# Museum of classical archaeology logo Time for some grammar! Cases: nominative or accusative?

Just what is a case, and how do nominative and accusative fit in?

It is simple: the case tells us who is doing an action and who is having an action done to them.

Nouns have cases!

The nominative case tells us who is doing the action. They are the subject.

The horse walks.

Equus ambulat.

Verb

Nominative

But what if we wanted to say something like:

**The boy loves the horse.**

We need to put horse (equus) into the accusative case.

The accusative case shows the person or thing *being loved*.

In other words, the accusative case shows us who is having the action done to them. They are the object.

So, how do we turn the nominative **equus** into an accusative? We must change the ending, just like we did for our Latin verbs.

Equus becomes Equum.

We would say:

Filius amat Equum

Accusative

Verb

Nominative

## Here is a table with the nominatives and accusatives of some of the words you have learnt so far:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Nominative | Accusative | English |
| Ovis | Ovem | Sheep |
| Porcus | Porcum | Pig |
| Canis | Canem | Dog |
| Lupus | Lupum | Wolf |
| Pullus | Pullum | Chicken |
| Gallus | Gallum | Cockerel |
| Vulpes | Vulpem | Fox |
| Vacca | Vaccam | Cow |
| Mater | Matrem | Mother |
| Pater | Patrem | Father |
| Frater | Fratrem | Brother |
| Soror | Sororem | Sister |
| Avus | Avum | Grandfather |
| Filius | Filium | Boy |
| Filia | Filiam | Girl |

What do you notice about some of the endings?

Some end in -um, some end in -am and others end in -em.

## That is because nouns also have gender.

That means nouns can be masculine or feminine and this changes how they end.

Feminine nouns end in -a or -am.

Masculine nouns end in -us or -um.

The ending -is or -em can be either masculine or feminine just to confuse you!

Here is a list of five feminine nouns and five masculine nouns.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Feminine** | **Maculine** |
| Filia | Filius |
| Vacca | Gallus |
| Mater | Pater |
| Soror | Porcus |
| Ovis | Avus |

## Activity: Next to the English sentences below, write an N for nominative or an A for accusative in the box, to show what case the word in bold should be in.

## The first one is done for you.

**N**

The **cow** eats grass.

The **brother** loves his sister.

The fox chases the **chicken**.

The boy rides the **horse**.

The **sheep** bleats.

The father cooks **dinner**.

The girlhits the **boy**.

The **cockerel** crows at dawn.

The **mother** and the **girl** played a game.