

Possession

Possession can be indicated in one of two ways:

- 1) via the genitive of possession
- 2) via a possessive adjective

The Genitive of Possession

With nouns, the use of the genitive case is quite common to indicate possession:

<i>ἡ τοῦ νεανίου οἰκία</i>	the young man's house
<i>τὰ τῶν ἀγροργῶν πρόβατα</i>	the farmers' sheep
<i>οἱ δοῦλοι τῶν Ἀθηναίων</i>	the slaves of the Athenians / the Athenians' slaves

As the examples above show, when it indicates simple possession, the noun in the genitive can appear in either the attributive or the predicative position, in relation to the noun on which it depends.

The possessive genitive can be used predicatively, however, as the equivalent of a predicate adjective (cf. below):

<i>ἡ οἰκία τοῦ νεανίου ἐστίν.</i>	The house is of (i.e., belongs to) the young man.
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The genitive of personal pronouns (including *αὐτός, -ή, -ό*) appears in the predicative position when indicating possession:

<i>ὁ ἐταῖρός μου</i>	my companion
<i>ἡ θυγάτηρ ἡμῶν</i>	our sister
<i>ὁ πάππος αὐτοῦ</i>	his grandfather
<i>ἡ μήτηρ αὐτῶν</i>	their mother

Possessive Adjectives

Possessive adjectives (*ἐμός, ἡμέτερος — σός, ὑμέτερος*) generally appear in the attributive position:¹

<i>τὸ ὑμέτερον ἄροτρον</i>	your (pl.) plow
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When in the predicative position, they function as a predicate adjective:

<i>τὸ ἄροτρον ὑμέτερον ἐστίν.</i>	The plow is yours (pl.). ²
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As we have seen (Unit 1A), the definite article alone will often convey the force of a possessive adjective:

<i>ὁ ἀγροργὸς φυλάττει τὸν κλῆρον.</i>	The farmer is guardian <u>his</u> farm.
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¹ The 3rd-person possessive adjectives (*ἐός, σφέτερος*) are used less frequently. Instead, the genitive of *αὐτός, -ή, -ό* is preferred.

² Note that the possessive genitive can also be employed in this fashion, as in effect a predicative possessive adjective (above).