Dative of Relationship

There are several verbs in the German langauge that indicate a relationship between physical items and human (animate) beings. To express that relationship using these verbs, the physical items appears as the grammatical subject of the sentence in nominative case. The person to whom object is related takes the dative case. The verb conjugates to the physical item(s), not to the person. Below are three example verbs to memorize.

① **gehören** *indicates: belonging, ownership, possession*

② **passen** *indicates: fitting, being of correct size (most typically with clothing)*

③ **stehen** *indicates: looking good, being attractive (with clothing, colors, etc.)*

① OWNERSHIP
verb *gehören* + a person in the dative who owns the item(s)
The verb *gehören* conjugates to the item being owned (the owner is in dative).

Das Auto **gehört** mir.	The car is mine. The car belongs to me.
Meinem Bruder **gehört** der Fernseher .	The TV set belongs to my brother.
Gehören dir diese Bücher?	Do these books belong to you?
Uns **gehört** das Haus .	The house is ours. The house belongs to us.

② CORRECT SIZE OF CLOTHING
verb *passen* + a person in the dative who fits into the item(s)
The verb *gehören* conjugates to the item being owned (the owner is in dative).

Das Hemd **passt** mir.	The shirt fits me.
Passen dir die Socken?	Do the socks fit you?
Ihr **passt** Die Mütze nicht	The cap doesn't fit her.
Gut **passen** ihm die Jeans.	The jeans fit him well.

③ ATTRACTIVENESS OF CLOTHING & COLORS
verb = *stehen* + person in the dative who looks good in the item
The verb *stehen* conjugates to the item that looks good (the owner is in dative).

Die Farbe **steht** dir.	That color looks good on you. You look good in that color.
Ihr **steht** das Kleid nicht.	The dress doesn't suit her. She doesn't look good in that dress.
Steht mir diese Mütze?	Does this cap look good on me? Do I look OK in this cap?
Die Jacke steht meinem Vater nicht.	The jacket doesn't look good on my father.
Den Kindern **stehen** die Krawatten gut.	The ties look nice on the children.