

GENITIVE CASE

The Genitive is the third and last case existing in both English and Latin. In English, all pronouns have a genitive case that shows possession: "his", "her", "my", "their", "whose", etc. These answer the question "Belonging to whom or what?" Regular nouns in English also have a genitive form: in the singular, the ending "s" is added; in the plural, s'.

Consider the following examples:

Their father is here.

The **man's** father is here.

The **boys'** father is here.

In Latin, the Genitive case may also show possession. However, it may be used for some other things as well, as you will see later on. Its ending of course varies depending on the original ending of the noun: for a-nouns, the singular is *-ae* and the plural is *-ārum*; for both us- and um-nouns, the singular is *-ī* and the plural is *-ōrum*. Consider the following chart:

Nominative, Accusative, and Genitive Cases

	a-nouns		us-nouns		um-nouns	
	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.	sg.	pl.
Nominative	a	ae	us	ī	um	a
Accusative						
Genitive	ae	ārum	ī	ōrum	ī	ōrum

A genitive is normally paired with another noun in the sentence which it modifies. In English, it is always placed immediately before the noun it modifies: for example, "my soup", "the boy's shirt", etc. But in Latin, a genitive may be placed either before or after the noun it modifies: for example, *feminae panes*, *panes feminae*. In fact, a genitive may occasionally even be separated by another word: *panes sunt feminae*.

Also, keep in mind that the grammatical possession that the genitive case signifies is a fairly broad and vague connection. It includes physical possession, such as when someone has a thing on their person: For example, in "The student's book was loaned from the library." the book does not legally belong to the student, but it may still be referred to as "the student's book" because it is on his person. Grammatical possession may also be legal possession: for example, in "You have my book!" the book may be called "my book" because it legally belongs to me, even though I am not in possession of it. Finally, grammatical possession may signify a close relationship between people or things: for example, in "the man's wife" or the "woman's husband" the possession is not necessarily legal or physical but only shows a strong connection.