

Introduction to Dative Verbs

TERMINOLOGY

Intransitive Verb is a verb that takes no direct object in the sentence. Nothing is being acted on.
Isst du schnell? Do you *eat* fast?
Wir *fahren* nach Augsburg. We' *re going* to Augsburg.
Sie *wartet* zu Hause. She *is waiting* at home.
Er *sitzt* in dem Sessel. He *is sitting* in the easy chair.

Transitive Verb is a verb that takes a *direct object* in its sentence. Something is being acted upon.
Direct objects are marked in German using the accusative case.
Er *isst den Kuchen*. He *is eating the cake*.
Sie *schreibt ihm einen Brief*. She *is writing him a letter*.
Möchtest du *einen Film sehen*? *Would* you *like to see a movie*?
Das Kind *liest ein Buch*. The child *is reading a book*.

Dative Verb is a verb that takes its *object* in the dative case.
Dative verbs have no readily identifiable traits. They must be memorized.
Sie *dankt ihm* für die Blumen. She *is thanking him* for the flowers.
Ich *werde dir* nach Hause *folgen*. I *will follow you* home.
Die Schülerin *antwortet dem Lehrer*. The school girl *is answering the teacher*.
Die Kinder *helfen ihrer Mutter*. The children *are helping their mother*.
Glaubst du *mir*? Do you *believe me*?

FIVE DATIVE VERBS (Memorize these five. There are many more in German – well over a hundred.)

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------|---|
| danken | thank | (ich danke, du dankst, er dankt, etc. / ich habe gedankt, du hast gedankt, etc.) |
| folgen | follow | (ich folge, du folgst, er folgt, etc. / ich bin gefolgt, du bist gefolgt, etc.) |
| antworten | answer (a person) | (ich antworte, du antwortest, er antwortet, etc. / ich habe geantwortet, du hast geantwortet, etc.) |
| helfen | help | (ich helfe, du hilfst, er hilft, wir helfen, etc. / ich habe geholfen, du hast geholfen, etc.) |
| glauben | believe | (ich glaube, du glaubst, er glaubt, etc. / ich habe geglaubt, du hast geglaubt, etc.) |

ADDITIONAL NOTES (Here are some further complications go along with these verbs.)

danken + person in dative + *für* + object in accusative (to thank someone *for* something)
Ich danke dir *für* den Brief. - I thank you *for* the letter. (Thank you for the letter.) (for = für)

folgen (counts as a *travel* verbs, so it takes *sein* in the perfect tense)
Er *ist* mir zur Uni gefolgt. - He followed me to the university. (The participle takes *sein*.)

antworten (used only with people - to answer a person)
(The verb meaning *to answer a question or a letter* is *beantworten* + accusative direct object)
Warum *antwortest* du *mir* nicht? - Why aren't you answering me? (*antworten* takes a dative object)
Warum *beantwortest* du *den Brief* nicht? - Why aren't you answering the letter? (*beantworten* takes an accusative object)

helfen (takes a stem vowel change e-i in 2sg & 3sg)
Helft ihr dem Mann? - Are you guys helping the man?
Hilfst du der Frau? - Are you helping the woman? (note: stem vowel change e - i)
helfen + person in dative + *bei* + object in dative (to help someone *with* a task, with = bei)
Er hilft mir *bei* der Arbeit. - He is helping me *with* the work.

glauben (takes a dative object with people only) · *glauben* (takes a direct object in the accusative with things)
Glaubst du *dem Touristen*? - Do you believe the tourist? (dative with people)
Glaubst du *den Bericht*? - Do you believe the report? (accusative with things)
Ich glaube *dir das* - I believe that of you. (dir = dative / das = accusative)