

■ **8.1.4** The genitive case expresses possession. It is used

- to indicate the owner of another noun, or to define or qualify another noun:
 der Computer meines Bruders *my brother's computer*
 ein Haus mittlerer Größe *a medium-sized house*
 die Auswirkung der Magersucht *the effect of anorexia*
- for the object of a small number of verbs (see 30.4)
- after certain prepositions (see 15.5)
- in some adverbial phrases (see 4.4.2, 11.1.4)

Especially in colloquial German, the genitive is often replaced by a construction with **von** (+ dative). With personal names both constructions are used:

der Hund von unserem Nachbarn	<i>our neighbour's dog</i>
der Deckel von der Kaffeemaschine	<i>the lid of the coffee machine</i>
Erikas Katze	} <i>Erika's cat</i>
die Katze von Erika	

8.2 Cases of nouns: formation

Endings are added to German nouns to indicate some but not all of the cases in which they are used.

■ 8.2.1 The singular

Most nouns do not add any endings in the singular, except in the genitive singular of masculine and neuter nouns. This is formed by adding **-s**, or often **-es** with one-syllable nouns or for ease of pronunciation. (For exceptions see 8.2.3.) No ending is added to feminine nouns.

	masculine		neuter		feminine	
nom.	der	Lehrer	das	Kind	die	Hand
acc.	den	Lehrer	das	Kind	die	Hand
dat.	dem	Lehrer	dem	Kind	der	Hand
gen.	des	Lehrers	des	Kind(e)s	der	Hand

■ 8.2.2 The plural

All nouns add **-n** in the dative plural unless their nominative plural ends in **n** or **s**:

die Frauen – den Frauen die Babys – den Babys

(The plural of most feminine nouns and all weak nouns (8.2.3) ends in **n**.)

		masculine		neuter		feminine	
nom.	die	Lehrer	Kinder	Kinder	Hände	Hände	Hände
acc.	die	Lehrer	Kinder	Kinder	Hände	Hände	Hände
dat.	den	Lehrern	Kindern	Kindern	Händen	Händen	Händen
gen.	der	Lehrer	Kinder	Kinder	Hände	Hände	Hände

■ 8.2.3 Weak and irregular nouns

a Weak nouns

The so-called 'weak' nouns add the ending **-(e)n** in all cases, singular and plural, except the nominative singular. The (e) is omitted if the noun ends in **-e**, **-el** or **-er**. All these nouns are masculine. They include

- some names of human beings and animals, e.g.:
 der Mensch (*man*), der Bär (*bear*), der Bauer (*farmer*)
- many foreign words, especially those with the endings **-and**, **-ant**, **-at**, **-ent**, **-ist**, **-krat**, e.g.:
 der Automat (*machine*), der Demokrat (*democrat*),
 der Komponist (*composer*), der Student (*student*)