

Dative Prepositions

(The following are eight common prepositions that govern the dative case.)

nach

to, toward (used with place names that take no definite article; countries, cities, home)
according to, in accordance with
after (indicating a period of time or an event marking time)

Wir fahren nach Deutschland. We are going to Germany.
Nach der Regel ist das nicht richtig. According to the rule, that's not right.
Nach einem Jahr bin ich fertig. After a year, I'll be finished.

(nach Hause)

(to, toward) home (shows destination)
This is a special idiom and must be memorized as such.
Constructions with *nach Hause* take verbs showing destination. (go, come, etc.)

Wir gehen jetzt nach Hause. We are going home now.

zu

to the place of, to the home of (in reference to a person or establishment)
to (used with nouns that take a definite article)

Wir gehen jetzt zu ihm. We are going over to his place. (to his house)
Ich gehe bald zu der Bank. I am going to the bank soon.

(zu Hause)

(at) home (shows location)
This is a special idiom and must be memorized as such.
Constructions with *zu Hause* must use verbs indicating location. (stay, be, etc.)

Sie bleiben heute Abend zu Hause. They are staying home this evening.

bei

at the home of (with a reference to a person by name or a pronoun)
at, at the place of (with a reference to a person or place of business)
near, close to
with (in the sense of close proximity; not accompaniment)

Wir arbeiten heute bei Helga. We are working at Helga's today.
Die Studenten trinken Kaffee bei ihm. The students are drinking coffee at his place.
Erlingen bei Stuttgart Erlinging (the town of Erlingen) that is near Stuttgart
Johann wohnt bei mir. Johann is living at my house. (at my place)

aus

out of; out from (from an enclosed space)
from (from the city or country of origin)
out of (made of a substance)

Er geht gerade aus dem Haus. He is going out of the house just this moment.
Sie kommt aus Bremen. She is (originally) from Bremen.
Der Ring ist aus Gold. The ring is made of gold.

von

from (from a city in the sense of a stopover)
from (from a location, but no focus on coming from within an enclosed space)
of (as in nobility); of (in an abstract sense, can also show possession)

Er kommt gerade von Köln. He has just arrived from Cologne. (passing through)
Götz von Berlichingen: Götz (a man's name) of Berlichingen (von = nobility)
Er kommt gerade von der Bank. He is just now coming from the bank.
Das ist nett von dir. That is nice of you.
Das Auto von meinem Vater ist kaputt. My father's car is broken. (car of my father)

außer

except, except for
but (in the sense of „except“)
excluding; without (in the sense of having none left)

Alle haben Geld außer mir. Everyone has money except for me.
Keiner weiß die Antwort außer Heidi. No one knows the answer but Heidi.
Ich bin ganz außer Atmen. I am completely out of breath.

mit

by (showing the instrument with which an action is accomplished)
with (in the sense of temporary accompaniment)

Wir fahren mit dem Auto. We are taking the car. (We are going by car.)
Fährst du oft mit dem Bus? Do you take the bus often? (Do you go by bus often?)
Ich schreibe nur mit Tinte. I only write using ink. (in ink)
Sie geht heute mit mir ins Kino. She is going to the movies with me today.

seit

since (from the time of); Note: The verb in these constructions takes present tense!
for (for a specified length of time)

Ich wohne seit dem Anfang hier. I've lived here since the beginning.
Wir wohnen seit einem Jahr in Berlin. We have lived in Berlin for a year.