Genitive
(Showing possession and close relationships)

Ich habe mit dem Sohn des Bäckers gesprochen. I talked to the baker’s son.
Das ist die Frage eines Kindes. That is a child’s question.
Die Farbe der Wände gefällt mir I like the color of the walls.

English shows possession or other close relationships by adding ‘s to a noun or by using a phrase with of. English generally uses the s form only for persons. For things and ideas, English uses the of… construction.

German uses the genitive case to show possession or other close relationships. The genitive is used for things and ideas as well as for persons. The genitive generally follows the noun it modifies (die Frage eines Kindes). It may precede the noun it modifies with proper names and kinship titles. With proper names simply add –s without the apostrophe. (Peters Freundin = Peter's girlfriend, Mutti’s Auto = mom's car)

In spoken German the genitive is frequently replaced by von + dative:

die Freundin von meinem Bruder (meines Bruders)
zwei von ihren Freunden (ihrer Freunde)
ein Freund von Thomas (Thomas’ Freund)

Von + dative is considered standard in phrases similar to the English of mine, of Nicole, etc.:
ein Freund von mir
ein Freund von Nicole

The interrogative pronoun 'wessen'?

Wessen CD-Spieler ist das? Whose CD player is that?
Wessen CDs sind das? Whose CD’s are those?

The question word to ask for nouns or pronouns in the genitive is wessen. It is the genitive form of wer and is equivalent to English whose.
**Possessive adjectives**

Theresa ist die Freundin **meines** Bruders. Theresa is *my* brother's girlfriend.

Hast du die Telefonnummer **seiner** Freundin? Do you have *his* girlfriend's telephone number?

Possessive adjectives take the case of the noun they modify and takes the ein-word ending. Even though a possessive adjective already shows possession (*mein = my, sein = his*), it must itself be in the genitive case when the noun it goes with is in the genitive (**meines Bruders** = of my brother); **die Freundin meines Bruders** shows two possessive relationships.

**Prepositions with the genitive**

(an)statt instead of Kommt Anna (an)statt ihrer Schwester?

trotz in spite of **Trotz des** Regens fahren wir in die Berge.

während during **Während des** Sommers bleiben wir nicht in Boston.

wegen on account of **Wegen des** Regens fahren wir nicht in die Berge.

In colloquial usage many people use the prepositions **statt, trotz, wegen** and sometimes **während** with the dative.

wegen **dem** Regen vs. wegen des Regens

trotz **dem** Regen vs. trotz des Regens

Dative pronouns are considered standard with these prepositions: trotz **ihm**, wegen **dir**, statt **ihr**