



Insights & Revelations

What is a Nominative?

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There are 6 types of noun cases in Hebrew. The nominative case, the accusative, the genitive, the vocative, the dative, and the locative. They are nouns with certain kinds of suffixes that indicate the function of a noun in the sentence.

Latin, and Greek have true cases. Biblical Hebrew doesn't have true cases. It doesn't use suffixes to state the function of the noun. Biblical Hebrew strictly uses word, and particles to dictate its usage. This is a good method for polyglots like myself who can read Hebrew and Greek. I am able to keep nouns straight in sentences.

Once you learn this system, you will be able to learn any sentence structure in any language. We are only going define the nominative, accusative, and genitive in this lesson.

The “nominative” is the “subject” of the sentence. Biblical Hebrew sentences are arranged with the verb or action first followed by the subject of the sentence who is doing the action.

The accusative is the object of the sentence. They are the object receiving the action from the subject. In Hebrew, it is usually marked with (׀ת- et).

The genitive shows possession. This is usually indicated by the word “of” which can be a line, or the prefix “ל- le.”

Let’s consider these concepts in the English language first.

- Subjects are nouns or pronouns that identify the subject doing the action within a sentence and is usually at the beginning of the sentence.
- Modifiers can be a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb. They provide the details about your subject in the sentence.

Here is an example:

The **cat** **ate**.

The word “cat” in orange is the subject of the sentence. It is the entity performing the action of “eating”. The verb is highlighted in blue and is the action as well as the modifier. When we just say the phrase, “the cat,” we get a mental image in our mind of a “cat”. In our mind, it may be catching a mouse, hopping on the counter or climbing a tree. When we add the word “ate,” this modifies the mental image in our mind. We no longer see a cat climbing a tree. We see a cat eating food or one that has eaten food.

What did the cat eat?

We can modify the sentence even further by including an “object” in the sentence. The “object” is the receiver of the action. This is also identified as the “accusative” in Hebrew grammar. Here is an example in the English:

The **cat** **ate** a **mouse**.

The word mouse is in green. It modifies the image in our minds even more. The cat is not eating from its food bowl. It is eating a mouse. It is the recipient of the action of “eating”. In biblical Hebrew, the “accusative” is an object of the sentence and is preceded by the word **אֶת**- et.

The “genitive” case shows possession. This is indicated by the word “of” which can be a line, or the prefix **ל**- le.

In this lesson, we are focusing upon the “nominative” in Biblical Hebrew. It is usually identified by the word order in a Hebrew sentence. As discussed previously, the verb first is the first word in the sentence; then subject performing the action, and then other modifiers. The subject is a noun or pronoun. We are going to focus upon 2 examples to understand grammar syntax in Hebrew.

Bereshith (Genesis) 1:3 (The verb is highlighted in blue; the nominative or subject is highlighted in orange.):

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר

Here is the verse translated in English. In our language the subject is first and the verb is second. We have color-coded them for easy reference.

And Elohiym said, Let there be light: and there was light.

The first word in the Hebrew is a verb, “va’yomer” which translates as “and he said”. This is the action of the subject in the sentence. The subject or “nominative” is the word “Elohim”. In translation, the subject in the Hebrew replaces the pronoun “he”.

And He said, Mighty One...



The best way to translate these two words into English is:

“And Elohim said”.

The letter “vav” at the beginning of the sentence is a “vav conversion” which indicates how many beings are doing the action. The number of subjects has to match the number indicated within the verb. In this situation, the action is singular. The Hebrew word “Elohim” is called the “majestic plural” but refers to “Elohim” as a singular Entity. Our Father is one and not many. We know this because of the letter “yod” added to the verb. This is highlighted in orange in our verb below:

וַיֹּאמֶר

Bereshith (Genesis) 2:3 (The verb is highlighted in blue and the subject is highlighted in orange):

ויברך אלהים את־יום השביעי ויקדש אתו כי בו שבת
מכל־מלאכתו אשר־ברא אלהים לעשות:

Here is the verse translated in English. The subject is first in orange and the verb is second highlighted in blue which is the opposite in Hebrew.

And **Elohiym blessed** the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which Elohiym created and made.

The first word in the Hebrew is “vay’barek” which translates as “and he blessed”. This is the action of the subject in this sentence. The subject doing the action in this sentence is “Elohiym”. The presence of the “yod” in the verb is singular and is translated as “he”. This means the word “Elohiym” is referring to one entity doing the action. The “yod” is highlighted in orange in this verb.

ויברך

Bereshith (Genesis) 1:26 (the verb is highlighted in blue and the subject doing the action is highlighted in orange):

ויאמר אלהים נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו וירדו בדגת
הים ובעוף השמים ובבהמה ובכל־הארץ ובכל־הרמש
הרמש על־הארץ:

Here is the passage translated in English with the subject highlighted in orange and the verb highlighted in blue.

And Elohiym said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

The first word in Hebrew is translated as “va’yomer” which is translated as “and he said” which is singular masculine. The subject of the sentence is Elohiym and must be singular as well. The letter “yod” indicates that the subject is a singular entity.

וַיֹּאמֶר

This proves that the reference to “us” is not referring to Elohiym. He is talking TO someone. The letter “nun” at the beginning of the next verb is plural meaning “us”. It is highlighted in orange.

וַנַּעֲשֶׂה

This phrase can be translated as “Let us make”. It is not a reference to “Elohiym” validating the trinity doctrine. In the context of the Hebrew, it is telling us that He is talking TO someone else. This illustrates the value of learning the grammar of the underlying Hebrew.