

# A Snippet from The Chapter On Case

By Holly Lisle

Exploring grammatical forms not used much in English is part of the best fun of building languages. Here's a little snippet from the **Create A Language Clinic** chapter on Case (Declension).

## *Using Case As A Worldbuilding Tool*

*Let's play with a sentence in English, creating a couple of new cases to reflect a society very different from our own.*

## **Creating A Case (or Two) for the Government**

*Let's say that we're required (by law, religion, or mind control) to publicly speak to and about government officials in terms of deep respect. Further, let's say that we wish to speak of them among ourselves in, ah, a somewhat less reverent manner.*

*We'll create the reverential case and the despicable case specifically to discuss government officials.*

*We'll create two case rules to make it possible for us to carry out these new goals for our language:*

â€¢ **Reverential-case** nouns end with the suffix â€“ba (singular) and â€“bat (plural) and reverential-case verbs begin with the prefix bâ€™.

â€¢ **Despicable-case** nouns end with the suffix â€“duh (singular) and â€“dork (plural) and despicable-case verbs begin with the prefix dâ€™.

Now let's do a sentence, modifying it both ways. The basic sentence will be:

- *Senator Hypocriticus addressed the Assembly on the subject of raises for members of the Senate.*

We can tag certain nouns as neutral—that is, not in need of modification. Well, really, we only have two neutral nouns in that whole sentence, and those are the words *subject* and *members*. Everything else has a political charge that's going to require modification. [1]

Reverentially, (what you're going to hear on the nightly news, for example,) we'll get:

- *Senatorba Hypocriticus ba addressed the Assemblyba on the subject of raisesbat for members of the Senateba. (grovel, grovel)*

The guy at home watching this on television is going to turn with one eyebrow raised and says to his wife:

- *Senatorduh Hypocriticus da addressed the Assemblyduh on the subject of raisesdork for members of the Senateduh.*

Same words. Same information—almost. We know that in the first sentence, the speaker is sucking up, whether by inclination or by compulsion. We know in the second sentence that the speaker disapproves of almost everything said by the first speaker.

[1] The word *raises* could be considered a neutral word, too; in most cases, *raises* are happy things, and everyone loves to get them. In the case of government officials voting themselves *raises*, however, the word takes on blood-pressure-raising qualities. Because of that, we can treat *raises* in this instance as a special case involving only government *raises*. In which case, we modify it. (Which is, by the way, the nice thing about making up your own rules. They always

*work out the way you want them to when you do.*

Contents © Holly Lisle. <https://hollylisle.com> All Rights Reserved