Language Awareness for Key Stage 3
7: Case

Key Terms	Optional Terms
• Case	• Partitive
• Nominative	• Allative
• Accusative	• Ablative
• Genitive	• Adessive
• Dative	• Illative
	• Elative
	• Inessive
	• Essive
	• Abessive
	• Translative
	• Instructive
	• Comitative

- Introduction: Case
  - Today we will look at another property of nouns and pronouns: <u>case</u>
  - We will see how case works in English, and how case is sometimes visible and sometimes not
  - Then we can go on to see how case works in other languages
  - Some languages have no cases, but others have a lot of them
  - Some of these cases are more fundamental than others
- What Is Case?
  - Case is a property of nouns and pronouns related to their role in a sentence (i.e. as a subject, an object or something else)
  - Some cases are already familiar to you from English
    - <u>I</u> saw <u>them</u>
    - <u>They</u> saw <u>me</u>
  - The forms *I* and *they* are for subjects
  - The forms *me* and *them* are for objects
  - Case relates to the structure of the sentence, not necessarily to the meaning
    - <u>I</u> saw <u>them</u>
    - <u>I</u> was seen by <u>them</u>
  - In *I saw them*, *I* refers to the person seeing
  - In *I was seen by them*, *I* refers to the person being seen
  - However, *I* is the subject in both sentences (even though its relation to seeing is different)
  - This means that *I* appears in the same case in both sentences
  - The case used for subjects (*I*, *they*) is called the <u>nominative</u> case
  - The case used for objects (*me*, *them*) is called the <u>accusative</u> case
  - In English, most pronouns have separate forms for these two cases
  - However, there can be a difference in case even without a difference in form
    - <u>Mary</u> saw <u>me</u>
    - <u>She</u> saw <u>me</u>
    - <u>I</u> saw <u>Mary</u>
    - <u>I</u> saw <u>her</u>
  - We can say that *Mary* in *Mary saw me* is nominative, because it can only be replaced by *she*
  - Likewise, *Mary* in *I saw Mary* is accusative, because it can only be replaced by *her*

- However, there is only a single form *Mary* for both cases

Activity 1:

Make a list of all the words in English with separate nominative and accusative forms. There are some pronouns without separate forms for these cases; include them in your list too.

Nominative	Accusative

- What Cases Are There?
  - So far we've looked at the nominative and accusative cases
  - However, these are not the only possible cases
  - Many languages also have a <u>genitive</u> case
  - The genitive case can indicate the relation of one noun or pronoun to another noun or pronoun
  - One of the main uses of the genitive case is to indicate possession
  - You can see how the genitive case works by looking at possessive forms in English
    - This is *John's* book
    - This book is *John's*
  - The *italic* forms indicate the relation of John to the book
  - There are many languages that use a genitive case to indicate possession
    - *Hansens* Buch   (German)
    - leabhar *Sheáin*   (Irish)
    - *Jonno* honga   (Japanese)
    - *Jana* książka   (Polish)
    - kniga *Ivana*   (Russian)
  - There are certain differences between English possessives and the genitive case found in some other languages
  - For example, in Latin the genitive can express possession
    - Hic est *Iohannis* liber
      'This is John's book'
  - But it can also be used with partitive meaning (relating a part to a whole)
    - *aquae* sextarius
      water's pint
      'a pint of water'
  - Another common case is the <u>dative</u> case
  - The dative case is often used for the indirect object of a verb
  - As such, it frequently refers to a person who receives something

	Direct object (accusative) 'I see her'	Indirect object (dative) 'I give her a book'
French	Je la vois	Je lui donne un livre
German	Ich sehe sie	Ich gebe ihr ein Buch
Polish	Widzę ją	Daję jej książkę

- Different languages do not always use cases in the same way
- With the verb meaning 'help', German and Polish use the dative case
  - Ich helfe ihr   (German)
  - Pomogę jej   (Polish)
  - (Help can be seen as something that you receive)
- However, French uses the accusative case
  - Je l'aide   (French)
  - (Help can also be seen as something done to you)
- What Does Case Do?
  - In a language like English, where case is not shown on most words, we can use word order to tell subjects and objects apart
  - Languages with more case marking can be more flexible about word order

Iohannes dedit Mariae librum	Dedit Mariae Iohannes librum	Mariae librum Iohannes dedit
Iohannes dedit librum Mariae	Dedit Mariae librum Iohannes	Mariae librum dedit Iohannes
Iohannes Mariae dedit librum	Dedit librum Iohannes Mariae	Librum Iohannes dedit Mariae
Iohannes Mariae librum dedit	Dedit librum Mariae Iohannes	Librum Iohannes Mariae dedit
Iohannes librum dedit Mariae	Mariae dedit Iohannes librum	Librum dedit Iohannes Mariae
Iohannes librum Mariae dedit	Mariae dedit librum Iohannes	Librum dedit Mariae Iohannes
Dedit Iohannes Mariae librum	Mariae Iohannes dedit librum	Librum Mariae Iohannes dedit
Dedit Iohannes librum Mariae	Mariae Iohannes librum dedit	Librum Mariae dedit Iohannes

  - All these Latin sentences mean the same thing: 'John gave Mary a book'

Activity 2:

In groups, take some time to think of any other languages that you might know. How many cases do these languages have? You can start by trying to translate some of the sentences that we've seen (e.g. with *see*, *give*, *help*). Can you find any cases that we haven't seen yet?

Language	Cases

- Case in Different Languages
  - We've seen that different languages distinguish different cases
  - For example, there are no separate dative forms in English, but there are in French, German, and Polish
  - But exactly how much variation is there?
  - Chinese makes no case distinctions at all
    - Wǒ kàn tāmen
      'I see them'
    - Tāmen kàn wǒ
      'They see me'
  - *I* and *me* are the same word, *wǒ*

- *They* and *them* are the same word, *tāmen*
- As in English, you can use word order to tell which is the subject and which is the object
- Finnish has as many as 15 cases!

Name	Example	Meaning
Nominative	he	they
Accusative	heidät	them
Genitive	heidän	their
Dative (Allative)	heille	to them
Ablative	heiltä	from them
Adessive	heillä	at them
Illative	heihin	into them
Elative	heistä	out of them
Inessive	heissä	within them
Essive	heinä	as them
Abessive	heittä	without them
Partitive	heitä	of them
Translative	heiksi	until them
Instructive	hein	with them
Comitative	heineen	along with them

- As you can see from the table, many of these Finnish cases are translated into English using prepositions
- It's even possible to use prepositions as a different way of saying some of the things we've seen in English
    - I took <u>John's</u> picture
    - I sent <u>Mary</u> the picture
    - I took a picture <u>of John</u>
    - I sent the picture <u>to Mary</u>
- However, it isn't possible to express the meaning of the nominative or accusative case with a preposition
- We can't replace *I* or *me* with anything in the same way that we can replace *John's* with *of John*
- This may suggest to you that nominative and accusative are in some ways the most basic cases
- Many languages have special nominative and accusative case forms, but very few have special elative case forms
- Case and Determiners
    - In English, if you use a possessive form you can't use a determiner as well
        - the book
        - John's book
        - ~~the John's book~~
    - This is also true in some other languages, such as Irish
        - an leabhar
          'the book'
        - leabhar Sheáin
          'John's book'
    - However, there are also languages such as Greek, where you can use both
        - tò Iōánnou biblíon
          'the John's book'

- You may remember from before that we call words like *my* and *your* <u>determiners</u>, because they appear in the same places as words like *the* and *that*
- However, these words can also be seen as case forms of pronouns, so that *my* has the same relationship to *I* as *John's* does to *John*
- Conclusion
  - Case shows the role of nouns and pronouns within a sentence
  - The <u>nominative</u> and <u>accusative</u> are for the subject and object
  - The <u>genitive</u> case shows relationships such as possession
    - Sometimes genitive forms can be used instead of determiners
  - The <u>dative</u> case is for indirect objects (e.g. recipients)
  - Some languages do not distinguish any of these cases, while others distinguish more than a dozen
  - The information that case conveys can also be shown by word order or prepositions