

## Nominative & Dative Cases

The **Nominative Case** is the basic form that you learn whenever you learn a new noun. It's also the form that you look up in the dictionary, which is why it is sometimes called the Dictionary Form.

As we recall, nouns can be indefinite (unspecific) or definite (specific). For example:

|                | Dictionary Form | Indefinite Form | Definite Form |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>English</b> | dog             | a dog           | the dog       |
| <b>Gaelic</b>  | cù              | cù              | an cù         |

In English, we have two articles - 'a' for indefinite and 'the' for definite. However, in Gaelic, there is no indefinite article, but there is a definite article. The form of the definite article depends on the grammatical gender of the noun, the initial letter and the number (singular or plural). Here is a wee chart to summarize:

| Nominative Case (Dictionary Form)   |                         |              |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--|--|
| Gender & Number                     | Initial Letter          | Article Form | Example                                      | Notes  |
| <b>Masculine &amp; Singular</b>     | m, b, f, p (1)          | am           | am bòrd / the table                          | (1) My, Big, Fat, Pig rule   |
|                                     | vowels<br>other         | an t-<br>an  | an t-aran / the bread<br>an doras / the door |  |
| <b>Feminine &amp; Singular</b>      | b, c, g, m, p (2)       | a' *         | a' chraobh / the tree                        | (2) lenitable consonants not subject to the To Die for rule (or other rules)<br>(3) s + unlenitable letter |
|                                     | f                       | an *         | an fheòil / the meat                         |  |
|                                     | s +                     | an t-        | an t-seoclaid / the chocolate                |  |
|                                     | l,n,r,vowel(3)<br>other | an           | an nighean / the girl                        |  |
| <b>Masculine or Feminine Plural</b> | consonant               | na           | na bùird (4)                                 | (4) irregular plural   |
|                                     | vowel                   | na h-        | na h-ùbhlán                                  |  |
|                                     | * causes lenition       |              |  |  |

| Examples of the Nominative Case |                                |                              |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1                               | Tha cù an-seo.                 | A dog is here.               |
| 2                               | Tha an cù an-seo.              | The dog is here.             |
| 3                               | Tha na coin an-seo.            | The dogs are here.           |
| 4                               | A bheil bòrd mòr?              | Is a table big?              |
| 5                               | A bheil am bòrd mòr?           | Is the table big?            |
| 6                               | A bheil na bùird mòr?          | Are the tables big?          |
| 7                               | Chan eil aran math.            | Bread is not good.           |
| 8                               | Chan eil an t-aran math.       | The bread is not good.       |
| 9                               | Chan eil na h-aran math.       | The breads are not good.     |
| 10                              | Nach eil doras gorm?           | Isn't a door blue?           |
| 11                              | Nach eil an doras gorm?        | Isn't the door blue?         |
| 12                              | Nach eil na dorsan gorm?       | Aren't the doors blue?       |
| 13                              | Tha craobh bhrèagha.           | A tree is beautiful.         |
| 14                              | Tha a' chraobh bhrèagha.       | The tree is beautiful.       |
| 15                              | Tha na craobhan bhrèagha.      | The trees are beautiful.     |
| 16                              | Chan eil feòil dhona.          | Meat isn't bad.              |
| 17                              | Chan eil an fheòil dhona.      | The meat isn't bad.          |
| 18                              | Chan eil na feòla dhona.       | The meats aren't bad.        |
| 19                              | Nach eil seoclaid dhonn?       | Isn't chocolate brown?       |
| 20                              | Nach eil an t-seoclaid dhonn?  | Isn't the chocolate brown?   |
| 21                              | Nach eil na seoclaidean dhonn? | Aren't the chocolates brown? |

The **Dative Case** is the form used when nouns become part of prepositional phrases. Just like the Nominative Case, there is a wee chart to help with the definite form.

| <b>Dative Case (Prepositional)</b>       |  |                             |  |  |
|--|--|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Gender &amp; Number</b>               | <b>Initial Letter</b>                        | <b>Article Form</b>         | <b>Example</b>                                   | <b>Notes</b>   |
| <b>Masculine &amp; Feminine Singular</b> | b, c, g, m, p<br>f<br>s+l,n,r,vowel<br>other | a' *<br>an *<br>an t-<br>an | a' bhòrd<br>an fhòn<br>an t-seoclaid<br>an duine | All nouns are treated like the nominative feminine singular. |
| <b>Masculine &amp; Feminine Plural</b>   | consonant<br>vowel                           | na<br>na h-                 | na bùird<br>na h-ùbhlán                          | This is the same form as the nominative plural               |
| * causes lenition                        |  |                             |  |  |

Now take a look at the Dative Case in action.

| <b>Preposition</b> | <b>Indefinite Example</b> | <b>Definite Example</b> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| ann/anns - in      | ann an taigh              | anns an taigh           |
| air - on           | air bòrd                  | air a' bhòrd            |
| aig - at           | aig craobh                | aig a' chraobh          |
| fo/fon* - under    | fo bhòrd                  | fon a' bhòrd            |

\*causes lenition

| <b>Examples of the Dative Case</b> |                            |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1                                  | Tha ubhal air bòrd.        | An apple is on a table.    |
| 2                                  | Tha an ubhal air bòrd.     | The apple is on a table.   |
| 3                                  | Tha an ubhal air a' bhòrd. | The apple is on the table. |
| 4                                  | Chan eil duine aig fòn.    | A man is not at a phone.   |

| <b>Examples of the Dative Case</b> |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 5                                  | Chan eil an duine aig fòn.         | The man is not at a phone.   |
| 6                                  | Chan eil an duine aig an fhòn.     | The man is not at the phone. |
| 7                                  | A bheil nighean fo chraobh?        | Is a girl under a tree?      |
| 8                                  | A bheil an nighean fo chraobh?     | Is the girl under a tree?    |
| 9                                  | A bheil an nighean fon a' chraobh? | Is the girl under the tree?  |
| 10                                 | Nach eil cù ann an taigh?          | Isn't a dog in a house?      |
| 11                                 | Nach eil an cù ann an taigh?       | Isn't the dog in a house?    |
| 12                                 | Nach eil an cù anns an taigh?      | Isn't the dog in the house?  |