağa