



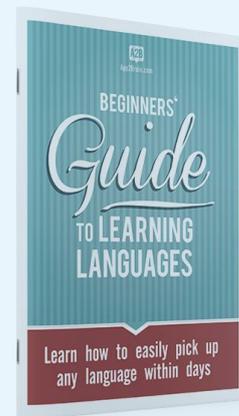
# Georgian Grammar: Case Declension



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This table shows you how to decline a noun ending in a consonant and one ending in a vowel:

<b>Nominative</b>	სახლი	house	თონე	bakery
<b>Ergative</b>	სახლმა	house (past)*	თონემ	bakery*
<b>Genitive</b>	სახლის	house's	თონის	bakery's
<b>Dative</b>	სახლს	to the house	თონეს	to the bakery
<b>Instrumental</b>	სახლით	with the house	თონით	with the bakery
<b>Locative</b>	სახლში	in the house	თონეში	in the bakery
<b>Adverbial</b>	სახლად	becoming a house	თონედ	becoming a bakery/baker
<b>Vocative</b>	სახლო	Oh, a house!	თონეო	Oh, a bakery!

Note that in the ergative case, *past* is placed in parentheses because the ergative case is a case which works strictly with the aorist tense, which we will cover below. The ergative case is also used for the Georgian verbs defining *to know*.

We will cover each case and how they are used in detail on the next pages.



## The Nominative Case

The nominative case is the basic case in Georgian, as the nominative case would be in any language with case declensions. Typically, in a sentence, when a noun is the subject, the one performing the action is in the nominative case. The difference in Georgian is that the subject is only in the nominative case if the verb is in the present subjunctive and present perfect tense or in the future tenses. The nominative case is also used as the defining case in dictionaries and textbook vocabularies. Likewise, all nouns and adjectives in our vocabularies are in the nominative case. Most nouns and adjectives which end in a consonant have an ending in *o*, and Georgian nouns and adjectives ending in a vowel have no ending. The vowel is the ending.

## The Ergative Case

This case is unique to Georgian and her related Kartvelian languages. Other languages besides Georgian which have an ergative case are Laz, Megrelian, Basque, and Corsican. In Georgian, the ergative case governs the aorist tense. The aorist tense will be covered below, but it primarily covers the past subjunctive tense. The verbs *ცოდნა to know (something)* and *ცნობა to know (a person)* also govern the subject to be in the ergative case in all tenses. In Georgian nouns and adjectives which end in consonants, the ergative ending is *ბს* and nouns and adjectives ending in a vowel have the ending *ბ*. Note that nouns which truncate during declension do not truncate in the ergative case.

## The Genitive Case

The genitive case defines possession. Basically, it is the possessive form of the noun, much like the 's in English. The noun possessing another noun is always in the genitive case. Depending on the position of the possessed noun, it can be in any of the cases listed in the table above. Georgian nouns with consonants have the genitive ending of *ობ* and the adjectives which describe the noun in the genitive keep their nominative ending. Georgian nouns ending in *ს* and *ჯ* take the ending *ობ* in the genitive, and nouns ending in *მ* or *ჯ* just take the *ბ* for the genitive ending.



## The Dative Case

If you have studied German, or some of the Slavic languages, such as Russian, Ukrainian, or Polish, you might be familiar with the dative case, which typically places the noun in the indirect object. Though the dative case can also denote the indirect object in Georgian, it is also used to denote direct object if the verb is in the present subjunctive and the subject is in the nominative case. In the aorist tense where the subject is in the ergative case, the direct object ends up in the nominative case, yet the indirect object remains in the dative case. Nouns ending in a consonant drop the *o* ending and take on *ს* in the dative. Truncating nouns do not truncate in the dative case. Nouns ending in vowels simply take on the *ს* ending in the dative case. Adjectives which end in a consonant drop their ending all together and end in the last consonant in the dative case. Adjectives ending in a vowel do not take any ending in the dative case.

## The Instrumental Case

This is a rather simple case. Besides Georgian, other European languages which carry an instrumental case include many of the Slavic languages, such as Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, and Serbian. The instrumental case is used when you are using a noun as a means of doing something or as a vehicle.

For example, *აქედან დედოფლისწყაროში ორი საათია მანქანით*. Basically, this means *Dedoplistskaro is two hours from here by car*.

As you notice, the word *მანქანა* or *car* is being used as the means of getting to Dedoplistskaro, hence it's in the instrumental case. Georgian nouns ending in consonants take the ending *ით*, and nouns ending in *ს* or *ც* also take the ending *ით* in the instrumental case. Nouns ending in *ო* or *უ* just take the ending *თ* in the instrumental case. Adjectives keep their nominative ending for agreement in the instrumental case, like in the genitive case.



## The Locative Case

Sometimes called the prepositional case by some linguists, this case denotes the noun as a location or the preposition of the sentence. For example, *მალაზიაში*, *in the store*. In Georgian, the locative case is similar to the dative, but instead of the *ს* ending, like in the dative case, the locative case takes on two suffixes, either *ში* which means *in* or *ზე* which means *on* or *on top of*. The dative case can also take these suffixes to denote *into* or *onto* or *about*. All suffixes are covered in our [Georgian grammar lessons](#).

## The Adverbial Case

This is another case which is unique to Georgian. This case got its name because it takes on the ending *ად* for nouns which end in consonants and *ად* for nouns ending in vowels. Basically, the adverbial case is used if a noun has become something. For example, *ჯანომ პოლიციელად გახდა*. In English, this would translate as *Johnny became a policeman*. Johnny is the subject and what did he become – a policeman. Thus, *policeman* in this sentence is in the adverbial case.

## The Vocative Case

This is a case that is used when a noun is addressed to or called. Typically, this case is mainly used with names in conversational Georgian, however it is also often used in poetry. Typically, in the vocative case, nouns which end in consonants take the ending *ო*.

Example: *ზურაბო, ხინკალი მომეცი*. In English, this would read *Zurab, pass me the khinkali*.

Zurab is in the vocative case. Nouns ending in vowels will keep the vowel ending of the nominative and take the ending *ო*.

For example: *მამაო ჩვენო, რომელი ხარ ზათაშინა...* The beginning of the Lord's Prayer in Georgian, *Our Father, who art in Heaven...*

Note that *father* or in Georgian *მამა* is in the vocative case.

