

Exercise 1

The passage on the next page is a fairly literal translation from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, about half the entry for the year 894. The noun phrases and pronouns that appear in parentheses are listed below the text with the cases used in the original OE text. Explain the choice of case for each by naming the function of the noun or pronoun of the sentence as listed above.

894. And then immediately after that, in this year, the Viking army (*se here*) marched from Wirral in on the Welsh, because they were not able to stay there: that was because they were deprived of both cattle (*þæs ceapes*) and the grain (*þæs cornes*) which they [the English] had captured. When they (*hīe*) turned back out from the Welsh with the plunder (*þære herehȳðe*) which they had seized there, they then marched over the Northumbrians' (Norðhymbra) land (*lond*) and also the East Anglians', so that the [English] army (*sēo fird*) could not reach them (*hīe*) – until they came on the eastern part of the East Saxons' land onto an island (*an īgland*) that is out on the sea (*þære sǣ*), which (*þæt*) is called Mersea.

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| 1. se here | nominative | subject |
| 2. þæs ceapes | genitive | |
| 3. þæs cornes | genitive | |
| 4. hīe | nominative | |
| 5. þære herehȳðe | dative | |
| 6. Norðhymbra | genitive | |
| 7. lond | accusative | |
| 8. sēo fird | nominative | |
| 9. hīe | accusative | |
| 10. an īgland | accusative | |
| 11. þære sǣ | dative | |
| 12. þæt | nominative | |

The form of every noun can be *parsed* (interpreted) according to three criteria: *case*, *number* (singular or plural), and *gender* (masculine, feminine, or neuter). In MnE we have to select the correct pronoun, *he*, *she*, or *it* according to the sex, or lack of sex of the referent. This is called *natural gender*. In OE, nouns for things that today are all neuter, and nouns for a male or female person, might be masculine, feminine, or neuter. For example, *sunne* (sun) was feminine, *mona* (moon) was masculine, and *wif* (woman) and *cild* (child) were neuter. This is called *grammatical gender*. The importance of gender can be seen if we place the nominative singular form of the word for 'the' before these nouns: *se mona*, *sēo sunne*, *þæt wif*, *þæt cild*. Definite articles ('the', in Modern English) and adjectives agree in gender, as well as case and number, with the nouns to which they refer.

<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	nama 'name'	naman	Nom.	ēaġe 'eye'	ēagan
Acc.	naman	naman	Acc.	ēagan	ēagan
Gen.	naman	namena	Gen.	ēagan	ēagena
Dat.	naman	namum	Dat.	ēagan	ēagum

<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Nom.	sunne 'sun'	sunnan
Acc.	sunnan	sunnan
Gen.	sunnan	sunna
Dat.	sunnan	sunnum

Exercise

Examine the italicised OE nouns for case, number, and function.

1. Ond þā ġefeahrt *sē cyning* Æþerēd wiþ *þāra cyninga* ġetruman.
 And then fought the king Æthelred against the kings' troops.
 sē cyning: Case N Number Sg Function Subject
 þāra cyninga: Case Number Function
2. Norþhymbre ond Ēastengle hæfdon Ælfrēde *cyninge* āþas ġeseald.
 Northumbrians and East-Angles had Alfred king oaths given.
 Case Number Function
3. Hē mid gāre stang wlancne wīcing þe him *þā wunde* forġeaf.
 He with spear stabbed bold viking who him the wound gave.
 Case Number Function
4. Wīġend crungon *wundum* wērgē.
 Warriors fell (by) wounds exhausted.
 Case Number Function
5. Ic bōhte ān ġetȳme *oxena*.
 I bought a team (of) oxen.
 Case Number Function

6. Dā ġenam Abimelech *oxan* and *scēp*.

Then took Abimelech oxen and sheep.

oxan: Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

scep (= sceap): Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

7. And *þā scēap* ġehýrað his stefne.

And the sheep hear his voice.

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

8. Ġē ne synt of mīnum *scēapum*.

You not are among my sheep.

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

9. Hwylc man is of ēow þe hæfð hund *scēapa*?

Which one is among you who has a hundred sheep?

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

10. And on *scyp* stīgende hī fōron onsundran on wēste stōwe.

And on ship moving they went privately to barren place.

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

11. *þā* men of Lundenbyrig ġefetodon *þā scipu*.

The men of London-town fetched the ships.

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

12. Ond *þær* forwearþ cxx *scipa* æt Swānawīc.

And there perished 120 ships at Swanage.

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

13. Ġealde ġeþrunġen wāron mīne *fēt*.

(By) cold pinched were my feet.

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

14. Stincende āttor singāllīce of ðām tōswollenum *fōtum* flēow.

Stinking poison continuously from the swollen feet flowed.

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

15. Oððe gyf hē bit *æg*, segst þū rācð hē him scorpionem?

Or if he requests egg, say'st thou he gives him scorpion?

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

16. Selle mon uuēge cāsa, ond fises, ond butran, ond *æg*era.

Give one (a) weight (of) cheeses, and fish, and butter, and eggs.

Case _____ Number _____ Function _____

Adjectives

Adjectives may also be **strong** or **weak**. The weak forms are the same as the endings of weak nouns, characterised by *-an*. They only occur immediately following the definite article or a demonstrative pronoun (e.g. *se* 'the, that' or *þes* 'this') and immediately after possessives such as *mīn* 'mine': *se ealda mann* 'the old man, that old man', *mīn ealda frēond* 'my old friend'. Elsewhere the strong forms occur: *se mann is eald* 'the man is old', *ealde menn* 'old men'. The strong declension is given below:

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>
Nom.	blind	blind	blind
Acc.	blindne	blinde	blind
Gen.	blindes	blindre	blindes
Dat.	blindum	blindre	blindum
<i>Plural</i>	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>
Nom.	blinde	blinde, -a	blind
Acc.	blinde	blinde, -a	blind
Gen.	blindra	blindra blindra	
Dat.	blindum	blindum	blindum

Adjectives with short roots end in *-u* in the fem.nom.sg., the neut.nom.pl., and the acc.nom.pl., e.g. *tilu* 'good' (compare the *a*-stem and *ō*-stem noun endings).

Demonstrative Pronouns and the Definite Article

	<i>Masculine</i>	<i>'The, That'</i>		<i>'Those'</i>
		<i>Feminine</i>	<i>Neuter</i>	<i>All Genders</i>
Nom.	se	sēo, sīo	þæt	þā
Acc.	þone	þā	þæt	þā
Gen.	þæs	þære	þæs	þāra, þæra
Dat.	þæm, þām	þære	þæm, þām	þæm, þām