

The preposition neben

— DIE PRÄPOSITION NEBEN

neben (next to, beside) is a two-way preposition: it takes the Dativ for location and the Akkusativ for direction.

neben takes two cases: **Dativ** for location (wo? — where?), **Akkusativ** for direction (wohin? — where to?). English “next to” looks the same either way, so learners often lose track of whether something is moving or not.

CONTENTS

- 01 neben – Dativ or Akkusativ? 02 neben with location (Dativ): examples
03 neben with direction (Akkusativ): examples 04 Contractions and the “in addition to” meaning
05 Traps 06 The other two-way prepositions 07 Test yourself

01 00:00

neben – Dativ or Akkusativ?

If the question is **wo?** (where?) and the sentence states a location, **neben** takes the **Dativ**. If the question is **wohin?** (where to?) and the sentence states a movement, it takes the **Akkusativ**.

The rule is simple: movement means Akkusativ, no movement means Dativ.

QUESTION	SENTENCE	CASE
wo?	Das Buch liegt neben dem Tisch .	Dativ
wohin?	Er stellt das Buch neben den Tisch .	Akkusativ

The verb (liegen vs. stellen) changes whether it is a location or a direction.

02 01:10

neben with location (Dativ): examples

Everyday sentences that state a fixed position with **neben** + Dativ.

GERMAN	ENGLISH
Das Buch liegt neben dem Tisch .	The book is lying next to the table .
Meine Katze schläft neben mir .	My cat is sleeping next to me .
Die Schule steht neben dem Bahnhof .	The school is next to the train station .
Wir sitzen neben den Freunden .	We are sitting next to our friends .

Dativ articles: dem (masc.), der (fem.), dem (neut.), den (plural).

03 02:20

neben with direction (Akkusativ): examples

In sentences with movement, **neben** + Akkusativ is used.

GERMAN	ENGLISH
Er stellt die Vase neben den Tisch .	He puts the vase next to the table .
Sie legt das Handy neben das Buch .	She puts the phone next to the book .
Wir parken das Auto neben die Garage .	We park the car next to the garage .
Der Hund springt neben den Zaun .	The dog jumps down next to the fence .

Akkusativ articles: den (masc.), die (fem.), das (neut.), die (plural).

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04 03:30

Contractions and the “in addition to” meaning

Besides “next to”, **neben** is also used to mean “in addition to / besides”. Example: **neben der Arbeit** = besides work.

The adverb **nebenbei** is also common, meaning “by the way / in passing”.

① In this use the case is usually the Dativ (neben der Arbeit), because it states a situation.

05 06:00

Traps



TRAP 01

Mixing up Dativ and Akkusativ with masculine nouns

In English, “next to the table” looks the same whether something sits there or moves there, so you don’t notice the case.

✗ **Das Auto parkt neben den Tisch.**

parken states no movement, it is a location → it needs the Dativ “dem Tisch”.

✓ **Das Auto parkt neben dem Tisch.**

The car is parked next to the table (location).



TRAP 02

Using the Dativ in a sentence with movement

With verbs that express direction, like “go up to / go over next to”, the Akkusativ is a must.

✗ **Er geht neben dem Park.**

gehen is movement → it should be the Akkusativ “den Park”.

✓ **Er geht neben den Park.**

He goes to the spot next to the park.



TRAP 03

Forgetting the plural Dativ -n

Plural nouns take -n in the Dativ; if you forget it, the noun looks like an Akkusativ.

✗ **Wir sitzen neben die Freunde.**

sitzen is a location → it needs the Dativ “den Freunden”.

✓ **Wir sitzen neben den Freunden.**

We are sitting next to our friends.

06 07:00

The other two-way prepositions

07 BUILD

Build the sentence yourself

Tap the words and put them in order. This is the hardest part of German — and there are no options to pick from, **you** build it.

TAP THE WORDS

TAP THE WORDS

TAP THE WORDS

07 07:30

Test yourself

Tap an answer — we will look at why together.

+7

Take the full test

13 questions · timed · rule breakdown at the end



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