

## Dative of Experience

There are many constructions in German that show a person's relationship to the physical universe and how that person perceives the universe. One such construction uses the dative case to indicate the person who is experiencing a sensation. The item being perceived by the person is expressed as the grammatical subject of the sentence in nominative case. The verb conjugates to this item. The person experiencing the item takes the dative case. The following instances show examples of the dative of experience arranged by frequently used verbs. Familiarize yourself with these constructions and memorize them. Verbs are in boldface. Dative elements are underlined.

**sein** often used to express physical sensation, also attitude: temperature, expense, interest, etc.  
*Sein* is used with the subjects *es* and *das*.

Es ist <u>mir</u> heiß/kalt.	I am hot/cold.
Ist es <u>dir</u> heiß/kalt gewesen?	Were you hot/cold?
Ist das <u>dir</u> zu teuer?	Is that too expensive (for you)?
Das ist <u>mir</u> langweilig gewesen.	That was boring (to me).

**gefallen** indicates pleasure. It is often associated with visual pleasure but can be abstract as well.  
Remember that the person experiencing the pleasure takes dative.

Gefällt <u>dir</u> das Mädchen?	Do you like the girl? (Is she attractive to you?)
Der Film hat <u>mir</u> gefallen.	I liked the movie.
Oh, das gefällt <u>mir</u> .	Oh, I like that.

**schmecken** indicates taste. Unless otherwise stated, *schmecken* implies a pleasant taste.  
Remember that the person experiencing the taste takes dative.

Das Bier schmeckt <u>uns</u> .	We like the beer. (It tastes good to us.)
Schmeckt <u>euch</u> der Wein?	Do you guys like the wine? (taste good to you)
Das Essen hat <u>mir</u> nicht geschmeckt.	The food didn't taste good (to me).

**gehen** is used idiomatically to indicate the state of a person's being.  
*Gehen* is only ever used with the subject *es* in this meaning and always conjugates to 3sg.

Wie geht es <u>dir</u> ? (formal: Wie geht es Ihnen?)	How are you?
Es geht <u>mir</u> gut/schlecht.	I'm doing well/poorly.
Wie ist es <u>deinem</u> Bruder gegangen?	How was (it for) your brother?
Es ist <u>ihm</u> gut gegangen.	He was fine. (It went well for him.)
Wie geht es <u>deiner</u> Schwester?	How's your sister?
Es geht <u>ihr</u> schlecht.	She's not doing too well.

**nützen** indicates usefulness, value, benefit  
(nützt, haben genützt)

Das nützt <u>mir</u> nichts.	That is of no use to me. That doesn't help me.
Was nützt <u>dir</u> das?	What use is that (to you)? How can that help you?
Was hat das <u>uns</u> genützt?	How did that help us? What good did that do?