Handout:

**Kasus: Nominativ und Akkusativ**

What is the subject of a sentence?

The subject of a sentence is the person or thing that is performing the activity (verb). To find the subject, look for the verb and ask “Who or what is doing that activity?” Who or what is singing? Who or what is sleeping?) Subjects are always in the NOMINATIVE CASE.

What is the direct object of a sentence?

The direct object receives the action of the verb. To find the direct object, look for the verb and ask “Who or what is being verbed :)) / affected by the action ?” (as in Who or what is being kicked? Who or what is being read?) Direct objects take the ACCUSATIVE CASE.

For example:

The woman sees the girl.

The woman in this sentence is the subject and it is nominative. Girl is the direct object and is accusative.

The girl sees the woman.

The girl is the subject and is nominative. Woman is the direct object and its accusative.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier is the President.

Frank-Walter Steinmeier is the subject and is nominative.

The President is also nominative because it follows the verb “to be” sein , a nominative verb.

Summary:

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| **Nominative** case is used: |
| - for the subjects of sentences |
| - after any form of the verb “to be” |
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| **Accusative** case is used: |
| - for direct objects |
| - after accusative prepositions |
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**Kasus: Dativ:**

A primary use of the dative case is for the **indirect object** of a sentence. An indirect object is the beneficiary of whatever happens in a sentence. It’s usually a person, although it doesn’t have to be. If you ask yourself: “TO whom or FOR whom the activity is done?”, the answer will be the indirect object, and in German it will need the dative case.

I’m giving her a book = a book to her.

I’m giving her a book = a book to her.

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| **Dativ** case is used: |
| - for indirect objects |
| - after dativ prepositions   * with dativ verbs |

Summary: when you're trying to decide which case to use, consider the following things:

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| 1. | Is it a fixed expression? (such as *Mir geht es gut*, or *Es tut mir Leid*) |
| 2. | Does the noun follow either an accusative or a dative preposition? If so, this should be easy, since the preposition determines the case. Just make sure you know which prepositions take the akkusativ and which take the dativ. |
| 3. | Is the verb a dative verb? If so, the object will be in the dative. |
| 4. | If none of the other conditions apply, then you need to determine which noun in the sentence is the subject, and put that in nominative. Then look for a direct object (put in accusative) and indirect object (put in dative). Remember that not every sentence necessarily has a direct object and an indirect object: some have only one or the other, or none at all. |