

Dative Case as an Indirect Object

Effective and efficient note-taking hint:
focus on/write down the things in red!

- The primary usage of the **dative case** is to express an **indirect object**.
- An indirect object will usually be found **after a verb of giving, showing, or telling**.

Give the girl the money. Da puellae pecuniam.

- “Give” is the verb. What did you give?
 - “the money” -- pecuniam
 - This is the direct object, accusative in Latin
- To whom did you give the money?
 - “the girl” -- puellae
 - This is the indirect object, dative in Latin

what? = accusative direct object
to whom? = dative indirect object

- Show us the picture.
 - Demonstra nobis picturam.
- Tell me the story.
 - Narra mihi fabulam.

Verbum Sapienti (“a word to the wise):

- “Give the girl the money” shows an indirect object in English.
 - If you rearrange the sentence as “Give the money to the girl,” it is NOT an indirect object IN ENGLISH. It is a prepositional phrase introduced by “to.”
- That is not true in Latin. “Give the girl the money” and “give the money to the girl” are BOTH correct translations for Da puellae pecuniam.
 - As a matter of fact, if you can arrange the sentence both ways, it will confirm to you that it is an indirect object in Latin.

- Da puero stylum.
 - Give the boy a pencil.
 - Give the pencil to the boy.
- Monstra matri librum.
 - Show your mother the book.
 - Show the book to your mother.
- Dat liberis cibum.
 - He is giving the children food.
 - He is giving food to the children.

- Narrasne vobis veritatem?
 - Are you telling us the truth?
 - Are you telling the truth to us?
- Da mihi complexum et osculum.
 - Give me a hug and a kiss.
 - Give a hug and a kiss to me.

Remember:

- For a **dative indirect object**, you are giving, showing, or telling “something” (accusative direct object) **to** “someone” (dative indirect object).
- Do NOT confuse this “to” with an accusative prepositional phrase showing motion toward.
 - Puer ad villam ambulat.