Grammatik

+1000

MIT AUDIO

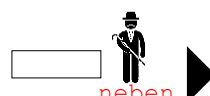## praktische Beispiele ...

[...]

NOMINATIV

AKKUSATIV

DATIV

GENITIV

neben

unter

auf

KONSTRUKTION

QR-CODES & AUDIODATEIEN

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GRAMMAR

GRAMMATIKHÄPPCHEN

SNACKS

grammar in small portions

easy explanations

useful examples

(English edition)

Eine Teamproduktion von:

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INTRODUCTION

Grammatikhäppchen - grammar snacks - are German grammar rules in mouth-watering and fun small portions which will make it easier for you to study German.

The rules are explained in a way which is clear and understandable for everyone. For each topic you'll find little tricks, practical examples and example sentences which will help you to memorise the rules and use them properly.

If you eat just one or two snacks a day [no more, or you'll get indigestion!], then by the end you'll know the essential rules of German grammar up to level B1/B2. Beginners should avoid the "B" classified chapters.

The articles are organised by themes in a systematic way.
So you don't necessarily have to read them in that order,
but for each theme you can find the easier topics first.

For each snack you will find supplementary material online:
audio examples, the text to listen to in German
and lots of free exercises - with their help you can immediately
put into practice what you have learnt and never forget it again!
Just scan the QR code found at the beginning of each topic
or click on it.

INDEX

PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciation: the easiest chapter in German grammar.

German is basically pronounced the way it's written, with a few exceptions. Here you'll find everything you need to know, as well as the alphabet.

alphabet

The German alphabet isn't difficult and only has a few unusual features.

The main one is the vowels a, o, u when they have the dots on top, known as the *Umlaut* - ä, ö, ü.
And then there's the ß: it looks like a Greek beta, but it's just a double ss known as *scharfes S* or *Esszett*.

The majority of the letters are pronounced the same as in English. But there are a few differences: see also the other articles on pronunciation.

To *buchstabieren* [spell] in German, proper names are used like the ones shown here, preceded by *wie* [like/as in]. Next to the letter is the equivalent pronunciation in English.

letter	pronounced		letter	pronounced
A	ah wie Anton		N	enn wie Norbert
B	be wie Berta		O	oh wie Otto
C	tse wie Caesar		P	pe wie Paula
D	de wie Dora		Q	koo wie Quelle
E	e wie Emil		R	er wie Richard
F	eff wie Friedrich		S	ess wie Siegfried
G	ge wie Gerda		T	te wie Theodor
H	hah wie Heinrich		U	ooh wie Ulrich
I	eeh wie Ida		V	fow wie Victor
J	yot wie Jürgen		W	ve wie Wolfgang
K	kah wie Kaufmann		X	eeks wie Xanthippe
L	ell wie Lisa		Y	ipsilon wie Ypsilon
M	emm wie Martha		Z	tset wie Zacharias

The letter ß [*Eszett* or *scharfes S*]

ß used instead of double ss is a hangover from the old German spelling - it's used after the double vowels au, ei, ie, eu/äu and after long vowels. But after short vowels [since the spelling reform] we always put the double ss.
In Switzerland it's always written as ss, and there is no ß.
The keyboard code is ALT+225.

Umlaut **letters: ä, ö, ü**

Vowels with the so-called *Umlaut* are pronounced differently from the same vowels without the dots:
ä =   open "e" [ay]
ö =   similar to the British English pronunciation of the vowel sound in "turn" - the best way is to shape your
        lips like you're trying to say an "o", but say an "ee" instead
ü =   like French "u" - shape your lips like you're whistling and try to say "ee"

Umlaut vowels can be replaced, for example in emails, with "ae", "ue" and "oe".
Otherwise, the respective codes are: ä = ALT+132, ü = ALT+129, ö = ALT+148

> **Tipps & Tricks**
> **All nouns, not just proper nouns, are capitalised!**
> **After long or double vowels, we use ß. After short vowels we use ss.**

[ch]

How do we pronounce *ch*? It depends on where it is in the word. It's the one German sound which is a bit more difficult.

Soft [ch]

When the ch is after a "light" vowel [e, i, ä, ö, ü], after r and l and at the beginning of the word, the pronunciation is "soft".

The place of articulation is very close to the y sound in words like "year". It sounds a bit like a [very small] angry cat hissing. Try putting your tongue in the right position to say a "y", but making a hissing noise instead. Another "trick": say yayayayaya quickly and then whisper yayayaya or yiyiyiyi. That's how to say the soft ch.

The ending *-ig* is also pronounced "ich", with the soft ch.

But listening to examples is better than just reading a description.

After i, at the beginning of the word and as *-ig*:
mich – dich – ich – sich – sicher – nicht – nichts – Kirche – endlich – wirklich – Licht – Sicht – kichern – nächtlich - China – Chemie – Schicht – richtig – wichtig – lustig – fünfzig - sechzig
[me, you, I, himself, sure, not, nothing, church, finally, really, light, sight, giggle, nocturnal, China, chemistry, layer, correct, important, funny, fifty, sixty]

After e/ä:
echt – Recht – rechts – sechzehn – Becher – rechnen – ächten
[true, straight, right, sixteen, cup, calculate, to ostracise]

After ei:
leicht – weich – schleichen – reich – beichten – seicht – erleichtern – bezeichnen – zeichnen – speichern
[light, soft, to sneak, rich, to confess, shallow, to lighten, to designate, to draw, to store]

After eu:
euch – Seuche – leuchten – feucht – scheuchen – keuchen – heucheln
[you, plague, to glisten, wet, to chase, to gasp, to pretend]

After ö/ü:
wir möchten – ich möchte – du möchtest – Töchter – Löcher – Küche – süchtig – flüchtig – Sprüche
[we would like, I would like, you would like, daughters, holes, kitchen, addicted, fleeting, sayings]

Hard [ch]

After "dark" vowels [a, o, u] the ch is pronounced in a "hard" way, and usually the pronunciation isn't a problem. It's more or less the same as the throaty sound in Scottish "loch", or here are some examples to listen to:

After a, o, u:
machen – lachen – Sachen – Nacht – auch – brauchen – rauchen – Versuch – Geruch – Flucht – doch
[to do/make, to laugh, things, night, also, to need, to smoke, attempt, smell, escape, however]

And finally some tongue twisters [listen and repeat at the same speed!]:

Ich sehe dich sicherlich nicht in der Kirche. [I certainly don't see you in church.]
Ich möchte mich nicht lächerlich machen! [I don't want to sound ridiculous.]
Die chemische Industrie in China ist wichtig. [The chemical industry in China is important.]
Das ist richtig oder nicht richtig. [This is correct or incorrect.]
Das Wörtchen "wichtig" ist wirklich wichtig! [The word "important" is really important!]

Tipps & Tricks
The sound and the place of articulation of the ch are very close to the y sound in "year". Quickly say "yayayayayayayaya" and then say it in a whisper "yayayayayaya".

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[h]

[h] at the beginning of the word

When it's at the beginning of the word, the h is pronounced, not very strong but audible:

Haus – Hans – hier – hassen – haben – hat – Hose – halt – Hund
[house, Hans, here, to hate, to have, has, trousers, stop, dog]

And also after a prefix: gehalten, verhaften, Behinderung [held, to arrest, handicap]

[h] after a vowel

After a vowel the h isn't pronounced, it just lengthens the vowel:

gehen - sehen - wehen - Ehre - sehr - Fahrt
[to go, to see, to blow (wind), honour, very, journey]

Warning

Don't aspirate vowels at the start of words, but pronounce them "hard" with a small glottal stop. Here are some examples to help you hear the difference:

und – Hund, Abend – habend, ihn – hin, aus – Haus, Hamburg – Amberg, offen- hoffen, Ast – Hast, hin – ihn, er – her, ihr – hier

[and - dog, evening - having, him - (to) there, from - house, Hamburg - Amberg, to open – to hope, branch - haste, (to) there - him, he - (to) here, plural you - here]

Er ist immer ärgerlich und angespannt. [He's always angry and nervous.]
Heute handelt Hans hier hervorragend. [Hans is acting brilliantly here today.]
Heinrich hasst heutige Häuser. Er ist aber immer an Altbauten interessiert. [Heinrich hates modern houses. But he's always interested in old buildings.]
Herr Hist?? Er ist ein Idiot. [Mr Hist? He's an idiot.]

> **Tipps & Tricks**
> **Don't aspirate vowels at the start of words, but pronounce them "hard" with a small glottal stop.**

[r]

Der Rubel rollt.

r has a special role in pronunciation: it changes its sound depending on its position in the word.

[r] followed by a vowel / at the beginning of the word

When it's followed by a vowel or when it's at the beginning of the word, the r is pronounced. This standard pronunciation is "soft", a bit like the French r. The place of articulation is close to g and k. To learn how to pronounce it properly, try saying "gggrrrrr".

Listen and repeat:
grau, groß, Gras, krank, Kraft, Kralle, Graphik, grün, Rast, Rost, Ring, rot, trinken, tragen, braun, bringen, brauchen, Brust, Braten, Schrift, schreiben, Turin, Florenz, Rom

[grey, large, grass, ill, strength, claw, graphics, green, rest, rust, ring, red, to drink, to carry, brown, to bring, to need, breast, to roast, (writing) font, to write, Turin, Florence, Rome]

[r] followed by a consonant / at the end of the word

On the other hand, when it's followed by a consonant or when it's at the end of the word, the r is "eaten" and pretty much just "hinted" at: der = dey-a, er = ey-a, hier = hee-a, gestern = gestan, morgen = moagen, wir = vee-a, aber = ahba, war = vaa, warten = vaaten

In this case, prefixes or single parts of compound words also count as "words", so e.g. "ver-ändern" is pronounced vea-ändan, "Meer-enge" becomes mea-enge etc.

Listen and repeat:
Meier, war, Bier, für, sehr, mehr, Meer, Mutter, Butter, Sänger, Spieler, Italiener, aber, der, er, wir, ihr
[Meier, was, beer, for, very, more, sea, mother, butter, singer, player, Italian, but, the, he, we, plural you]

Tipps & Tricks
When it's at the end of the word, the r is "eaten" and is pretty much just "hinted" at.

diphthongs [ei], [eu], [äu], [ie]

Warning - there are a few double vowels [diphthongs] which aren't pronounced the way they're spelled!
For example, the shortest noun in German is a diphthong: "das Ei" [egg], pronounced "eye".
But, as you can see below, there are many other types of diphthongs. The most "intimidating" kind has to be the second one; you can find it in a lot of plural nouns and in names like "Freude", "Europa" and "Euro".

pronounced	spelt	examples
eye	ei	sein, mein, dein, einer, schreiben, heißen, leisten, Reise, leise, eins
		Bayer, Meyer
		Mailand, Hain

	ay, ey	[his, my, your, one, to write, to be called, to perform/carry out,
	ai	journey, soft, one, Bavarian, Meyer, Milan, copse]
oi	eu	freut, Eule, euer, Europa, heulen
	äu	Räuber, Mäuse, Säulen
		[rejoices, owl, plural your, Europe, to howl, bandit, mice, pillars]
au	au	auch, Bauch, kaufen, laufen
		[also, stomach, to buy, to run]

ie is pronounced ee

ie is pronounced like a very long iii and it just lengthens the sound! There are a couple of exceptions -
Italien, Sizilien, Argentinien, … und: Familie – where the "i" and "e" are actually pronounced separately, like
"ee-uh".

Die, Sie, wie, nie, wieder, Wien, sieben
[the, formal you, how, never, again, Vienna, seven]

Tipps & Tricks

**The best way to remember "ei" and "ie" is that they're pronounced like the name of the second
letter in English - so "ei" is pronounced like the letter name "i" [eye], and "ie" like the letter name "e"
[ee].**

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emphasis

In German as in English, the emphasis almost always falls on the first syllable. This also applies to
compound words, including separable verbs. The exceptions are compound words starting with ver-, be-,
er-, ent-, ge-, zer-, emp-, where the emphasis "shifts" to the second syllable.

words with the emphasis on the first syllable

trinken, Mannschaft, gehen, einkaufen, anmachen, ausgehen
[drink, team, to go, to shop, to turn on, to go out]

words where the emphasis shifts to the second syllable

verstehen, Getränke, Erfahrung, empfehlen, Besuch
[to understand, drinks, experience, to advise, visit]

Foreign words

Words of Latin origin usually have the same emphasis as they do in Italian and Spanish:
Na<u>tion</u>, anti<u>quiert</u>, Sta<u>tis</u>tik, stu<u>die</u>ren, Mu<u>se</u>um
The ending -tion (Latin) is pronounced -tsion: Nation, Revolution, Aktion, Rationalität

ph is pronounced the same as in English, and usually turns up in the same words: Philosophie, Graphologie, Physik

A lot of words in spoken German are imported or borrowed from Greek, Latin, French, Italian or English.

Most of them are pronounced the same as they are in the original language:
Garage, Portemonnaie, Ambiente, E-Mail, relaxen, Cappuccino, Fitness-Center,
Information, Chance, Niveau, Ciao, Manager, okay

Tipps & Tricks
**The emphasis almost always falls on the first syllable. In words starting with ver-, be-, er-, ent-,
ge-, zer-, emp- the emphasis "shifts" to the second syllable.**

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closed and open vowels
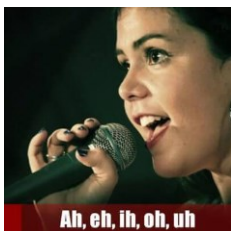
In general…
… Short vowels are pronounced open.
…while long vowels are closed.
e, however, can be long and open.

- A vowel before a double consonant becomes short-open.
- ß makes the vowel before it long-closed, ss makes it short-open:
  Fuß - Füße, Fluss - Flüsse, Straße - Strass, Maße - Masse
  [foot/feet, river/s, road - strass, measurements - mass]
- A vowel followed by h always becomes long.

Outside of these rules, there's no way to know whether you should pronounce a vowel long or short - you just have to learn it!

pronounced	can be written	examples
long a	a, aa, ah	Plan, Aal, Zahl [plan, eel, number]
short a	a	Stand, Platz [stall, square]
long closed e	e, eh, ee	Reben, sehen, zehn, Allee, den [tendrils, to see, ten, avenue, the (acc.)]
short open e	e, ä	Geld, März, echt, hätte, lässt [money, march, true, would have, leaves]
e -mute	final e	Mode, Halle, Nase [fashion, pavilion, nose]
long closed i	i, ie, ieh	ihr, viel, wir, sie, die, Wien, liegen, siegen, Igel, Riese, sieh [plural you, many, we, they, the, Vienna, to lie, to win, hedgehog, giant, look]
short open i	i	ist, links, ich [is, left, I]
long closed o	o, oo, oh	groß, Boot, wohl [large, boat, probably]
short open o	o	Sport, Post, Koch [sport, mail, cook]
long closed u	u, uh	gut, Uhr, Bube [good/well, watch, boy]
short open u	u	kurz, Bus, Lust [short, bus, desire]
long ä: pronounced like a very open "e"	ä, äh	täglich, zählen, wäre, mähen [daily, to count, would be, to reap]
long closed ö: pronounced like "ee" with a rounded mouth.	ö, öh	Möbel, hören, Ökologie, böse, Möhre, Söhne [furniture, to hear, ecology, angry, carrot, sons]

short open ö	ö	zwölf, können [twelve, to be able to/can]
long closed ü: pronounced like an "ee" with a flattened mouth.	ü, üh, y	Mühe, Kühe, über, Gemüse, müde, Psychologie, physisch [fatigue, cows, over, vegetables, tired, psychology, physical]
short open ü	ü	küssen, müssen, Schlüssel, Thyssen [to kiss, to have to/must, key, Thyssen]

Tipps & Tricks
Short vowels are pronounced open, while long vowels are closed.

hard consonants

Pronouncing consonants usually isn't too difficult for students. However, there are some small exceptions.

Consonants are usually pronounced hard and "explosive" - almost like there's an *h* after the consonant. To exaggerate: "Theater", "Kartoffel", "Pass", "ist", "Kuss", "können", "zehn" *Kartoffel* sounds almost like "K'harthoffel", *Pass* like "P'hass".

Another important aspect is the pronunciation of words and syllables starting with st or sp, where the s is pronounced like an English "sh". Words of this type include *spielen* [to play] or *studieren* [to study], but also *verstehen/verstanden* [to understand/understood].

z is always "hard", that is, it sounds like "ts".

When they're at the end of a word, the consonants d, b and g don't stay "soft" like they do when they're intervocalic, but are pronounced like t, p and k.

For example *der Weg* [the way] sounds like "wek" - and not "weg" – but the plural *die Wege* is still "wege" thanks to the presence of the final "e".

[grammar snacks]

Here's a summary of the pronunciations you need to remember, with some examples to listen to:

d, b and g at the end of a word are pronounced like "t, p, k".	Tag, Bad, Rad, gib, seid, Stab, sag, lag, Sieg [day, bath, wheel, give, plural you are, stick, say, lay, victory]
ig at the end of a word is a soft "ich", but in some regions it can also be "ik".	dreißig, fünfzig, riesig, or: dreißig, fünfzig, riesig "k" [thirty, fifty, huge]
s at the start of a word is always soft.	singen, sehen, sagen, süß, sieben [to sing, to see, to say, sweet, seven]
z is always hard: "ts".	Zahl, Zahn, Zug, zwanzig, ziehen [number, tooth, train, twenty, to pull]
g is always hard, like "give"	gehen, Gas, gegessen, gut, Gold [to go, gas, eaten, good/well, gold]
v is pronounced "f", with the exception of nouns imported from Latin.	viele, verstehen, Verkehr, Vater [many, to understand, traffic, father] but: Vase, Kurve, Universität "v"
w is pronounced like "v".	wer, wo, wie, was, woher, wann [who, where, how, what, from where, when]
ß is the same as "ss" where the preceding vowel is double or long.	gießen, reißen, heißen, Fuß, Straße [to pour, to tear, to be called, foot, street]
sch is always pronounced like "sh".	schreiben, Scheibe, Schluss, Schlange [to write, disc, end, snake]
st and sp at the beginning of a word or syllable are pronounced like "sht" and "shp".	Student, studieren, spielen, stehen, verstehen, sparen, Spaß, Spiel, sprechen, versprechen [student, to study, to play, to stand, to understand, to save, fun, game, to speak, to promise]

prosody
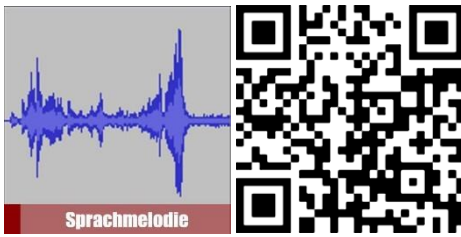
Here you'll find some passages from German literature, masterfully read out by professional actors and actresses. By listening to them you can get an idea of how the language "sounds", of its melody. Try to listen and replicate the pronunciation as best as you can, while maintaining the original speed.

Franz Kafka [1883-1924]: Brief an den Vater
gelesen von Christian Brückner

Es gab glücklicherweise davon allerdings auch Ausnahmen, meistens wenn Du schweigend littest und Liebe und Güte mit ihrer Kraft alles Entgegenstehende überwand und unmittelbar ergriff. Selten war das allerdings, aber es war wunderbar. Etwa wenn ich Dich früher in heißen Sommern mittags nach dem Essen im Geschäft müde ein wenig schlafen sah, den Ellbogen auf dem Pult, oder wenn Du sonntags abgehetzt zu uns in die Sommerfrische kamst; oder wenn Du bei einer schweren Krankheit der Mutter zitternd vom Weinen Dich am Bücherkasten festhieltest; oder wenn Du während meiner letzten Krankheit leise zu mir in Ottlas Zimmer kamst, auf der Schwelle bliebst, nur den Hals strecktest, um mich im Bett zu sehn, und aus Rücksicht nur mit der Hand grüßtest. Zu solchen Zeiten legte man sich hin und weinte vor Glück und weint jetzt wieder, während man es schreibt.

[Letter to my father
Fortunately, there were exceptions to all this, mostly when you suffered in silence, and affection and kindliness by their own strength overcame all obstacles, and moved me immediately. Rare as this was, it was wonderful. For instance, in earlier years, in hot summers, when you were tired after lunch, I saw you having a nap at the office, your elbow on the desk; or you joined us in the country, in the summer holidays, on Sundays, worn out from work; or the time Mother was gravely ill and you stood holding on to the bookcase, shaking with sobs; or when, during my last illness, you came tiptoeing to Ottla's room to see me, stopping in the doorway, craning your neck to see me, and out of consideration only waved to me with your hand. At such times one would lie back and weep for happiness, and one weeps again now, writing it down.]

Günter Wilhelm Grass [1927-2015]: Beim Häuten der Zwiebel
gelesen von Frauke Poolman

Die Erinnerung liebt das Versteckspiel der Kinder. Sie verkriecht sich. Zum Schönreden neigt sie und schmückt gerne, oft ohne Not. Sie widerspricht dem Gedächtnis, das sich pedantisch gibt und zänkisch rechthaben will. Wenn ihr mit Fragen zugesetzt wird, gleicht die Erinnerung einer Zwiebel, die, gehäutet sein möchte, damit freigelegt werden kann, was Buchstab nach Buchstab ablesbar steht: selten eindeutig, oft in Spiegelschrift oder sonstwie verrätselt. Unter der ersten, noch trocken knisternden Haut findet sich die nächste, die kaum gelöst, feucht eine dritte freigibt, unter der die vierte, fünfte warten und flüstern. Und

jede weitere schwitzt zu lang gemiedene Wörter aus, auch schnörkelige Zeichen, als habe sich ein Geheimniskrämer von jung an, als die Zwiebel noch keimte, verschlüsseln wollen.

[Peeling the onion
Memory likes to play hide-and-seek, to crawl away. It tends to hold forth, to dress up, often needlessly. Memory contradicts itself; pedant that it is, it will have its way. When pestered with questions, memory is like an onion that wishes to be peeled so we can read what is laid bare letter by letter. It is seldom unambiguous and often in mirror-writing or otherwise disguised. Beneath its dry and crackly outer skin we find another, more moist layer, that once detached, reveals a third, beneath which a fourth and fifth wait whispering. And each skin sweats words too long muffled, and curlicue signs, as if a mystery-monger from an early age, while the onion was still germinating, had decided to encode himself.]

Hermann Karl Hesse [1877-1962]: Glück
gelesen von Ulrich Pleitgen

Solang du nach dem Glücke jagst,
Bist du nicht reif zum Glücklichsein,
Und wäre alles Liebste dein.
Solang du um Verlornes klagst
Und Ziele hast und rastlos bist,
Weißt du noch nicht, was Friede ist.
Erst wenn du jedem Wunsch entsagst,
Nicht Ziel mehr noch Begehren kennst,
Das Glück nicht mehr mit Namen nennst,
Dann reicht dir des Geschehens Flut
Nicht mehr ans Herz, und deine Seele ruht.

[Happiness
If luck you chase, you have not grown
enough for happiness to stay,
not even if you get your way.
If, what you lost, you still bemoan,
and grasp at tasks, and dash and dart,
you have not known true peace of heart.
But if no wishes are your own,
and you don't try to win the game,
and Lady Luck is just a name,
then tides of life won't reach your breast
and all your strife and all your soul will rest.]

Ingeborg Bachmann [1926-1973] aus Malina, zweites Kapitel: Glücklich mit Ivan
gelesen von Therese Hämer

Da Ivan kommt, bin ich sehr rasch fertig, nur die Kopien von den Briefen liegen noch herum, und ein einziges Mal fragt Ivan, was ich denn so mache, und ich sage: Oh, nichts, ich sehe so verlegen aus, dass er lachen muß. Briefe interessieren ihn nicht, aber ein unverfängliches Blatt, auf dem steht "Drei Mörder" und Ivan legt es wieder hin. […] Er nimmt noch eines in die Hand und liest belustigt: TODESARTEN. Und von einem anderen Zettel liest er ab: Die ägyptische Finsternis. [….] Das gefällt mir nicht, ich habe mir schon was Ähnliches gedacht, und alle diese Bücher, die hier herumstehen in deiner Gruft, die will doch niemand, warum gibt es nur solche Bücher, es muß auch andere geben, die müssen sein, wie EXSULTATE JUBILATE, damit man vor Freude aus der Haut fahren kann, du fährst doch so oft vor Freude aus der Haut, warum schreibst du nicht so. Dieses Elend auf den Markt tragen, es noch vermehren auf der Welt, das ist doch widerlich, alle diese Bücher sind widerwärtig. Was ist denn das für eine Obsession mit dieser Finsternis, alles ist immer traurig und die machen es noch trauriger in diesen Folianten. […] Ja aber, sage ich eingeschüchtert. Nichts aber, sagt Ivan, und immer leiden sie gleich für die ganze Menschheit und ihre Schreiereien und denken an die Kriege und stellen sich schon neue vor, aber wenn du mit mir Kaffee trinkst oder wenn wir Wein trinken und Schach spielen, wo ist dann der Krieg und wo ist die hungernde sterbende Menschheit, und tut dir nur leid, weil du die Partie verlierst, oder weil ich einen Riesenhunger haben werde, und warum lachst du jetzt, hat die Menschheit vielleicht viel zu lachen in diesem Augenblick? Aber ich lache doch nicht, sage ich, trotzdem muss ich lachen und lasse das Unglück anderswo geschehen, weil da kein Unglück ist, wo Ivan sich mit mir zum Essen niedersetzt.

[Happy with Ivan
Since Ivan is on his way I finish up very quickly, only the copies of the letters are still lying around, and Ivan asks just once what I'm up to there, and I say: "Oh, nothing, but I look so embarrassed that he's forced to laugh. He's not interested in the letters, only in a plain piece of paper with the words "Three Murderers" which he puts back down. […] Merrily he takes one and reads: DEATHSTYLES. And from another piece of paper: The Egyptian darkness. […] I don't like it, I suspected something like this was going on, and nobody wants all these books lying around in your crypt, why isn't there anything else, there must be other books, like EXSULTATE JUBILATE, which make you mad with joy, you're always mad with joy yourself, so why don't you write like that. It's disgusting to put this misery on the market, just adding to what's already there, these books are all absolutely loathsome. What kind of obsession is this anyway, all this gloom, everything's always sad and these books make it even worse in folio editions. […] I say, intimidated: yes, but - But nothing, says Ivan, and they're always suffering for all of humanity with all its troubles as well and they talk about all the wars and predict new ones, but when you're drinking coffee with me or when we're drinking wine and playing chess, then where are all the wars and where is humanity starving to death, and are you really sorry about all that or just sorry because about the fact that you're losing, or because I'm about to be so hungry I could eat a horse and why are you laughing right now, does humanity have a lot to laugh about right this minute? But I'm not laughing, I say, still I have to laugh and I allow affliction to occur elsewhere, since there isn't any here, where Ivan is sitting down with me to dinner.]

NUMBERS

The cardinal and ordinal numbers of German: learning them is easy because from 13 onwards they're completely regular.

Here you'll also learn how to say the date and understand prices.

numbers

From 13 onwards the numbers always follow the unit + *und* + ten rule. Tens are always made up of the number plus the suffix *-zig*.

Here you'll find all the numbers from 0 to 100 and beyond! Note that decimal points and thousand separators are the other way round in German, so dots are used as thousand separators.

0 = null	**10 = zehn**	**20 = zwanzig**
1= eins	11 = elf	21 = einundzwanzig
2= zwei	12 = zwölf	22 = zweiundzwanzig
3= drei	13 = dreizehn	23 = dreiundzwanzig
4= vier	14 = vierzehn	24 = vierundzwanzig
5= fünf	15 = fünfzehn	25 = fünfundzwanzig
6= sechs	16 = sechzehn	26 = sechsundzwanzig
7= sieben	17 = siebzehn	27 = siebenundzwanzig
8 = acht	18 = achtzehn	28 = achtundzwanzig
9 = neun	19 = neunzehn	29 = neunundzwanzig
30 = dreißig	**40 = vierzig**	**50 = fünfzig**
31 = einunddreißig	41 = einundvierzig	51 = einundfünfzig
32 = zweiunddreißig	42 = zweiundvierzig	52 = zweiundfünfzig
33 = dreiunddreißig	43 = dreiundvierzig	53 = dreiundfünfzig
34 = vierunddreißig	44 = vierundvierzig	54 = vierundfünfzig
35 = fünfunddreißig	45 = fünfundvierzig	55 = fünfundfünfzig
36 = sechsunddreißig	46 = sechsundvierzig	56 = sechsundfünfzig
37 = siebenunddreißig	47 = siebenundvierzig	57 = siebenundfünfzig
38 = achtunddreißig	48 = achtundvierzig	58 = achtundfünfzig
39 = neununddreißig	49 = neunundvierzig	59 = neunundfünfzig
60 = sechzig	**70 = siebzig**	**80 = achtzig**
61 = einundsechzig	71 = einundsiebzig	81 = einundachtzig

62 = zweiundsechzig	72 = zweiundsiebzig	82 = zweiundachtzig
63 = dreiundsechzig	73 = dreiundsiebzig	83 = dreiundachtzig
64 = vierundsechzig	74 = vierundsiebzig	84 = vierundachtzig
65 = fünfundsechzig	75 = fünfundsiebzig	85 = fünfundachtzig
66 = sechundsechzig	76 = sechsundsiebzig	86 = sechsundachtzig
67 = siebenundsechzig	77 = siebenundsiebzig	87 = siebenundachtzig
68 = achtundsechzig	78 = achtundsiebzig	88 = achtundachtzig
69 = neunundzechzig	79 = neunundsiebzig	89 = neunundachtzig
90 = neunzig	**100 = hundert**	**1000 = tausend**
91 = einundneunzig	102 = hundert(und)zwei	2000 = zweitausend
92 = zweiundneunzig	200 = zweihundert	3000 = dreitausend
93 = dreiundneunzig	300 = dreihundert	4000 = viertausend
94 = vierundneunzig	400 = vierhundert	5000 = fünftausend
95 = fünfundneunzig	500 = fünfhundert	6000 = sechstausend
96 = sechsundneunzig	600 = sechshundert	7000 = siebentausend
97 = siebenundneunzig	700 = siebenhundert	8000 = achttausend
98 = achtundneunzig	800 = achthundert	9000 = neuntausend
99 = neunundneunzig	900 = neunhundert	10.000 = zehntausend
1.000.000 = eine Million	**1.000.000.000**	
2.000.000 = zwei Millionen	**= eine Milliarde**	

Here's a large number and how to say it:
798.457 sieben hundert acht und neunzig tausend, vier hundert sieben und fünfzig

Again... listen and repeat:

10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1—0

50000 < 500000 < 900000 < 1000000 < 2000000 < 3000000 < 200000000 < 1000000000 < 2000000000, usw.

10–11–12–20–13–30–14–40–15–50–16–60–17–70–18–80–19–90–100

32–64-45–37–55–78–123–89–48–58–39– 24–57–93

167–393–4031–673–777–450—-696–1000– 678238–10700–340000–2450000

ordinal numbers

Ordinal numbers from 1 to 19 are formed by adding the suffix –te to the cardinal number: 5. = fünfte. From the number 20 onwards the suffix is –ste: 31. = einunddreißigste.
Some ordinal numbers from 1 to 19 have irregular forms. All the other ordinal numbers are regular.

Ordinal numbers are written with a dot to distinguish them from cardinal numbers.
They behave like adjectives and so they take the adjectival ending if they're declined.

Just like in English, ordinal numbers are also used to say the date.

1. = erste	21. = einundzwanzigste	100. = [ein]hundertste
2. = zweite	22. = zweiundzwanzigste	101. = [ein]hunderterste
3. = dritte	23. = dreiundzwanzigste	102. = [ein]hundertzweite
4. = vierte	24. = vierundzwanzigste	999. = neunhundert-neunundneunzigste
5. = fünfte	25. = fünfundzwanzigste	
6. = sechste	26. = sechsundzwanzigste	1000. = [ein]tausendste
7. = siebte	27. = siebenundzwanzigste	10.000. = zehntausendste
8. = achte	28. = achtundzwanzigste	100.000. = hundert-tausendste
9. = neunte	29. = neunundzwanzigste	
10. = zehnte	30. = dreißigste	1.000.000. = millionste
11. = elfte	31. = einunddreißigste	1.500.000. = **eine**millionfünf-hunderttausendste
12. = zwölfte	…	
13. = dreizehnte		2.000.000. = zweimillionste
14. = vierzehnte		2.500.000. = zweimillion**en**-fünfhunderttausendste
15. = fünfzehnte		
16. = sechzehnte		
17. = siebzehnte		
18. = achtzehnte		
19. = neunzehnte		
20. = zwanzigste		

Examples:

Ich bin erster und du nur zweiter. [I'm the first and you're just the second.]

Ich komme am siebenundzwanzigsten Februar. [I'm coming on the 27th of February.]

Ein zweites Mal mache ich diesen Fehler nicht! [I won't make this mistake a second time.]

Auf dem ersten Platz ist Hans Mueller. [In first place is Hans Mueller.]

Heute wurde das zweihunderttausendste Buch verkauft. [The 200,000th copy of the book was sold today.]

Ordinal numbers are also used to give an order to a speech, as adverbial expressions: erstens, zweitens, drittens, viertens, ... and letztens [last but not least]:

Erstens finde ich das Projekt viel zu vage. Zweitens habe ich auch kein Geld dafür und drittens habe ich gar nicht die Zeit da mitzumachen.

[Firstly, I think the project is too vague. Secondly, I have no money and thirdly, I don't have time to participate.]

Tipps & Tricks
ordinal numbers from 1st to 19th = cardinal number + -te
ordinal numbers from 20th onwards = cardinal number + -ste

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the date

The date is made up of the day and month - with ordinal numbers - and the year [cardinal number].

After the day and month it's customary to put a dot: 13.02.2020

Alternatively, the month can also be written in full: 13. Februar 2020

Days and months

Here are the days and months and how they're abbreviated [they're all masculine]:

Montag	Mo	1.	Januar	Jan
Dienstag	Di	2.	Februar	Feb
Mittwoch	Mi	3.	März	Mär
Donnerstag	Do	4.	April	Apr

Freitag	Fr		5.	Mai	Mai
Samstag	Sa		6.	Juni	Jun
Sonntag	So		7.	Juli	Jul
			8.	August	Aug
			9.	September	Sep
			10.	Oktober	Okt
			11.	November	Nov.
			12.	Dezember	Dez

When saying the date out loud or in writing, ordinal numbers take the adjectival endings:

Nominative:
*Heute ist **der** fünf**te** Oktober. / Heute ist der fünfte Zehnte*. [Today is the 5th of October.]

Dative:
*Wir treffen uns **am** fünf**ten** Oktober. / Wir treffen uns am fünften Zehnten.* [We'll meet on the 5th of October.]

The year

From the year 1100 to 1999, we talk about "hundreds" of years. Starting from the year 2000, the number is said normally.
1100 - elfhundert ["eleven hundred"]
1214 - zwölfhundertvierzehn ["twelve hundred fourteen"]
1999 - neunzehnhundertneunundneunzig ["nineteen hundred ninety-nine"]
2020 - zweitausendzwanzig [two thousand twenty]

The year doesn't take the preposition; it's just *Ich werde 2035 60 Jahre alt* [(In) 2035 I will be 60]. In German you can't say "in" 2000, but you can say "in the year" 2000 instead: *im Jahre 2000*.

Centuries

Like days and months, centuries are also expressed with ordinal numbers:
Im 12. Jahrhundert [Jh.]
Im 3. Jahrhundert vor Christus [v. Chr.]
Im 4. Jahrhundert nach Christus [4. Jh. n. Chr.]
Im 16. Jahrhundert
Im 20. Jahrhundert

Different ways of saying the date

There are several ways to say the date in German. The spelling may differ slightly from the pronunciation.

1. General indication of the date
   - written: heute ist der 03.03.2020/03.März 2020
   - spoken: heute ist der dritte-dritte zweitausendzwanzig/der dritte März zweitausendzwanzig
2. The date in letters
   In formal letters, the place and date must be indicated:
   - written: London, [den] 25.08.1993
   - spoken: London, den fünfundzwanzigsten achten neunzehnhundertdreiundneunzig

3. Periods of time
   - written: Vom 12.04. – 03.05.2014 [benötige ich ein Zimmer]
   - spoken: Vom zwölften vierten bis zum dritten fünften zweitausend(und)vierzehn [benötige ich ein Zimmer]
     [I need a room from the 12th of April to the 3rd of May 2014.]
   - written: Ab dem 12.04.2014 [benötige ich ein Zimmer]
   - spoken: Ab dem zwölften vierten zweitausendvierzehn [benötige ich ein Zimmer]
     [I need a room starting from the 12th of April 2014]

Asking for and giving the date

The day:
   - **Welcher** Tag ist heute? Der wievielte ist heute?
     Heute ist der 10.02. / zehnte Februar / der zehnte Zweite [der + ordinal number + month]
   - **Welchen** Tag haben wir heute?
     Montag, den elften Oktober [day of the week, der + ordinal number + month]
     [What day is it today?]

Exact dates/making an appointment:
   - Wann hast du Geburtstag? Am Wievielten hast du Geburtstag?
     Ich habe **am** 10.02./ zehnten Februar/zehnten Zweiten Geburtstag (am + ordinal number + month)
     [When is your birthday? My birthday is on the 10th of February.]
   - Wann ist der Termin?
     Der Termin ist am Dienstag, dem/den dreißigsten September [am + day of the week, **dem/den** + ordinal number + month)
     [When is the appointment? It's on Tuesday the 30th of September.]

units of measurement and prices

Here are the most common units of measurement

Time:	Weight/quantity:
die Sekunde[n] – Sek.	das Milligramm – mg
die Minute[n] – Min.	das Gramm – g
die Stunde[n] – Std.	das Pfund [pound]
	das Kilogramm – kg
der Tag[e] [day]	der Zentner [hundredweight]
die Woche[n] [week]	die Tonne[e] [metric ton] – t
der Monat[e] [month]	
das Jahr[e] [year]	der Milliliter – ml
das Jahrzehnt[e] [decade]	der Deziliter [decilitre] – dl
das Jahrhundert[e] [century] - Jh.	der Liter – l
das Jahrtausend[e] [millennium]	der Hektoliter – hl
	der Kubikzentimeter [cubic centimetre] – cm³
Length/surface:	der Kubikmeter [cubic metre] – m³
der Millimeter – mm	anderthalb [one and a half]
der Zentimeter – cm	ein halb [one half]
der Meter – m	ein Viertel [one quarter]
der Kilometer – km	ein Achtel [one eighth]
der Quadratmeter [square metre] – qm	
Kilometer pro Stunde – km/h	

How do you say units of measurement out loud?

Units of measurement are usually abbreviated when they're written down, but the whole word is used to say them out loud. So you'd write *Das Hotel liegt 5km vom Zentrum entfernt*, but out loud you'd say *fünf Kilometer*.

When there's a comma (used instead of a decimal point), you say that out loud too:
5,3 km = fünf Komma drei Kilometer
1,25 l = eins Komma fünfundzwanzig Liter

Prices

And finally: How do you say prices in German? It's very simple: pretty much the same as in English.

5 € = fünf Euro

50 ct. = fünfzig Cent

3,90 € = drei Euro neunzig - unlike with units of measurement, you don't say the comma/decimal point.

VERBS [PRESENT TENSE]

The present tense of German verbs: regular, irregular, modal.

present tense of regular verbs

Let's warm up a bit with some good news: verb endings are the same for all verbs. The first-person plural and third-person plural are the same as the infinitive. Here's the verb *machen* [to make/do]:

	machen	
ich	mach**e**	Ich mache einen Deutschkurs. [I'm taking [doing] a German course.]
du	mach**st**	Machst du Sport? [Do you play [do] any sports?]
er/sie/es	mach**t**	Sie macht Hausaufgaben. [She does her homework.]
wir	mach**en**	Heute machen wir Pizza. [Today we're making pizza.]
ihr	mach**t**	Ihr macht das gut. [You're doing that well.]
sie/Sie	mach**en**	Manchmal machen sie Fehler. [Sometimes they make mistakes.]

Note that in German, there is no present continuous [I am doing]; you just say "I do" instead. See below for how to form progressive verbs if you need to specifically say you're doing something "right now".

Let's summarise how the conjugation works: to get the right form of the verb you simply have to take the root [for *machen* that would be *mach-*] and add the right ending for the person and number.

If, on the other hand, we're talking about verbs whose stem ends in -t, like *arbeiten* [to work], an e is added to the second- and third-person singular and to the second-person plural, to make the final consonant easier to pronounce.

	arbeiten	
ich	arbeit**e**	Ich arbeite morgen nicht. [I'm not working tomorrow.]
du	arbeit**est**	Immer arbeitest du den ganzen Tag. [You always work all day.]

er/sie/es	arbeit*et*	Wann arbeitet er nächste Woche? [When is he working next week?]
wir	arbeit*en*	Wir arbeiten als Ingenieure. [We work as engineers.]
ihr	arbeit*et*	Ihr arbeitet zu langsam! [You're working too slowly!]
sie/Sie	arbeit*en*	Sie arbeiten im Kulturbereich. [They work in the cultural sector.]

Finally, one small point before we're done with regular verbs: when a verb ends with -s, -ss, -z or the famous ß, in the second person the root loses its own s. Here's an example with *reisen* [to travel]:

	reisen	
ich	reis*e*	Nächstes Jahr reise ich nach Indien. [Next year I'll travel to India.]
du	rei*st*	Reist du gerne? [Do you like to travel?]
er/sie/es	reis*t*	Im Sommer reist sie nach Spanien. [In summer she'll travel to Spain.]
wir	reis*en*	Wir reisen mit dem Bus. [We travel by coach.]
ihr	reis*t*	Reist ihr oft? [Do you travel a lot?]
sie/Sie	reis*en*	Normalerweise reisen sie zusammen. [Normally they travel together.]

Tipps & Tricks
ich __e. du __st, er/sie/es __t, wir __en, ihr __t, sie/Sie __en
For verbs whose root ends with -t, we add an e: du __est, er/sie/es __et, ihr __et.
For verbs whose root ends with -s, -ss, -z, or -ß, in the second person the root loses its s.
The endings are always the same – even for irregular verbs!

common irregular verbs

Don't be scared of irregular verbs! First of all, here's some good news:
- There aren't many irregular verbs [they're important, but still rare] and the only difference is in the second- and third-person singular – often the letter "e" changes to "i" or "ie", and "a" to "ä".
- The endings are the same as for the regular verbs.

Verbs in this category include *sprechen* [to speak], *lesen* [to read], *nehmen* [to take], and *fahren* [to go by car]. Here are some examples:

sprechen [to speak]: the "e" in the root becomes "i"

ich	spreche	Ich spreche Englisch und Spanisch. [I speak English and Spanish.]
du	spr**i**chst	Sprichst du Deutsch? [Do you speak German?]
er/sie/es	spr**i**cht	Sie spricht sehr schnell. [She speaks very quickly.]
wir	sprechen	Später sprechen wir mit Hans. [Later we'll speak with Hans.]
ihr	sprecht	Sprecht ihr über mich? [Are you speaking about me?]
sie/Sie	sprechen	Sie sprechen Dialekt. [They speak dialect.]

lesen [to read]: the "e" becomes "ie"

ich	lese	Ich lese gerne. [I like reading.]
du	**lie**st	Liest du oft die Zeitung? [Do you often read the newspaper?]
er/sie/es	**lie**st	Am Abend liest er seine E-Mails. [In the evening he reads his emails.]
wir	lesen	Im Englischunterricht lesen wir Shakespeare.

		[In our English classes we read Shakespeare.]
ihr	lest	Ihr lest generell viel, oder? [You read a lot in general, right?]
sie/Sie	lesen	Lesen Sie bitte die Information. [Please read the information.]

fahren [to go by vehicle]: "a" becomes "ä"

ich	fahre	Heute fahre ich nach Florenz. [Today I'm going to Florence.]
du	f**ä**hrst	Fährst du Auto? [Do you drive [a car]?]
er/sie/es	f**ä**hrt	Er fährt mit dem Zug nach Hause. [He's going home by train.]
wir	fahren	Wann fahren wir los? [When are we setting off?]
ihr	fahrt	Ihr fahrt immer nach Holland. [You always go to Holland.]
sie/Sie	fahren	Sie fahren in den Urlaub. [They're going on holiday.]

nehmen [to take] is a bit more irregular, but the "e" still becomes "i"

ich	nehme	Ich nehme ein Bier. [I'll take [have] a beer.]
du	n**im**mst	Nimmst du auch einen Kaffee? [Will you also take [have] a coffee?]
er/sie/es	n**im**mt	Er nimmt das Buch. [He takes the book.]
wir	nehmen	Morgen nehmen wir uns frei. [Tomorrow we'll take a day off.]
ihr	nehmt	Ihr nehmt ein Glas Wein. [You're taking [having] a glass of wine.]
sie/Sie	nehmen	Normalerweise nehmen sie den Bus. [Normally they take the bus.]

Other irregular verbs

These examples are in the third-person singular, but the irregularity also applies to the second person.

empfehlen	recommend	Er empfiehlt mir einen Film. [He recommends a film to me.]
essen	eat	Sie isst ein Brötchen. [She eats a sandwich.]
fallen	fall	Er fällt vom Stuhl. [He falls off the chair.]
geben	give	Das Kind gibt mir die Hand. [The child gives me his hand.]
gefallen	please	Dieses Buch gefällt mir. [This book pleases me./I like this book.]
geschehen	happen	Das geschieht oft. [That happens a lot.]
halten	hold, stop	Der Bus hält an der Ecke. [The bus stops at the corner.]
helfen	help	Sie hilft ihm [dat.] [She helps him.]
brechen	break	Glas bricht leicht. [Glass breaks easily.]
lassen	leave	Er lässt sie nicht in Ruhe. [He won't leave her alone.]
laufen	run, walk	Sie läuft jeden Tag 8 km. [She runs/walks 8 km every day.]
lesen	read	Jeden Morgen liest er die Zeitung. [He reads the newspaper every morning.]
schlafen	sleep	Das Baby schläft gerade. [The baby is sleeping.]
schlagen	hit, beat	Sie schlägt ihn beim Tennis. [She beats him at tennis.]
sehen	see	Ein Adler sieht sehr gut. [An eagle sees very well.]
tragen	carry, wear	Er trägt einen Koffer. [He's carrying a suitcase.]
treffen	meet	Sie trifft sich gerne mit Freunden. [She likes meeting up with friends.]
vergessen	forget	Manchmal vergisst sie die Schlüssel zu Hause. [Sometimes she forgets her keys at home.]
waschen	wash	Er wäscht sich die Hände. [He washes his hands.]

"sein" und "haben"

Here are two verbs which are fundamental for learning German:

***sein* [to be]**

The auxiliary verb *sein* is used for names and professions, along with a noun or an adjective. It can also be used to say someone's age, to form the perfect tense, or it can be more philosophical with the question *Sein oder nicht sein?*

ich	**bin**	Ich bin Jürgen. [I'm Jürgen.]
du	**bist**	Bist du zu Hause? [Are you at home?]
er/sie/es	**ist**	Sie ist zwanzig. [She's twenty.]
wir	**sind**	Wir sind um 8 Uhr angekommen. [We arrived at 8.]
ihr	**seid**	Ihr seid bestimmt müde. [You must be tired.]
sie/Sie	**sind**	Sind Sie Italiener? [Are you Italian?]

***haben* [to have]**

Unlike *sein, haben* is mostly regular, but it loses the b in the second-person and third-person singular:

ich	habe	Gestern habe ich einen Kuchen gebacken. [Yesterday I baked a cake.]
du	**hast**	Hast du eine Freundin? [Do you have a girlfriend?]
er/sie/es	**hat**	Er hat keine Geschwister. [He doesn't have any siblings.]
wir	haben	Wir haben im Moment keine Zeit. [We don't have any time right now.]
ihr	habt	Habt ihr ein Auto? [Do you have a car?]
sie/Sie	haben	Sie haben nie genug Geld. [They never have enough money.]

Tipps & Tricks
Who am I??? It's best you don't forget: commit the verb sein to memory – it's much easier.

"mögen" und "möchten"

Mögen [to like] can only be followed by a noun, never by a verb.
Here are some examples:

ich	**mag –**	Ich mag keine Bananen. [I don't like bananas.]
du	**magst**	Magst du Krimis? [Do you like detective stories?]
er/sie/es	**mag –**	Sie mag ihre neuen Nachbarn nicht besonders. [She doesn't particularly like her new neighbours.]

wir	mögen	Wir mögen nur warmes Wetter. [We only like warm weather.]
ihr	mögt	Ihr mögt nur Omas Schweinebraten. [You only like grandma's roast pork.]
sie/Sie	mögen	Sie mögen dich sehr. [They like you a lot.]

It's important to differentiate between *mögen* and **möchten** which, although technically just the subjunctive of *mögen*, has become something of a verb in its own right. It means "would like" and is used as a weaker and more polite version of "to want", wollen, e.g. to order in a restaurant or to offer something to someone:

ich	möchte	Ich möchte einen gemischten Salat. [I would like a mixed salad.]
du	möchtest	Möchtest du einen Kaffee? [Would you like a coffee?]
er/sie/es	**möchte**	Er möchte bald nach Italien fahren. [He would like to travel to Italy soon.]
wir	möchten	Wir möchten zwei Bier. [We would like two beers.]
ihr	möchtet	Möchtet ihr mit ins Kino kommen? [Would you like to come to the cinema with us/me?]
sie/Sie	möchten	Möchten Sie ein Stück Torte zum Kaffee? [Would you like a slice of cake with your coffee?]

Tipps & Tricks
Mögen can only be followed by a noun, never by a verb.
Möchten means "would like", i.e., it's used as a weaker and more polite version of "to want" [wollen] and is followed by a verb [or an implied verb].

the modal verb "wollen"

Here's another important modal verb: *wollen*. In the singular the vowel changes from *o* to *i,* and the first and third person are identical – which is the case for all modal verbs.

Like in English it tends to sound quite strong, so it's common to substitute it with *möchten*, especially in formal contexts.

ich	will –	Ja, ich will.
		[Yes, I want to [marry you].]
du	will st	Immer willst du Recht bekommen!
		[You always want to be in the right!]
er/sie/es	will –	Er will keine Kinder.
		[He doesn't want any children.]
wir	woll en	Wollen wir uns morgen treffen?
		[Shall we [do we want to] meet up tomorrow?]
ihr	woll t	Wollt ihr zum Abendessen bleiben?
		[Do you want to stay for dinner?]
sie/Sie	woll en	Am Samstag wollen sie nicht arbeiten.
		[They don't want to work on Saturday.]

Tipps & Tricks
Like in English, wollen – to want – sounds quite strong, so it's common to substitute it with möchten, especially in formal contexts.

Tipps & Tricks - special
Ja, ich will [dich heiraten]! Think hard before you say it… otherwise it won't be long before you have to follow up with: Das habe ich nicht gewollt! [I didn't want that.]

the modal verbs "müssen/sollen"

Müssen always refers to a duty or to an [urgent] necessity.

For example, you'd say *Ich muss mal…* [only with family and friends!] to say "I have to... go to the bathroom".

ich	muss –	Ich muss mal… [I have to [implied: go] to the bathroom.]
du	muss t	Du musst jetzt erst die Hausaufgaben machen. [You have to do your homework now.]
er/sie/es	muss –	Sie muss sich beeilen. [You have to get a move on.]
wir	müss en	Müssen wir das unbedingt machen? [Do we absolutely have to do that?]
ihr	müss t	Ihr müsst jetzt gut aufpassen! [You have to pay close attention now.]
sie/Sie	müss en	Sie müssen das Haus verkaufen. [They have to sell the house.]

N.B.: Don't get *müssen* mixed up with its cousins *sollen* and *dürfen*!

To see the difference between *müssen* and *sollen*:

Ich muss das Auto abholen.

[I have to go and pick up the car, maybe because it would benefit me personally and I'm the one who "made" myself do it.]

Ich soll das Auto abholen.

[I should/I'm supposed to go and pick up the car because somebody told me or asked me to, maybe it's that person's car.]

If there's any doubt, use *müssen* and avoid using *sollen* which is more likely to lead to confusion.

Sollen refers to an imposed duty or an imperative expressed by somebody else:

ich	soll–	Soll ich Milch kaufen?
		[Should I buy milk? [Are you telling me I should buy it?]]
du	soll st	Du sollst nicht töten.
		[Thou shalt not kill. [God commands it.]]
er/sie/es	soll –	Soll Mama dich vom Bahnhof abholen?.
		[Should mum pick you up from the station [do you want her to]?]
wir	soll en	Immer sollen wir leise sein!
		[We should always be quiet. [Someone has ordered us to be.]]
ihr	soll t	Ihr sollt mich nicht immer unterbrechen!
		[Stop interrupting me all the time!]
sie/Sie	soll en	Die Kinder sollen ja auch Spaß haben.
		[The kids should have fun too. [I want them to.]]

But to express a prohibition, i.e. "one may not", we use *nicht dürfen*:

Du darfst die Torte jetzt nicht essen. [You don't have permission to eat the cake right now.]

Sie dürfen den Rasen nicht betreten. [You don't have permission to step on the lawn.]

Tipps & Tricks

ich muss = it's absolutely necessary

ich muss nicht = it's not necessary

ich darf nicht = it's prohibited/inappropriate

ich soll = someone has said I have to

the modal verb "können"

Können is simply the German equivalent of the verb "to be able to" or "can". For example, if we wanted to say "I can ride a horse", we'd say *Ich kann reiten*.

Here are some examples:

ich	kann –	Ich kann den schweren Koffer nicht tragen.
		[I can't carry the heavy suitcase.]
du	kann st	Kannst du schwimmen?
		[Can you swim?]
er/sie/es	kann –	Er kann ausgezeichnet Deutsch.
		[He can [speak] German very well.]
wir	könn en	Wir können nicht kommen.
		[We can't come.]
ihr	könn t	Könnt ihr mich hören?
		[Can you hear me?]
sie/Sie	könn en	Sie können ein bisschen Klavier spielen.
		[They can play the piano a little.]

Tipps & Tricks

Können refers to the capability of doing something or the ability to do something. It can also be used to avoid the imperative: Kannst/könntest du bitte (mal) kommen? Instead of komm!.

the modal verb "[nicht] dürfen"

Dürfen indicates permission to do something or prohibition from doing something, or it means that doing something is [in]appropriate.

It's usually used with *nicht* to express a prohibition or to indicate that an action is inappropriate: *nicht dürfen* means "not permitted/forbidden/inappropriate".

Hier dürfen Sie nicht parken! [You're not allowed to park here.]

Dürfen is a nuance of the verb to be able to/can [*können*] which you need to be a bit careful with. Not because it's particularly difficult, but because it exclusively refers to permission to do something or prohibition from doing something.

Nicht dürfen means something like "to not be able to, to not have permission to". However, with *nicht müssen* or *nicht brauchen*, we're saying that something is not necessary, not obligatory.

The best way to understand how to use it is by looking at some examples:

ich	darf –	Darf ich das Fenster aufmachen? [May I open the window?]
du	darf st	Wie lange darfst du wegbleiben? [How long are you allowed to stay away?]
er/sie/es	darf –	Das darf man nicht. [You're not allowed to do that.]
wir	dürf en	Dürfen wir unsere Meinung sagen? [May we give our opinion?]
ihr	dürf t	Ihr dürft gerne probieren. [You're welcome to try.]
sie/Sie	dürf en	Sie dürfen sich nicht so benehmen! [You can't act like that!]

Tipps & Tricks
Dürfen is often used with nicht, to express that something is forbidden or inappropriate.
nicht dürfen = not permitted/forbidden/inappropriate
nicht müssen = not necessary, not obligatory.

auxiliary verbs [summary]

The verbs listed here can be auxiliary verbs, i.e. verbs which accompany another verb, or standalone verbs in their own right.

sein [to be]

As a standalone verb *sein* can be found in plenty of different contexts, just like in English: to refer to a person's profession, with a noun, to describe a psychological state, to say how old someone or something is, etc.
Sein is also used to form the Perfekt, especially for verbs relating to movement.

ich	bin	Ich bin Konditor. [I'm a baker.]
du	bist	Bist du zu Hause? [Are you at home?]
er/sie/es	ist	Sie ist zwanzig. [She's twenty.]
wir	sind	Wir sind um 8 Uhr angekommen. [We arrived at 8.]
ihr	seid	Ihr seid bestimmt müde. [You must be tired.]
sie/Sie	sind	Sind Sie Herr Müller? [Are you Mr Müller?]

haben [to have]

Haben can also be used on its own and it means "to have".
When it's an auxiliary verb, it's used to form the Perfekt.

ich	habe	Gestern habe ich einen Kuchen gebacken. [Yesterday I baked a cake.]
du	hast	Hast du eine Freundin? [Do you have a girlfriend?]
er/sie/es	hat	Er hat keine Geschwister. [He doesn't have any siblings.]
wir	haben	Wir haben im Moment keine Zeit. [We don't have any time right now.]
ihr	habt	Habt ihr ein Auto? [Do you have a car?]
sie/Sie	haben	Sie haben nie genug Geld. [They never have enough money.]

werden [to become]

When it's on its own, the verb *werden* means "to become".
As an auxiliary verb it's used to form…
- The future: subject + *werden* + verb in the infinitive
- The passive: subject + *werden* + verb in the past participle

ich	werde	Ich werde langsam ungeduldig.
		[I'm starting to lose my patience [become impatient].]
du	wirst	Du bist aber groß geworden!
		[You've gotten so big!]
er/sie/es	wird	Im Juni wird sie dreißig.
		[She's turning thirty in June.]
wir	werden	Wir werden es versuchen.
		[We'll try.]
ihr	werdet	Was möchtet ihr werden, wenn ihr groß seid?
		[What do you want to be when you grow up?]
sie/Sie	werden	Sie werden in Kürze von uns kontaktiert!
		[You will be contacted by us shortly!]

separable verbs

Getrennte Verben

Kannst du mich bitte anrufen? – Klar, ich rufe dich in 10 Minuten an!
[Can you call me, please? – Sure, I'll call you in 10 minutes!!]

Is there anything about this example that looks a bit strange to you? Why do we say *anrufen* the first time and *rufe...an* the second time? Don't worry, it's completely normal: in German there are what we call "separable verbs" which are made up of a "normal" verb and a prefix. This prefix – which is usually a preposition, but can also be a noun or another word attached to the verb – detaches itself and goes to the bottom of the clause, i.e. into the last position!

Here are some examples:

an/rufen	to call		fern/sehen	to watch TV
an/fangen	to begin		auf/stehen	to get up
zurück/kommen	to return		an/kommen	to arrive
ab/sagen	to cancel/decline		los/fahren	to set off
auf/machen	to open		nach/denken	to contemplate

separable verbs in a sentence

- As we've already said, the affirmative is formed with the main verb in the second position and the prefix at the end.
  Ich rufe meine Mutter an. [I'm calling my mother.]
  Der Kurs fängt an. [The course is starting.]
  Wir sagen das Kino ab. [We're cancelling the cinema.]
  Ich fahre gerne Rad. [I like riding a bike.]

- In the interrogative the prefix stays at the end, but the verb goes to the start of the sentence in front of the subject, which also happens with inseparable verbs.
  Rufst du deine Mutter an? [Are you calling your mother?]
  Fängt der Kurs an? [Is the course starting?]
  Sagen wir das Kino ab? [Are we cancelling the cinema?]

- In the imperative, the verb also goes to the start of the sentence with the prefix at the end.
  Ruf deine Mutter an! [Call your mother!]
  Sagt das Kino ab! [Cancel the cinema!]

This is the case for all verbs which start with:
ab-, an-, auf-, aus-, bei-, ein-, los-, mit-, nach-, her-, hin-, vor-, weg-, zu-, zurück-

and now… pay attention! There's a reason we call them separa-BLE!

- When a separable verb is in the infinitive, for example with a modal verb or in the future tense, it's never separated:
  Ich muss meine Mutter anrufen. [I have to call my mother.]
  Wir können das Kino absagen. [We can cancel the cinema.]
  Der Kurs wird bald anfangen. [The course will start soon.]

- For the present perfect, we just put *-ge-* between the two parts, but that's another topic which we'll get onto later.
  Ich habe meine Mutter angerufen. [I have called my mother.]

- A subordinate clause in the infinitive works the same way, except we add *-zu-* instead of *-ge-*:
  Er hat versprochen, *mich anzurufen.* [He promised to call me./He promised he would call me.]
  Ich stehe auf, *um die Tür aufzumachen.* [I'm getting up to open the door.]

- In a subordinate clause where the verb goes to the end, the two parts of the separable verb just stay together:
  Wir werden direkt nach Hause gehen, *weil wir erst spät ankommen.* [We'll go straight home because we're arriving late.]
  Ich freue mich immer*, wenn meine Mutter anruft.* [I'm always happy when my mother calls.]

inseparable verbs

One last thing: There are also inseparable verbs! Not all prefixes detach from their verbs. More specifically, verbs which have *be-, ver-, er-, zer-, wider-, ent-, ge-,* or *miss-* as prefixes are inseparable.

Ich entschuldige mich für meinen Fehler. [I apologise for my mistake.]
Er versteht überhaupt nichts. [He doesn't understand anything at all.]
Sie widerspricht uns nie. [She never contradicts us.]

the imperative

Lass das!

The imperative is easy; you just need to remember a couple of simple rules:

- The second-person singular is identical to the root of the verb, and doesn't take a pronoun:
  Sag' doch was! [Say something!]
- For the polite version, and the imperative in the first- and second-person plural, the verb is the same as in the present. [The first-person plural is translated as "let's"/"let us" in English.] In the polite version and in the first-person plural we also add the pronoun, but it goes after the verb.
  Sagen Sie doch was! [[you, formal] Say something!]
  Sagt doch was! [[you, plural] Say something!]
  Sagen wir 15 Uhr! [Let's say 3pm!]
- Verbs which change their vowel from e to i**/**ie in the second- and third-person singular have the same change in the imperative: *Sprich! Nimm! Vergiss! Hilf!*. However, verbs with a/ä form the imperative without the Umlaut: *Fahr!* not *fähr, Schlaf!*, not *schläf.
- Like in the indicative, verbs with t and d add an e for pronunciation reasons.

Let's look at some examples for all the different kinds of verbs:

infinitive	**gehen [regular]**	
du-Form	Geh!	Geh das Wasser holen! [Go and fetch the water!]
ihr-Form	Geht!	Geht jetzt besser nach Hause! [Go home, that would be better!]
Sie-Form	Gehen Sie!	Gehen Sie bis an die Ecke, dann rechts! [Go to the corner, then turn right!]

wir-Form	Gehen wir!	Gehen wir ins Kino! [Let's go to the cinema!]

infinitive	**arbeiten [regular -t]**	
du-Form	Arbeite!	Arbeite nicht so unpräzise! [Don't work in such an imprecise way!]
ihr-Form	Arbeitet!	Arbeitet endlich an eurem Projekt! [Work on your project already!]
Sie-Form	Arbeiten Sie!	Arbeiten Sie, wann Sie möchten! [Work when you like!]
wir-Form	Arbeiten wir!	Los, arbeiten wir mal schneller! [Come on, let's work a bit more quickly!]

infinitive	**sehen [irregular]**	
du-Form	Sieh!	Sieh mich nicht so an! [Don't look at me like that!]
ihr-Form	Seht!	Seht mal, ein Marienkäfer! [Look, a ladybird!]
Sie-Form	Sehen Sie!	Sehen Sie hier ein Exemplar des seltenen Alpakas. [[You can] see some examples of rare alpacas here.]
wir-Form	Sehen wir!	Sehen wir uns lieber einen anderen Film an! [We should watch another film!]

infinitive	**anfangen [separable]**	
du-Form	Fang… an!	Fang endlich mit deiner Arbeit an! [Get started on your work already!]
ihr-Form	Fangt… an!	Fangt ruhig zu essen an! [Just start eating!]
Sie-Form	Fangen Sie an!	Der Test beginnt jetzt, fangen Sie an. [The test starts now, begin!!]
wir-Form	Fangen wir an!	Fangen wir an! [Let's start!]

infinitive	**sein**	
du-Form	**Sei!**	Sei still! [Be quiet!]
ihr-Form	**Seid!**	Seid nicht so gemein! [Don't be so mean!]
Sie-Form	**Seien Sie!**	Seien Sie jetzt sehr aufmerksam! [Now pay close attention!]
wir-Form	**Seien wir!**	Seien wir ehrlich, er ist einfach unfähig. [Let's be honest, he's simply incapable.]

We all know that the German language is considered to be quite hard and harsh, so the imperative doesn't have a great reputation…! That's why Germans tend to soften it a bit…

- by adding *bitte* [please] or *mal* [a bit, quickly, I'm not asking for something too difficult]:
  Geh bitte einkaufen! [Please go shopping!]
  Warten Sie bitte draußen! [Wait outside, please!]
  Schau mal! [Take a quick look!]
  Bringen Sie bitte Ihre Dokumente mit! [Please bring your documents with you!]
- by replacing it with a question:
  Kannst du bitte einkaufen gehen? [Can you please go shopping?]
  Gibst du mir mal die Butter? [Would you mind giving me the butter?]
  Könnten Sie mich zurückrufen? [Could you call me?]
- or just with an infinitive, which you'll see in recipes or instructions:
  Die Zwiebeln in Olivenöl anbraten. [Brown the onions in olive oil.]
  Das Gerät nur im Freien verwenden. [Only use the device outside.]

And one more thing you should know:
A lot of native speakers tend to mangle the imperative a bit to shorten the sentence. In a conversation, when you hear someone say *Kumma!* they're not saying *Kummer* [grief/misery], as you might think; it's actually a kind of request which is often used to say "look!" and which comes from *gucken*: the imperative is *Guck mal!* The verb *gucken* is pronounced "kucken", the *mal* is phonetically [through laziness] fused with the root. This is also how we get forms like: *Kommaher* [nothing to do with commas, it actually comes from *Komm mal her!*, "Come here!"], *Gemma* [Gehen wir!], *Gimma* [Gib mal!] etc.

the progressive form

Wir kochen gerade.

Kannst du später nochmal anrufen? Ich koche gerade.
[Can you call later? I'm cooking right now.]

All you need to do to form the progressive is to add *gerade*, which means "right now/at the moment", after the verb in the present tense.

So for example, if you want to ask "Are you talking to Andrea?", you'd say: *Sprichst du gerade mit Andrea?* And the response: *Ich spreche gerade mit Andrea.* …Easy, right?

For advanced students

The gerund as it's used in English doesn't exist in German, so you have to find another way to say it instead:

"Doing this work makes me very tired" can become
Wenn/Während ich diese Arbeit mache, werde ich sehr müde ["when I do this work, I get very tired"]
"You learn by making mistakes" becomes
Aus Fehlern lernt man, or *Wenn ich Fehler mache, kann ich dabei etwas lernen.*

However, there is a German form which vaguely resembles the English gerund: the present participle [read the snacks about this below]:
For example *der Reisende* is "the traveller", literally "the travelling [person]".

You can also use this form as an adjective: *Bitte achten Sie auf spielende Kinder*, literally "Please watch out for playing children", or "for children who are playing". *Fliegende Holländer* [the Flying Dutchman], *fließendes/kochendes Wasser* [flowing/boiling water], *vernichtende Niederlage* [devastating defeat] are easily translatable, but for example the saying *Bellende Hunde beißen nicht* can only be translated into English with a phrase like "Dogs which bark don't bite".

reflexive verbs

German has reflexive verbs, which also exist in English but are a lot less common. They're usually used when the subject which performs the verb is also, in a sense, the object to which the verb is being done. They're formed with the pronoun which corresponds with the subject of the sentence. Reflexive pronouns are almost identical to the accusative pronouns. For example, think of a sentence like *Ich wasche **mich*** [I wash myself] or *er wäscht **sich*** [he washes himself].

ich	mich (mir)	sich entschuldigen: Ich muss mich bei ihm entschuldigen. [I have to apologise [myself] to him.]
du	dich (dir)	sich irren: Da hast du dich geirrt. [You made [yourself] a mistake./You erred [yourself].]
er/sie/es	sich	sich vorstellen: Der neue Kollege stellt sich vor. [The new colleague introduces himself.]
wir	uns	sich erholen: Im Urlaub haben wir uns gut erholt. [We recovered/relaxed [ourselves] a lot on holiday.]
ihr	euch	sich entscheiden: Entscheidet euch endlich! [Decide [yourself] already!]
sie/Sie	sich	sich verlaufen: In Berlin haben sie sich oft verlaufen. [In Berlin they got themselves lost a lot.]

"False" reflexives

Sometimes – specifically when there's another object - some reflexive verbs take a pronoun which is in the dative instead of the accusative. However, these aren't "true" reflexives because in this case it isn't the subject of the sentence which is directly undergoing the action described by the verb, but the other object.

Ich wasche mich. → *Ich* is the subject which undergoes the action. → pronoun in the accusative
Ich wasche mir die Hände. → It's *die Hände* which are being washed. → pronoun in the dative

Ich kaufe mir ein Auto. → I'm buying a car [for me], I'm not buying myself. *Mir* means it's being bought "for me". → pronoun in the dative *Was wünschst du dir zum Geburtstag?* → What do you want [for yourself] for your birthday? → pronoun in the dative

Common reflexives

Here are some of the most common reflexive verbs – as you can see, some of them are also reflexive in English.

sich anziehen	to put on [clothing], dress oneself	Ich ziehe mir die Schuhe an. [I put my shoes on.]
sich ärgern	to get angry	Wir haben uns wirklich geärgert. [We got really angry.]
sich ausziehen	to take off [clothing], undress oneself	Soll ich die Schuhe ausziehen? [Should I take my shoes off?]
sich bedanken	to be grateful, to thank [sb.]	Ich möchte mich bei dir bedanken. [I'd like to thank you.]

sich beeilen	to hurry [oneself]	Wir müssen uns beeilen! [We have to hurry!]
sich duschen	to take a shower, shower oneself	Hast du dich schon geduscht? [Have you already taken a shower?]
sich entscheiden	to decide	Er muss sich endlich entscheiden. [He has to finally make a decision.]
sich entschuldigen	to apologise, to excuse oneself	Du musst dich bei ihm entschuldigen. [You have to apologise to him.]
sich erholen	to relax [oneself]	Habt ihr euch in den Ferien erholt? [Did you relax on your holidays?]
sich erinnern (an + Akk)	to remember	Ich kann mich nicht gut an meine Kindheit erinnern. [I can't remember my childhood.]
sich freuen (auf/über + Akk)	to be happy, to look forward to	Er freut sich sehr auf seinen Geburtstag. [He's looking forward to his birthday.]
sich informieren	to get informed, inform oneself	Ich wollte mich über Ihre Angebote informieren. [I wanted to learn about your offers.]
sich interessieren (für + Akk)	to be interested	Sie interessieren sich für Naturwissenschaften. [They're interested in science.]
sich irren	to make a mistake [err oneself]	Entschuldigung, da habe ich mich geirrt. [Sorry, I was wrong there.]
sich konzentrieren	to concentrate [oneself]	Wie kannst du dich bei diesem Lärm konzentrieren? [How can you concentrate in this noise?]
sich verlaufen	to get/be lost	Wir haben uns im Wald verlaufen. [We got lost in the woods.]
sich vorstellen	to introduce oneself	Darf ich Ihnen meinen Mann vorstellen? [May I introduce my husband?]

VERBS [PAST TENSE]

The past tense of verbs. The German verbal system is fairly simple: many forms are now no longer in use and you just need to be able to recognise them.

The most important past tense form is the Perfekt, but for advanced students there's also the Präteritum and the pluperfect.

perfekt

To express any tense in the past, in spoken German we almost exclusively use the present perfect, or Perfekt. The use of the Präteritum is limited to auxiliary and modal verbs.

How do you form the Perfekt?

The Perfekt is formed with the auxiliary *haben* and the past participle [at the end of the sentence]:
*Ich **habe** die Hausaufgaben nicht **gemacht**.* [I didn't do/I haven't done my homework.]

Only movement verbs, which almost all have an irregular participle, form the Perfekt with *sein:*
*Ich **bin** früh nach Hause **gegangen**.* [I went/have gone home early.]

How do you form the participle?

● Regular verbs

The participle of verbs which are regular in the present is formed with ***ge– + root + –t***.

infinitive	participle	example
machen	gemacht	Sie haben alles richtig gemacht. [They did/have done everything right.]
lernen	gelernt	Er hat viel für die Prüfung gelernt. [He [has] studied a lot for the exam.]
kochen	gekocht	Ich habe Nudeln gekocht. [I [have] cooked pasta.]

Other verbs which work like this are *kaufen, wohnen, leben, spielen, sagen* [to buy, to live [in a place], to live [be alive], to play, to say].

Other regular verbs in the present change their root:

denken	ge**dach**t	Ich habe an dich gedacht.

		[I [have] thought of you.]
bringen	ge**brach**t	Sie hat die Kinder ins Bett gebracht. [She [has] carried the children to bed.]

If the root of the verb ends with -t or -d the participle is formed with **ge– + root + –et.**

arbeiten	gearbeitet	Ich habe den ganzen Tag gearbeitet. [I [have] worked all day.]
warten	gewartet	Wir haben am Bahnhof gewartet. [We [have] waited at the station.]
reden	geredet	Sie haben nur über Politik geredet. [They [have] only talked about politics.]

- Irregular verbs

The participle of verbs which are irregular in the present is formed with **ge– + root + –en.**

treffen	getroffen	*Wir haben uns gestern **getroffen**.* [We [have] met yesterday.]
schlafen	geschlafen	*Hast du schlecht **geschlafen**?* [Did you sleep badly?]
lesen	gelesen	*Er hat die Zeitung noch nicht **gelesen**.* [He hasn't read the newspaper yet.]

Other examples: *sehen [gesehen], geben [gegeben], nehmen [genommen], sprechen [gesprochen], helfen [geholfen]* – [to see, to give, to take, to speak, to help]

- Compound verbs

Separable verbs form their participle with *–ge–* which goes **between the prefix and the root + –t** or *–en.*

einkaufen	ein**ge**kauf**t**	Ich habe eingekauft. [I did/have done the shopping.]
fernsehen	fern**ge**seh**en**	Gestern Abend habe ich ferngesehen. [Yesterday evening I watched TV.]
abfahren	ab**ge**fahr**en**	Der Zug ist abgefahren. [The train has left.]

Verbs with an inseparable prefix form their participle **without *ge-***, so with just the **root + –t** or *–en.*

enttäuschen	enttäuscht	Sie haben mich enttäuscht. [They [have] disappointed me.]
verstehen	verstanden	Ich habe das nicht verstanden. [I didn't understand that.]

- Verbs ending in *-ieren*

Verbs which end in *-ieren* just take the *–t* at the end to form the participle.

studieren	studiert	Er hat Zahnmedizin studiert*.*
		[He [has] studied dentistry.]
probieren	probiert	Hast du den Kuchen probiert?
		[Have you tried the cake?]

Other examples: *interessieren, konzentrieren* [to interest, to concentrate]

- Movement verbs

The participle of movement verbs is formed with **ge– + root + –en** like with irregular verbs. But they use the auxiliary *sein*. Plenty of movement verbs have an irregular participle!

kommen	gekommen	Warum bist du nicht zur Party gekommen?
		[Why didn't you come to the party?]
fahren	gefahren	Er ist in die Schweiz gefahren.
		[He went/He has gone to Switzerland.]

Other verbs which work like this: *laufen [gelaufen], gehen [gegangen], fliegen [geflogen]* – [to run, to go, to fly]

Tipps & Tricks
Warning: A lot of verbs have irregular participles!
For these and other participles, we recommend you learn them by heart, because that's almost easier than learning the rules.

most important participles

Below you'll find a list of the most important participles in German. It's good to memorise them, not only to form the Perfekt, but also for the passive. Also, past participles can be used as attributes of nouns.

Perfekt: Ich habe das nicht verstanden. [I didn't understand that.]
Passiv: Das Paket wird morgen geliefert. [The package will be delivered tomorrow.]
Attribut: Euer Garten ist sehr gepflegt. [You garden is very well cared-for.]

kommen	to come, arrive	Er ist zu spät gekommen. [He [has] arrived too late.]
fahren (fährt)	to go by vehicle	Wir sind nach Frankfurt gefahren. [We drove/have driven to Frankfurt.]
gehen	to go	Sie ist schon gegangen. [She's already gone.]
sehen (sieht)	to see	Hast du diesen neuen Film gesehen? [Have you seen this new film?]
geben (gibt)	to give	Sie gibt mir Geld. [She gives me money.]
nehmen (nimmt)	to take	Hat er seine Tabletten genommen? [Has he taken his tablets?]
essen (isst)	to eat	Der Kuchen ist schon aufgegessen. [The cake has already been eaten up.]
trinken	to drink	Kaffee muss warm getrunken werden. [Coffee has to be drunk warm.]
verstehen	to understand	Hast du mich verstanden? [Did you understand me?]
bleiben	to stay, remain	Wir sind gestern Abend zu Hause geblieben. [Yesterday we stayed at home.]
denken	to think	Ich habe eben an dich gedacht. [I was just thinking of you.]

wissen	to know [a fact]	Das habe ich nicht gewusst. [I didn't know that.]
kennen	to know [a person or thing]	Ihr habt ihn doch auch gekannt, oder? [You knew him as well, right?]
treffen	to meet	Schon oft habe ich ihn in der Bahn getroffen. [I met him a lot on the train.]
tun	to do	Wer hat das getan? [Who did/has done that?]
halten (hält)	to hold, stop	Der Bus hat hier nicht gehalten. [The bus hasn't stopped here.]
stehen	to stand	Ich hab 2 Stunden an der Haltestelle gestanden. [I [have] stood at the stop for 2 hours.]
liegen	to lay	Die Brille hat auf dem Tisch gelegen. [The glasses were laying on the table.]
lesen (liest)	to read	Hast du Harry Potter gelesen? [Have you read Harry Potter?]
finden	to find	Ich habe eine Wohnung gefunden. [I've found an apartment.]
helfen (hilft)	to help	Das hat uns sehr geholfen. [This has helped us a lot.]
bringen	to bring	Hast du uns etwas mitgebracht? [Did you bring something for us?]
fliegen	to fly	Gestern ist er nach Istanbul geflogen. [He flew to Istanbul yesterday.]
anrufen	to call on the phone	Ich wurde von jemandem angerufen. [Somebody called me.]
schreiben	to write	Hast du ihr geschrieben? [Have you written to her?]
beginnen	to start	Der Unterricht hat schon begonnen. [The class has already begun.]
sitzen	to sit down	Er hat auf dem Sessel gesessen. [He sat on the armchair.]
bekommen	to receive/get	Letzte Woche hat sie ein Kind bekommen. [She got a child last week.]
sein	to be	Wir sind noch nie in London gewesen. [We've never been to London.]
schlafen	to sleep	Sie haben lange geschlafen. [They've slept for a long time.]
werden	to be/become	Du bist aber groß geworden! [How big you've gotten!]

gefallen (gefällt)	to please/be liked by	Das Buch hat mir gefallen. [I liked the book.]
singen	to sing	Früher wurde viel gesungen. [We used to sing a lot.] ["Back in the day a lot was sung"]
sprechen (spricht)	to speak	Es wurde über Politik gesprochen. [People discussed politics.] ["Politics was discussed."]
fallen (fällt)	to fall	Der Würfel ist gefallen. [The die has fallen/been cast.]

participles of movement verbs

The participles of verbs which describe a movement, or rather a displacement, should be learned right from the start because they're some of the most-used verbs. The following are the most important ones.
Don't forget that a lot of movement verbs have an irregular participle and that they all form the Perfekt with the auxiliary *sein*!

A: Warum seid ihr denn so spät zurückgekommen?	kommen	gekommen
Ihr seid doch schon um 10 Uhr nach Frankfurt geflogen.	fliegen	geflogen
B: Ja richtig, aber wir sind dann noch in Frankfurt geblieben.	bleiben	geblieben
A: Und wann seid ihr nach Hause gefahren?	fahren	gefahren
B: Erst abends. Dann waren wir sehr müde und sind sofort ins Bett gegangen.	gehen	gegangen
A: Und wann seid ihr dann am Morgen aufgestanden?	aufstehen	aufgestanden
B: Erst um 10 Uhr. Deshalb sind wir so spät angekommen.	ankommen	angekommen

[A: Why did you get back so late? You took the flight to Frankfurt at 10.
B: Yeah, that's right, but we stayed in Frankfurt.
A: And when did you head home?

[grammar snacks]

B: Not until the evening. Then we were very tired and we went to bed straight away.
A: And when did you get up in the morning?
B: Not until 10, and that's why we got here so late.]

all the irregular past participles [B]

Here's the complete (or almost complete) list of irregular participles. There's a good few of them - 184 - but sooner or later you have to learn them! Even if you just read the sentences out loud once or twice, that's already good practice.

For all the verbs you can find the infinitive, the third-person singular if it's irregular in the present, the third-person singular if it's irregular in the Präteritum, and the past participle in that order.

[A]

abbiegen, bog… ab, ist abgebogen [to turn]	Ich bin links abgebogen. [I [have] turned left.]
abfahren, er fährt… ab, fuhr… ab, ist abgefahren [to leave]	Er ist schon abgefahren. [He [has] already left.]
abgeben, er gibt… ab, gab… ab, abgegeben [to hand over]	Lisa hat das Buch noch nicht abgegeben. [Lisa hasn't handed in the book yet.]
abhängen von, hing… ab, abgehangen [to depend on]	Das hat nicht davon abgehangen. [It didn't depend on that.]
abfliegen, er fliegt… ab, flog… ab ist abgeflogen [to fly off/take off]	Das Flugzeug ist um 12:00 Uhr abgeflogen. [The plane took off at 12:00.]
abheben, hob… ab, abgehoben [to withdraw, take out]	Hast du das Geld abgehoben? [Have you withdrawn the money?]
abnehmen, er nimmt… ab, nahm… ab, abgenommen [to lose]	Sie hat über 10 Kilo abgenommen. [She's lost more than 10 kilos.]

abschließen, schloss… ab, abgeschlossen [to lock]	Er hat die Haustür abgeschlossen. [He [has] locked the door.]
anfangen, er fängt… an, fing… an, angefangen [to start]	Der Kurs hat im Oktober angefangen. [The course started in October.]
ankommen, kam… an, ist angekommen [to arrive]	Sie ist noch nicht in Kiel angekommen. [She hasn't arrived in Kiel yet.]
annehmen, er nimmt… an, nahm… an, angenommen [to accept]	Wir haben das Angebot sofort angenommen. [We accepted the offer straight away.]
anrufen, rief… an, angerufen [to call on the phone]	Deine Mutter hat angerufen. [Your mother called.]
ansehen, er sieht… an, sah… an, angesehen [to watch]	Habt ihr euch gestern den neuen Film angesehen? [Did you see the new film yesterday?]
ansein, er ist… an, war… an, ist angewesen [to be on]	Das Licht ist angewesen. [The light was on.]
anziehen, zog… an, angezogen [to dress, to put on]	Sie hat sich ein Kleid angezogen. [She [has] put on a dress.]
aufgeben, er gibt… auf, gab… auf, aufgegeben [to give up]	Sie haben alles aufgegeben. [They've given everything up.]
aufheben, hob… auf, aufgehoben [to pick up]	Er hat alles aufgehoben. [He [has] picked everything up.]
ausgeben, er gibt… aus, gab… aus, ausgegeben [to spend]	Sie haben alles ausgegeben. [They [have] spent it all.]
ausschließen, schloss… aus, ausgeschlossen [to exclude]	Wir haben alle Möglichkeiten ausgeschlossen. [We've excluded all the possibilities.]
aus sein, er ist… aus, war… aus, ist aus gewesen [to be off]	Das Licht ist aus gewesen. [The light was off.]
aussprechen, er spricht… aus, sprach… aus, ausgesprochen [to pronounce]	Das hast du gut ausgesprochen. [You pronounced that well.]
aussteigen, stieg… aus, ist ausgestiegen [to get off, get out, disembark]	Sie sind alle aus dem Bus ausgestiegen. [Everyone [has] got off the bus.]
ausziehen, zog… aus, ausgezogen [to undress, take off]	Sie hat sich die Bluse ausgezogen. [She took off/has taken off her shirt.]

[B]

befehlen, er befiehlt, befahl, befohlen [to order, command]	Er hat es dem Soldaten befohlen. [He [has] ordered the soldier to do that.]
backen, backte, gebacken [to bake]	Er hat ihr einen Kuchen gebacken. [She [has] made him a cake.]
beginnen, begann, begonnen [to start]	Das Festival hat begonnen.

	[The festival has started.]
behalten, er behält, behielt, behalten [to keep]	Wir haben nur das Haus behalten. [We [have] only kept the house.]
bekommen, bekam, bekommen [to receive, get]	Sie hat alles bekommen. [She got everything.]
beraten, er berät, beriet, beraten [to advise]	Er hat sie gut beraten. [He gave/has given her good advice.]
beschließen, beschloss, beschlossen [to decide]	Es wurde einstimmig beschlossen. [It was decided unanimously.]
beschreiben, beschrieb, beschrieben [to describe]	Sie haben den Vorfall sehr gut beschrieben. [They [have] described the incident very well.]
besitzen, besaß, besessen [to possess]	Sie haben nichts besessen. [They didn't have anything.]
bestehen, bestand, bestanden [to pass an exam]	Alle Studenten haben die Prüfung bestanden. [All the students [have] passed the exam.]
betragen, er beträgt, betrug, betragen [to amount to]	Die Rechnung hat 500 € betragen. [The bill came to 500 €.]
betrügen, betrog, betrogen [to deceive/cheat]	Er hat seine Frau mehr als einmal betrogen. [He [has] cheated on his wife more than once.]
beweisen, bewies, bewiesen [to prove]	Er hat seine Urteilsfähigkeit bewiesen. [He [has] proved his ability to judge.]
bewerben, er bewirbt [sich], bewarb, sich beworben [to apply]	Ich habe mich um diese Stelle beworben. [I [have] applied for this job.]
beziehen auf [sich] AKK, bezog, sich bezogen [to refer to [sth]]	Er hat sich auf das dritte Kapitel bezogen. [He referred to the third chapter.]
biegen, bog, gebogen [to bend, curve]	Wir sind um die Ecke gebogen. [We curved around the corner.]
bieten, anbieten, bot… an, angeboten [to offer]	Ich habe ihnen meine Hilfe angeboten. [I [have] offered them my help.]
binden, band, gebunden [to tie/bind/attach]	Ich fühle mich nicht gebunden. [I don't feel connected.]
bitten [um] AKK, bat, gebeten [to ask [for]]	Wir haben ihn um Hilfe gebeten. [We [have] asked him for help.]
bleiben, blieb, geblieben [to stay]	Sie ist nur eine Woche geblieben. [She only stayed for a week.]
braten, er brät, briet, gebraten [to roast]	Er hat eine saftige Ente gebraten. [He [has] cooked a succulent duck.]
brechen, er bricht, brach, gebrochen [to break]	Sie hat die kostbare Vase zerbrochen. [She broke/has broken the expensive vase.]
brennen, brannte, gebrannt [to burn]	Die Kerze hat lange gebrannt. [The candle [has] burned for a long time.]

bringen, brachte, gebracht [to bring]	Er hat mir ein Buch gebracht. [He [has] brought me a book.]

[D]

denken, dachte, gedacht [to think]	Das hab' ich mir gedacht. [That's what I thought.]

[E]

einladen, er lädt…ein, lud… ein, eingeladen [to invite]	Wir haben sie zum Essen eingeladen. [We [have] invited him to eat.]
einschlafen, er schläft… ein, schlief… ein, eingeschlafen [to fall asleep]	Er ist gerade eingeschlafen. [He has just fallen asleep.]
einsteigen, stieg… ein, ist eingestiegen [to get on [board]]	Wir sind in den Bus eingestiegen. [We got on the bus.]
empfehlen, er empfiehlt, empfahl, empfohlen [to recommend]	Er hat mir diesen Film empfohlen. [He [has] recommended this film to me.]
enthalten, er enthält, enthielt, enthalten [to contain]	Die Mail hat keine Anlagen enthalten. [The email did not contain any attachments.]
entlassen, er entlässt, entließ, entlassen [to allow, permit]	Sie hat ihn entlassen. [She [has] allowed him [to do sth].]
entscheide, entschied, sich entschieden [to decide]	Sie hat sich noch nicht entschieden. [She hasn't decided yet.]
entschließen, entschloß, entschlossen [to decide]	Ich habe mich endgültig dazu entschlossen. [I've conclusively decided to do it.]
entsprechen, er entspricht, entsprach, entsprochen [to correspond]	Es hat nicht seinen Ansprüchen entsprochen. [It didn't match up to his promises.]
entstehen, entstand, entstanden [to create]	Dort ist eine Wohnsiedlung entstanden. [A housing estate has been created there.]
erfahren, er erfährt, erfuhr, erfahren [to experience, undergo]	Sie hat es per Zufall erfahren. [It happened to her by accident.]
erfinden, erfand, erfunden [to discover]	H. Ford hat das Fließband erfunden. [H. Ford invented the assembly line.]
erhalten, er erhält, erhielt, erhalten [to receive]	Er hat nichts erhalten. [He didn't receive anything.]
erschrecken, er erschrickt, erschrak, ist erschrocken [to scare/be scared]	Das Kind ist erschrocken. [The child is scared.]
erziehen, erzog, erzogen	Er hat sie schlecht erzogen.

[to educate, bring up]	[He brought her up badly.]
essen, er isst, aß, gegessen [to eat]	Er hat mit uns zu Mittag gegessen. [He ate lunch with us.]

[F]

fahren, er fährt, fuhr, gefahren [to travel by vehicle]	Sie sind nach Bonn gefahren. [They [have] travelled to Bonn.]
fallen, er fällt, fiel, gefallen [to fall]	Er ist gefallen. [He fell/has fallen.]
fangen, er fängt, fing, gefangen [to catch]	Sie hat den Ball gefangen. [She [has] caught the ball.]
fernsehen, sah… fern, ferngesehen [to watch TV]	Gestern haben sie zusammen ferngesehen. [Yesterday they watched TV together.]
festhalten [sich], er hält… fest, hielt sich fest, festgehalten [to hold on]	Sie hat sich am Geländer festgehalten. [She held on to the railing.]
finden, fand, gefunden [to find]	Er hat den Schlüssel nicht gefunden. [He hasn't found the key.]
fliegen, flog, ist geflogen [to fly]	Er ist mit einer Boeing 747 geflogen. [He flew in a Boeing 747.]
fliehen, floh, ist geflohen [to flee, escape]	Er ist aus dem Gefängnis geflohen. [He [has] escaped from prison.]
fließen, floss, geflossen [to flow]	Es sind Tränen geflossen. [Tears have flowed.]
fressen, er frisst, fraß, gefressen [to eat [animals]]	Die Katze hat alles gefressen. [The cat ate/has eaten everything.]
frieren, fror, gefroren [to be cold, freeze]	Sie hat am ganzen Leib gefroren. [She felt cold throughout her body.]

[G]

geben DAT, er gibt, gab, gegeben [to give]	Er hat ihr nichts gegeben. [He didn't give her anything.]
geboren werden, wurde geboren, geboren [to be born]	Er wurde am 5.10. geboren. [He was born on the 5th of October.]
gefallen DAT, er gefällt, gefiel, gefallen [to please, be liked by]	Ihnen hat es gut gefallen. [They liked it a lot.]
gehen, ging, ist gegangen [to walk/go]	Sie sind zu Fuß gegangen. [They walked.]

gelingen DAT [es], gelang [mir], gelungen [to succeed]	Es ist mir leider nicht gelungen. [Unfortunately I didn't manage it.]
gelten, er gilt, galt, gegolten [to be enough/sufficient]	Letztlich hat es nichts gegolten. [In the end it wasn't enough.]
genießen, genoss, genossen [to enjoy]	Er hat den Urlaub genossen. [He [has] enjoyed the holiday.]
geschehen, es geschieht, geschah, geschehen [to happen]	Es ist ganz plötzlich geschehen. [It happened all of a sudden.]
gewinnen, gewann, gewonnen [to win]	Sie haben im Lotto gewonnen. [They [have] won the lottery.]
gießen, goss, gegossen [to water]	Sie hat die Blumen gegossen. [She [has] watered the flowers.]
greifen, griff, gegriffen [to reach]	Sie hat nach den Sternen gegriffen. [She [has] reached for the stars.]

[H]

halten [sich], er hält hielt gehalten [to hold, to keep to]	Sie hat sich an die Regeln gehalten. [She [has] respected the rules.]
hängen, hing, gehangen [to hang]	Es hat am seidenen Faden gehangen. [It was hanging on a silk thread.]
heben, hob, gehoben [to raise]	Er hat den Arm gehoben. [He [has] raised his arm.]
heißen, hieß, geheißen [to be called]	Sie hat Lisa geheißen. [She was called Lisa.]
helfen DAT, er hilft, half, geholfen [to help]	Wir haben ihm geholfen. [We [have] helped him.]

[K]

kennen, kannte, gekannt [to know sb]	Er hat seinen Vater nicht gekannt. [He didn't know his father.]
kommen, kam, ist gekommen [to come, arrive]	Sie sind am Dienstag gekommen. [They came on Tuesday.]

[L]

lassen, er läßt, ließ, gelassen [to leave]	Er hat alles hinter sich gelassen. [He [has] left everything behind.]

laufen, er läuft, lief, gelaufen [to run]	Er ist schnell gelaufen. [He ran quickly.]
leiden, litt, gelitten [to suffer]	Sie hat nicht gelitten. [She didn't suffer.]
leihen DAT, lieh [ihm], geliehen [to lend]	Er hat mir eine CD geliehen. [He [has] lent me a CD.]
lesen, er liest, las, gelesen [to read]	Sie hat ein Buch gelesen. [She [has] read a book.]
liegen, lag, gelegen [to lie [down]]	Wir haben am Strand gelegen. [We lay on the beach.]
lügen, log, gelogen [to lie [deceive]]	Leider hat er wieder gelogen. [Unfortunately he [has] lied again.]

[M]

meiden, mied, gemieden [to avoid]	Er hat seine Nachbarn gemieden. [He [has] avoided his neighbours.]
messen, er misst, maß, gemessen [to measure]	Er hat die Länge gemessen. [He [has] measured the length.]
mögen, er mag, mochte, gemocht [to like]	Er hat ihre Gewohnheiten nicht gemocht. [He didn't like her habits.]
missverstehen,missverstand, missverstanden [to misunderstand]	Sie haben mich missverstanden. [They [have] misunderstood me.]

[N]

nachschlagen, er schlägt… nach, schlug… nach, nachgeschlagen [to look up]	Fremdwörter hat er im Lexikon nachgeschlagen. [He looked up the foreign words in the dictionary.]
nehmen, er nimmt, nahm, genommen [to take]	Sie hat ihm alles genommen. [They took/have taken everything from him.]
nennen, nannte, genannt [to name]	Er hat seinen Namen nicht genannt. [He didn't say his name.]

[R]

raten, er rät, riet, geraten [to guess]	Sie hat das Ergebnis geraten. [She [has] guessed the solution.]
reißen, riss, gerissen [to tear]	Das Seil ist gerissen. [The sail has torn.]

reiten, ritt, ist geritten [to ride [a horse]]	Sie ist immer gerne geritten. [She has always enjoyed horse riding.]
rennen, rannte, ist gerannt [to run]	Er ist ums Haus gerannt. [He ran/has run around the house.]
riechen, roch, gerochen [to smell [of sth], to stink]	Es hat nach Fisch gerochen. [There was a smell of fish.]
rufen, rief, gerufen [to call]	Wir haben einen Krankenwagen gerufen. [We [have] called an ambulance.]

[S]

saufen, er säuft, soff, gesoffen [to drink [too much/animals]]	Gestern hat er zu viel gesoffen. [Yesterday he drank too much.]
scheiden, schied, geschieden [to divorce]	Sie sind geschieden. [They divorced.]
scheinen, schien, geschienen [to shine]	Die Sonne hat geschienen. [The sun shone.]
scheißen, schiss, geschissen [to sh*t]	Der Hund hat auf die Straße geschissen. [The dog sh*t on the street.]
schieben, schob, geschoben [to push]	Er hat den Kinderwagen geschoben. [He pushed the pram.]
schlafen, er schläft, schlief, geschlafen [to sleep]	Sie haben fest geschlafen. [They [have] slept deeply.]
schlagen, er schlägt, schlug, geschlagen [to hit]	Er hat ihn mit der Faust geschlagen. [He hit him with his fist.]
schließen, schloss, geschlossen [to close]	Die Bar hat früh geschlossen. [The bar [has] closed early.]
schmeißen, schmiss, geschmissen [to throw]	Er hat es in den Müll geschmissen. [He threw/has thrown it in the rubbish.]
schneiden, schnitt, geschnitten [to cut]	Sie hat sich in den Finger geschnitten. [She [has] cut her finger.]
schreiben, schrieb, geschrieben [to write]	Er hat Briefe geschrieben. [He wrote/has written the letter.]
schreien, schrie, geschrien [to cry, scream]	Sie haben geschrien. [They [have] cried.]
schweigen, schwieg, geschwiegen [to be quiet]	Er hat geschwiegen wie ein Grab. [He stayed as quiet as the grave.]
schwimmen, schwamm, ist geschwommen [to swim]	Er ist weit hinaus geschwommen. [He swam far out.]
schwören, schwor, geschworen [to swear [promise]]	Sie hat ihm ewige Treue geschworen. [She has sworn eternal loyalty to him.]

sehen, er sieht, sah, gesehen [to see]	Sie haben alles gesehen. [They saw/have seen everything.]
sein, war, gewesen [to be]	Er ist hier gewesen. [He's been here.]
singen, sang, gesungen [to sing]	Sie hat ihr Lieblingslied gesungen. [She sang her favourite song.]
sinken, sank, gesunken [to sink]	Das Schiff ist gesunken. [The ship has sunk.]
sitzen, saß, gesessen [to sit]	Er hat hier gesessen. [He sat here.]
sprechen, er spricht, sprach, gesprochen [to speak]	Er hat wenig gesprochen. [He spoke/has spoken a little.]
springen, sprang, ist gesprungen [to jump]	Sie sind ins Wasser gesprungen. [They [have] jumped into the water.]
stattfinden, fand… statt, stattgefunden [to take place]	Das Konzert hat nicht stattgefunden. [The concert didn't take place.]
stechen, er sticht, stach, gestochen [to sting, stab, prick]	Die Mücke hat mich gestochen. [The mosquito stung me.]
stehen, stand, gestanden [to stand]	Er hat eine Stunde an der Haltestelle gestanden. [He stood at the stop for an hour.]
stehlen, er stiehlt, stahl, gestohlen [to steal]	Sie haben gestohlen. [They have stolen.]
steigen, stieg, ist gestiegen [to get up, get on board]	Er ist in den Bus gestiegen. [He got on the bus.]
sterben, er stirbt, starb, gestorben [to die]	Sie ist letztes Jahr gestorben. [She died last year.]
stinken, stank, gestunken [to stink]	Er hat gestunken wie die Pest. [It smelt like death.]
streiten, stritt, gestritten [to argue, dispute]	Sie haben gestritten. [They [have] quarrelled.]

teilnehmen, er nimmt …teil, nahm… teil, teilgenommen [to take part]	Er hat am Spiel teilgenommen. [He took part in the game.]
tragen, er trägt, trug, getragen [to carry]	Er hat das Kind getragen. [He [has] carried the child.]
treffen, er trifft, traf, getroffen [to meet]	Wir haben sie in Berlin getroffen. [We met them in Berlin.]
treiben, trieb, getrieben [to practice [sport]]	Er hat viel Sport getrieben. [He has done a lot of sport.]
treten, er tritt, trat, getreten [to kick]	Er hat den Hund getreten. [He [has] kicked the dog.]
trinken, trank, getrunken [to drink]	Wir haben Bier getrunken. [We have drunk beer.]
tun, tat, getan [to do]	Er hat nichts getan. [He hasn't done anything.]

[U]

überfahren, er überfährt, überfuhr, überfahren [to exceed/knock down]	Er hat sie überfahren. [He ran her down.]
übernehmen, er übernimmt, übernahm, übernommen [to assume, take on]	Sie hat die Verantwortung nicht übernommen. [She hasn't taken on the responsibility.]
überweisen, überwies, überwiesen [to transfer]	Wir haben dir das Geld überwiesen. [We [have] transferred the money to you.]
umsteigen, stieg… um, ist umgestiegen [to change trains]	Er ist in einen anderen Zug umgestiegen. [He [has] changed trains.]
umziehen, zog …um, umgezogen [to move house]	Wir sind umgezogen. [We moved house.]
umziehen [sich], zog sich… um, sich umgezogen [to change clothes]	Ich muss mich nur umziehen. [I just have to get changed.]
unterhalten, unterhielt, unterhalten [to converse]	Sie haben sich nett unterhalten. [They had a nice conversation.]
unterscheiden, unterschied, unterschieden [to distinguish]	Wir haben uns kaum unterschieden. [We weren't very different.]
unterschreiben, unterschrieb, unterschrieben [to sign]	Er hat den Vertrag unterschrieben. [He [has] signed the contract.]

verbieten, verbot, verboten [to ban, prohibit]	Er hat es ihm verboten. [He forbad him from doing it.]
verbinden, verband, verbunden [to connect, unite, link]	Sie hat die Enden verbunden. [She connected the ends.]
vergessen, er vergisst, vergaß, vergessen [to forget]	Wir haben alle Sorgen vergessen. [We forgot all our worries.]
vergleichen, verglich, verglichen [to compare]	Ich habe alle Dokumente verglichen. [I [have] compared all the documents.]
verhalten, er verhält, verhielt, verhalten [to behave]	Er hat sich schlecht verhalten. [He [has] behaved badly.]
verlassen, er verlässt, verließ, verlassen [to leave, abandon]	Er wurde von seinem Freund verlassen. [His [boy]friend [has] left him.]
verlieren, verlor, verloren [to lose]	Er hat Hab und Gut verloren. [He's lost all his worldly goods.]
verschreiben, verschrieb, verschrieben [to prescribe]	Sie hat ihm ein Antibiotikum verschrieben. [She [has] prescribed him an antibiotic.]
verstehen, verstand, verstanden [to understand]	Sie haben nichts verstanden. [They haven't understood anything.]
vertreten, er vertritt, vertrat vertreten [to represent]	Der Kollege hat mich vertreten. [My colleague represented me.]
verzeihen, verzieh, verziehen [to forgive]	Sie hat es ihm nie verziehen. [She hasn't forgiven him for it.]
vorschlagen, er schlägt… vor, schlug vor, vorgeschlagen [to suggest]	Sie hat vorgeschlagen ins Kino zu gehen. [She [has] suggested going to the cinema.]
vorziehen zog vor vorgezogen [to prefer]	Sie hat alles andere vorgezogen. [She preferred all the others.]

[W]

wachsen, er wächst, wuchs, gewachsen [to grow]	Die Palme ist kaum gewachsen. [The palm has hardly grown.]
Waschen, er wäscht, wusch, gewaschen [to wash]	Sie hat sich die Haare gewaschen. [She [has] washed her hair.]
wenden, wandte, gewandt [to turn to]	Ich habe mich an einen Spezialisten gewandt. [I [have] turned to a specialist.]
werden, er wird, wurde geworden [to become]	Er ist groß geworden. [He's gotten big.]
werfen, er wirft, warf, geworfen [to throw]	Sie hat den ersten Stein geworfen. [She threw the first stone.]

widersprechen, er widerspricht, widersprach, widersprochen [to contradict]	Er hat sich selbst widersprochen. [She [has] contradicted herself.]
wiegen, wog, gewogen [to weigh]	Sie haben die Äpfel gewogen. [They [have] weighed the apples.]
wissen, er weiß, wusste gewusst [to know sth]	Das habe ich nicht gewusst. [I didn't know that.]

[Z]

ziehen, zog, gezogen [to pull]	Er hat den Karren gezogen. [He pulled the wheelbarrow.]
zwingen, zwang, gezwungen [to force/oblige]	Ich bin gezwungen, die Partizipien zu lernen. [I am obliged to learn the participles :)]

präteritum
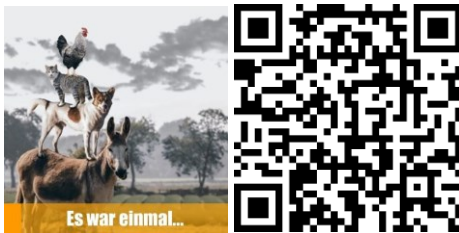
Es war einmal…. [Once upon a time…]

As we mentioned above, the most common form of the past tense is the present perfect [Perfekt] which is used to formulate almost any type of sentence in the past tense.

But there's also another form – the Präteritum. This form is used in **written** accounts [poetry, novels, articles etc.] to refer to continuous past events ["I used to…"] and in **spoken** German to form auxiliary and modal verbs in the past. Otherwise, it's almost never used.

In practice, in normal verbs we don't usually say "I went/I was going", but instead we say "I have gone", even when it comes to events which happened a long time ago or recurring events in the past:

Yesterday I was wearing a blue scarf.	→ Ich habe gestern einen blauen Schal getragen.
As a child I went to my grandparents' house every day.	→ Als Kind bin ich jeden Tag zu meinen Großeltern gegangen.
He moved to Rome in 1975.	→ 1975 ist er nach Rom umgezogen.

How do we form the Präteritum?

Regular verbs:

ich	mach**te**
du	mach**test**
er, sie, es	mach**te**
wir	mach**ten**
ihr	mach**tet**
sie	mach**ten**

Jeden Tag machte sie das Bad sauber. [She used to clean the bath every day.]

For **regular verbs ending in -t** we add an -e- before the Präteritum ending:

ich	arbeite**te**
du	arbeite**test**
er, sie, es	arbeite**te**
wir	arbeite**ten**
ihr	arbeite**tet**
sie	arbeite**ten**

Ich arbeitete immer bis spät am Abend. [I always used to work until late in the evening.]
Sie arbeiteten hart. [They used to work hard.]

Some **irregular verbs** don't have the ending in the first- and third-person singular and often change their root [e.g.: *kommen*]

ich	**kam –**
du	**kamst**
er, sie, es	**kam –**
wir	**kamen**
ihr	**kamt**
sie	**kamen**

Wir kamen nie vor 12 Uhr nach Hause. [We never used to get home before 12.]

Other **irregular verbs** just have the irregular root [e.g.: *bringen*]

ich	**brachte**
du	**brachtest**
er, sie, es	**brachte**
wir	**brachten**
ihr	**brachtet**
sie	**brachten**

Du brachtest die Kinder ins Bett. [You used to take the children to bed.]

Ihr brachtet den Kindern oft Süßigkeiten mit. [You often used to take sweets to the children.]

There are plenty of **irregular forms** of the Präteritum which you need to learn by heart! You'll find them in the list of irregular participles.

auxiliary verbs and modals in the past

Usually the Präteritum is almost never used on its own in spoken German. Here's just one small exception to this "rule": with auxiliary verbs and modal verbs the Präteritum is preferred, even when there's also a form in the Perfekt.

Auxiliaries: sein and haben

ich	**war –**	**hatte**	Ich hatte früher auch eine Katze. [I also used to have a cat.]
du	**warst**	**hattest**	Warst du schon einmal in Deutschland? [Have you ever been to Germany?]
er, sie, es	**war –**	**hatte**	Es war nicht leicht, sie zu überzeugen. [It wasn't easy to convince her.]
wir	**waren**	**hatten**	Heute Morgen hatten wir viel zu tun. [We had a lot to do this morning.]

ihr	**wart**	**hattet**	Ihr wart von dem Konzert enttäuscht. [You were disappointed by the concert.]
sie, Sie	**waren**	**hatten**	Manchmal hatten sie auch Spaß. [Sometimes they also had fun.]

Modals

	müssen	
ich	muss**te**	Gestern musste ich fahren. [I had to drive yesterday.]
du	muss**test**	Musstest du lange warten? [Did you have to wait long?]
er, sie, es	muss**te**	Sie musste lachen. [She had to laugh.]
wir	muss**ten**	Wir mussten das tun. [We had to do it.]
ihr	muss**tet**	Musstet ihr das sagen? [Did you have to say that?]
sie, Sie	muss**ten**	Sie mussten viel arbeiten. [They had to work a lot.]

	können	
ich	konnte	Gestern konnte ich nicht. [I couldn't yesterday.]
du	konntest	Du konntest nie tanzen. [You've never been able to dance.]
er, sie, es	konnte	Er konnte nicht kommen. [He couldn't come.]
wir	konnten	Wir konnten nichts sparen. [We couldn't save anything.]
ihr	konntet	Ihr konntet das gut. [You really knew how to do that.]
sie, Sie	konnten	Sie konnten nicht bleiben. [They couldn't stay.]

	wollen	
ich	wollte	Ich wollte das nicht. [I didn't want it.]
du	wolltest	Wolltest du etwas sagen? [Did you want to say something?]
er, sie, es	wollte	Er wollte reich sein. [He wanted to be rich.]
wir	wollten	Wir wollten uns entschuldigen. [We wanted to apologise.]
ihr	wolltet	Ihr wolltet einen Hund. [You wanted a dog.]
sie, Sie	wollten	Sie wollten alles wissen. [They wanted to know everything.]

	dürfen	
ich	durfte	Durfte ich das sagen? [Could I say that?]
du	durftest	Durftest du? [Were you allowed to?]
er, sie, es	durfte	Sie durfte frei nehmen. [She was allowed a day off.]
wir	durften	Wir durften das nicht. [We weren't allowed to do that.]
ihr	durftet	Ihr durftet mitkommen. [You were allowed to come along.]
sie, Sie	durften	Sie durften Fernsehen. [They were allowed to watch TV.]

	sollen	
ich	sollte	Ich sollte warten. [I was told to wait.]
du	solltest	Du solltest früher gehen. [You should go first.]
er, sie, es	sollte	Er sollte bleiben. [He was told to stay.]
wir	sollten	Wir sollten sie anrufen. [We were supposed to call them.]
ihr	solltet	Ihr solltet Rotwein kaufen. [You were supposed to buy red wine.]
sie, Sie	sollten	Sie sollten pünktlich sein. [They were supposed to be punctual.]

the pluperfect [B]

Der Zug war längst abgefahren!

Sie hatte dich nicht gesehen. [She hadn't seen you.]
Ihr wart schon weggegangen. [You had already left.]

If you look at the examples, you'll see that the perfect [or das Plusquamperfekt] is – just like in English – formed by combining the verb *sein* or *haben* in the Präteritum with the past participle.
The use of this tense is also the same as in English.
You see it a lot accompanied by *nachdem* [after] or *bevor* [before], when the main clause is in the past tense:
Nachdem der Zug **abgefahren war**, gingen wir nach Hause. [After the train had left, we went home.]
Bevor sie das Auto kaufte, **hatte** sie lange darüber **nachgedacht**. [Before buying the car, we had thought a lot about it.]
Bevor ich dieses Buch **gelesen hatte**, wusste ich nichts über Südamerika. [Before I had read this book, I didn't know anything about South America.]

Warning! In German you have to use a whole sentence, like "before I had read the book" [*Bevor ich das Buch gelesen hatte*] – because there are no gerund constructions like "before reading the book" etc.

VERBS [OTHER FORMS]

In this category you'll find out how to say the future. If you're an advanced student, you can also take a look at the passive and the subjunctive.

the future

Ein Blick in die Zukunft?

Ich werde zur Party kommen. [I'll come to the party.]

The future is formed with the declined form of the auxiliary verb *werden* [in the second position, as usual] plus the verb in the infinitive which goes to the end of the sentence.

Here are some examples:

ich	**werde**	Ich werde zur Party kommen. [I'll come to the party.]
du	**wirst**	Wirst du auch da sein? [Will you be there as well?]
er, sie, es	**wird**	Er wird Getränke mitbringen. [He will bring drinks.]
wir	**werden**	Wir werden wahrscheinlich keine Zeit haben. [We probably won't have any time.]
ihr	**werdet**	Ihr werdet wie immer zu spät sein. [You will be late as always.]
sie, Sie	**werden**	Werden sie das Auto nehmen? [Will they take the car?]

As you can see, this form is very simple, but the chances are you'll never hear something like the first example because in German, although the future form exists, it's only used very rarely! The future is something you should know and be able to recognise, rather than actually use. To express the future in spoken German, the present is used and the adverb of time – like morgen [tomorrow] or nachher [after] for example - is used to indicate that something will happen in the future.
In our case you'd just have to say: Ich komme [morgen] zur Party, in the present.

It's even better to use the present in these situations because the future can also imply a vague intention like "I guess I'll call him...": *Ich werde ihn mal anrufen…*
Or it can also be a guaranteed fact, rather than an intention. *Die Konferenz wird um 9:00 Uhr beginnen.* [The conference will start at 9 am.]

Also, the future can be used to make suppositions about something, often alongside the adverb *wahrscheinlich* or *wohl*: *Er wird [wohl/wahrscheinlich] schon nach Hause gegangen sein.* [He's probably already gone home; I would imagine he's already gone home.]
But of course it all depends on the tone.

the passive [B]

Heute mal ganz passiv!

The passive is a grammatical form which is used a lot in German. Here you'll learn how it's formed and used.

Präsens

In English the present passive is formed with the verb to be in the present + the past participle. In German, we use *werden* in the present as an auxiliary + the past participle.
Er **wird** immer um 8 Uhr zur Schule **gebracht**. [He's always brought to school at 8.]

If you also want to indicate the subject of the action expressed in the passive, we add them by using *von* + dative:
Er wird immer um 8 Uhr von seinem Vater zur Schule gebracht.
[He's always brought to school at 8 by his father.]

The passive is also used a lot to represent an impersonal subject or to avoid explicitly naming the subject of the sentence:
Im Deutschen wird das Passiv häufig benutzt. [The passive is used a lot in German.]

For the active form of this kind of phrase we use the impersonal "man" as a subject:
Im Deutschen benutzt man das Passiv häufig. [One uses the passive a lot in German.]

Präteritum

Formed with the verb *werden* in the Präteritum + past participle.

Here are the forms of *werden* in the Präteritum:

ich	wurde	wir	wurden
du	wurdest	ihr	wurdet
er, sie, es	wurde	sie, Sie	wurden

Ich wurde von jemandem angerufen. [I was called by somebody.]

Perfekt

The passive in the Perfekt is formed with the verb *sein* in the present + past participle + *worden*.

Ich bin von jemandem angerufen worden. [I have been called by somebody.]
Dieser Text ist von einer Software übersetzt worden. [This text has been translated by software.]

Zukunft

Formed with the verb *werden* in the present as an auxiliary + past participle + *werden*.

Maria wird morgen angerufen werden. [Maria will be called tomorrow.]
Auf dem Markt werden Bio-Produkte verkauft werden. [Organic products will be sold at the market.]

When there's a modal verb in the middle…

…it works like the future – except that instead of a form of *werden* conjugated in the present we put the modal verb in question.

Die Stromrechnung muss bis morgen bezahlt werden! [The electricity bill has to be paid by tomorrow!]
Diese Rechnung musste bis gestern bezahlt werden! [This bill should have been paid by yesterday!]

konjunktiv II [B]

The use of the Konjunktiv II corresponds to the conditional in English and is used a lot in polite forms.

There are two forms: one form with the auxiliary *würden* [normally used for all verbs except modal and auxiliary verbs] and one without an auxiliary [normally used for modal and auxiliary verbs]. The forms of the other verbs without *würden* are only worth learning "passively" because as a grammatical form, this has all but disappeared in spoken German by now.

Let's start with the most common form: *würden* + infinitive at the end

ich	**würde**	Ich würde jetzt gern ein Eis essen. [I would like to eat an ice cream now.]
du	**würdest**	Würdest du mir bitte helfen? [Would you help me please?]
er, sie, es	**würde**	Er würde ja mitkommen, aber er hat keine Zeit. [He would come along but he doesn't have any time.]
wir	**würden**	Wir würden in Urlaub fahren, wenn wir genug Geld hätten. [We would go on holiday if we had enough money.]
ihr	**würdet**	Wie würdet ihr das machen? [How would you do it?]
sie, Sie	**würden**	Würden Sie etwas langsamer sprechen? [Would you mind speaking a bit more slowly?]

The form without *würden*

The regular verb endings of the Konjunktiv II are identical to those in the Präteritum, plus the vowel takes an umlaut:
e.g. ich brauche [present] – ich brauchte [Präteritum] – ich bräuchte [Konjunktiv II]

As mentioned before, we normally just use the form *würden* + infinitive. The auxiliary and modal verbs, on the other hand, are always said in the actual form listed here:

Auxiliaries

	sein	**haben**	
ich	wäre	hätte	Ich hätte jetzt auch gerne ein Eis. [I would also like an ice cream.]
du	wärst	hättest	Wärst du dazu bereit, mir zu helfen? [Would you be able to help me?]
er, sie, es	wäre	hätte	Er wäre mitgekommen, wenn er Zeit gehabt hätte. [He would have come if he'd had time.]
wir	wären	hätten	Wenn wir Geld hätten, würden wir in Urlaub fahren. [If we had money, we'd go on holiday.]
ihr	wärt	hättet	Was hättet ihr gemacht? [What would you have done?]
sie, Sie	wären	hätten	Wären sie so nett, etwas langsamer zu sprechen? [Would they be so kind as to speak a bit more slowly?]

Modals

These forms are identical to the Präteritum, except for the presence of the Umlaut in *müssen*, *können* and *dürfen*.

	wollen	
ich	wollte	Ich wollte, ich wäre schon zu Hause! [If only I was still at home!]
du	wolltest	Du könntest, wenn du wolltest. [You could if you wanted.]
er, sie, es	wollte	Wenn er nur wollte… [If he only wanted to…]
wir	wollten	Wir wollten, es wäre Freitag. [If only it were Friday.]
ihr	wolltet	Wenn ihr nur wolltet… [If you only wanted to…]
sie, Sie	wollten	Ich wünschte, sie wollten bleiben! [I wish you would want to stay!]

	können	
ich	könnte	Ich könnte morgen kommen. [I could come tomorrow.]
du	könntest	Könntest du das wiederholen? [Could you repeat that?]
er, sie, es	könnte	Das könnte sein. [It could be.]
wir	könnten	Könnten wir kurz stören? [Could we disturb you quickly?]
ihr	könntet	Ihr könnten ihm aber helfen. [But you could help him.]
sie, Sie	könnten	Könnten Sie mir helfen? [Could you help me?]

	müssen	
ich	müsste	Ich müsste jetzt gehen. [I ought to go now.]

du	müsstest	Du müsstest fahren. [You ought to drive.]
er, sie, es	müsste	Morgen müsste es gehen. [It ought to work tomorrow.]
wir	müssten	Wir müssten Zeit haben. [We ought to have time.]
ihr	müsstet	Ihr müsstet kurz warten. [You ought to wait a little.]
sie, Sie	müssten	Sie müssten hier unterschreiben. [They ought to sign here.]

	sollen	
ich	sollte	Ich sollte gesünder essen. [I should eat more healthily.]
du	solltest	Du solltest mehr Sport machen. [You should do more sport.]
er, sie, es	sollte	Er sollte es noch einmal probieren. [He should try it again.]
wir	sollten	Wir sollten lieber jetzt gehen. [We should go now.]
ihr	solltet	Ihr solltet euch das ansehen. [You should see it yourself.]
sie, Sie	sollten	Sollten Sie Fragen haben… [Should you have any questions…]

	dürfen	
ich	dürfte	Ich wünschte, ich dürfte bleiben. [I wish I were allowed to stay.]
du	dürftest	Bei Mama dürftest du das nicht. [You wouldn't be allowed to do that at mum's house.]
er, sie, es	dürfte	Sie dürfte die Prüfung bestanden haben. [She would have had to pass the test.]
wir	dürften	Dürften wir kurz stören? [Would we be able to bother you for a second?]
ihr	dürftet	Jetzt dürftet ihr aber alles haben. [But now you could have had everything.]
sie, Sie	dürften	Dürften die Kinder eventuell mitkommen? [Would the children maybe be allowed to come along?]

Hypothetical sentences

We also use the Konjunktiv II for hypothetical sentences with the conjugations *wenn* and *als ob* [Warning: you have to respect the construction of the secondary clause!].

Wenn ich Zeit hätte, würde ich dir gerne helfen. [If I had time, I would be glad to help you.]
Ich würde das ganz anders machen, wenn ich du wäre. [If I were you, I would do it differently.]
Wenn ich im Lotto gewinnen würde, würde ich eine Weltreise machen. [If I won the lottery, I would go on a world tour.]
Er tut so, als ob er alles wüsste [wissen würde]. [He acts as if he knew everything.]
Wenn ich das könnte, wäre ich froh. [If I could do it I would be happy.]

Just like in English, to refer to something which didn't happen we put everything in the past while using participles, obviously in the form of the Konjunktiv II:

Wenn ich Zeit gehabt hätte, hätte ich dir geholfen. [If I'd had time, I would have helped you.]
Wir wären zu Hause geblieben, wenn du da gewesen wärst. [We would have stayed at home if you'd been there.]
Wenn ich das gewusst hätte, wäre ich früher zurückgekommen. [If I'd known that, I would have come back earlier.]

konjunktiv I [B/C]

The Konjunktiv I in German is only used for indirect speech [mainly in written German]. It's all but disappeared in spoken German, and even for indirect speech people usually prefer to use the indicative.

The Konjunktiv I can be found, for example, in secondary clauses after *er hat gesagt/behauptet/versichert/gemeint/erklärt, dass…* [he said/ claimed/ assured/ opined/ explained that…] or *er hat gefragt, ob* [he asked if…].

The classic use, for example, is journalists who are referring to the content of an interview.
Der Bundeskanzler hat gesagt, dass die Umweltverschmutzung zu stark sei. [The Chancellor said that environmental pollution is too high.]
Er meinte, dass der Schadstoffausstoß nicht wie bisher weitergehen dürfe. [He said that pollutant emissions can't continue at their current level.]
Es gehe vor allem darum, den Energieverbrauch zu reduzieren. [It's a question of reducing energy consumption.]
Man müsse die Ressourcen außerdem effizienter nutzen. [We also have to use resources more efficiently.]

The **present** is formed with the root of the verb plus the following endings:

ich	könn**e**	wir	geh**en**
du	woll**est**	ihr	hab**et**
er, sie, es	frag**e**	sie, Sie	leb**en**

The verb *sein* is irregular:

ich	**sei**	wir	**seien**
du	**seiest**	ihr	**seiet**
er, sie, es	**sei**	sie, Sie	**seien**

The **past** of the Konjunktiv I is formed with *sein* or *haben* in the Konjunktiv I + the past participle.
Er hat gesagt, er sei schon um 20 Uhr zu Hause gewesen. [He said he was already at home at 8pm.]
Sie hat behauptet, sie habe bereits bezahlt. [She claimed she had already paid.]

When the form of the Konjunktiv I is the same as the present indicative it's replaced with the form of the Konjunktiv II, or in normal use often even when they aren't the same.
Ich dachte, sie kämen [instead of kommen] schon früher. [I thought they'd come earlier.]

the present participle [B/C]

How is it formed?

The Partizip I corresponds to the present participle in English and it's formed by simply adding *-d* to the verb in the infinitive: lachen → lachend [to laugh → laughing]

How is it used?

The Partizip I can be used as an adjective – in which case it's declined:

ein lachendes Kind [a laughing child] → Ich habe sie mit einem lachenden Kind gesehen. [I saw him with a laughing child/a child who was laughing.]
der fliegende Holländer [the Flying Dutchman] → Wir lesen die Geschichte vom Fliegenden Holländer. [We're reading the story of the Flying Dutchman.]
fließendes Wasser [running water] → Hier gibt es kein fließendes Wasser. [There is no running water here.]

The Partizip I can also be turned into a noun:

studieren → die Studierenden [the students]

reisen → die Reisenden [the travellers]

vor + sitzen → der/die Vorsitzende [the chairperson]

On top of this, the Partizip I can be used as an adverb:

Er ist mir lachend entgegengekommen. [He approached me laughing./When he approached me, he was laughing.]

CONSTRUCTION

How do you construct a German sentence?
Here you'll find all the rules for how to construct beautiful and correct sentences: normal affirmative sentences, secondary clauses and questions. The rules are rigid, but consistent.

the affirmative

You just have to know how to count to two!

The one problem when constructing sentences in German is the strict rules on where to put the verb; however, the rule is simple and clear:

In affirmative sentences the conjugated verb always goes to the second position.

Ich **trinke** jetzt ein Bier. ["I **drink** now a beer."]
Jetzt **trinke** ich ein Bier ["Now **drink** I a beer."]

The other part of the verb – i.e. the past participle, the infinitive or the separable prefix – goes to the last position.

This creates a strange structure which, precisely because of its simplicity and rigidity, can be a problem. The best way is always to not just learn the rules, but to actually apply them!
Gestern **ist** er mit Freunden ins Kino **gegangen**. ["Yesterday **is** he with friends to the cinema **gone**."]
Morgen **muss** sie mit ihrem Chef **sprechen**. ["Tomorrow **must** she with her boss **speak**."]
Ich **rufe** dich am Nachmittag zu Hause **an**. ["I **phone** you in the afternoon at home **tele**."]

The other elements of the sentence [subjects, complements, etc.] can be positioned more or less the same as in English – though there are usually a few problems. Here are some useful rules:

1. In **first position**
- we often find the subject:
  Ich trinke jetzt ein Bier. [I'm drinking a beer now.]
  Maria nimmt jeden Tag den Zug. [Maria takes the train every day.]
- but there can also be an adverb or a time or place indicator:
  Jetzt trinke ich ein Bier. [I'm drinking a beer now.]
  Jeden Tag nimmt Maria den Zug. [Maria takes the train every day.]
- and sometimes the object can go there instead:
  Den Zug nimmt Maria jeden Tag. [The train, Maria takes it every day.]

- The first position can even be occupied by a whole secondary clause!
  Wenn Maria arbeitet, nimmt sie den Zug. [When Maria works, she takes the train.]

2. As you may have already realised, when the subject isn't in first position it's usually moved to after the verb. The same is true for **pronouns**: they always go immediately before or after the verb, they take precedence over all the other elements!
Am Nachmittag rufe **ich dich** zu Hause an. ["In the afternoon **phone** I you at home **tele**."]

3. Indicators of time, location, etc. usually follow the **TMP rule** [time – [cause] – manner place] – also known as **TeKaMoLo** [Temporal/Kausal/Modal/Lokal] - but this isn't a strict rule.
Heute fahre ich wegen des Regens mit dem Auto ins Büro.
[Today I'm taking the car to work because of the rain.]
→ heute: time – wegen des Regens: cause – mit dem Auto: manner – ins Büro: place

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Tipps & Tricks
In affirmative sentences the conjugated verb always goes to the second position. The subject [and the pronouns] are next to the verb. The other piece of the verb, more precisely the separable prefix, the infinitive or the past participle, goes in last position.

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the interrogative

Closed question

In a closed question [a question which can only have a "yes" or a "no" answer] the conjugated verb goes in the first position and the subject goes straight after. Unlike in English there is no word like "do" or "does", as you can see in the examples below:

Bist du Joseph? Genau, ich bin Joseph. [Are you Joseph? That's right, I'm Joseph.]
Machst du gerne Sport? Ja, ich mache Sport. [Do you like playing sports? Yes, I play sport.]
Kommt Anna aus München? Nein, sie kommt aus Nürnberg. [Is Anna from Munich? No, she's from Nuremberg.]

If it's a compound verb – separable, with a participle, with a modal – the other part goes into last position.

Machst du das Fenster auf? In Ordnung, ich mache es auf. [Will you open the window? Sure, I'll open it.]
Hast du den "Steppenwolf" gelesen? Ja, ich habe den "Steppenwolf" gelesen. [Have you read "Steppenwolf"? Yes, I've read it.]
Wollen Sie ein neues Auto kaufen? Ja, ich will ein neues Auto kaufen. [Do you want to buy a new car? Yes, I want to buy a new car.]
Spielt Peter gut Klavier? Ja, Peter spielt sehr gut. [Does Peter play the piano well? Yes, Peter plays very well.]

Open questions

However, if the question is open, i.e. formed with an interrogative pronoun [who, what, how, when, why, which…], this goes before the verb – just like in English. For the rest of the sentence the rules of the affirmative apply [conjugated verb in second position, infinitive/participle/prefix in last position, subject next to the verb].

Was hast du gegessen? Ich habe ein Brötchen gegessen. [What did you eat? I ate a sandwich.]
Wann fährt der Zug ab? Der Zug fährt um halb 7 ab. [When does the train leave? The train leaves at half 6.]
Wann ist er abgefahren? Er ist um halb 7 abgefahren. [When did he leave? He left at half 6.]
Wen haben sie getroffen? Sie haben den Nachbarn getroffen. [Whom did they meet? They met their neighbour.]
Wie viele Geschwister hat Egon? Egon hat zwei Schwestern. [How many siblings does Egon have? Egon has two sisters.]

Tipps & Tricks
In closed questions, i.e. questions without an interrogative pronoun, the verb goes to the first position and is followed by the subject. If the question is formed with an interrogative pronoun [who, what, how, when or why] the pronoun is in the first position and is followed by the verb. Unlike in English, there is no word like "do" or "does".

secondary clauses

A secondary clause is a clause introduced by a conjunction [e.g. when, why, what, if...] and it can come before or after a main clause. The conjunction "pushes" the conjugated verb: the verb leaves its second position, bypasses all the other elements [like pronouns, adverbs, infinitives, participles and even entire secondary clauses] and lands in the last position.
It's because of this that you sometimes need a bit of patience to read a text in German, because you often have to go a long way before you find the verb... Mark Twain once said that this type of structure "is a crime". And the culprits are conjunctions - which send the conjugated verb to the end!

But let's take a look at a few examples and you'll see that even this "crime" isn't all that bad.

Let's take a normal affirmative sentence:
Sie arbeitet morgen zu Hause. ["She's working from home tomorrow."]

If we add a conjunction like *weil*, this conjunction turns the sentence into a secondary clause by "pushing" the conjugated verb to the last position, after all the other elements.

Lisa ist froh, *weil* sie __ morgen zu Hause arbeitet. ["Lisa is happy because she's working from home tomorrow."]

This power which *weil* has also applies to other conjunctions, like *wenn*, *dass* and *obwohl*: [if you're a beginner this is all you need to know for now – you'll find a full list in the "conjunctions" article below].

Ich muss es machen. → Ich putze, weil ich es machen muss. [I clean because I have to do it.]
Es regnet. → Ich gehe nach draußen, obwohl es regnet. [I'm going outside although/even though it's raining.]
Er hat mir ein Geschenk mitgebracht. → Ich habe mich gefreut, dass er mir ein Geschenk mitgebracht hat. [I'm happy that he brought me a present.]
Du kommst mich morgen besuchen. → Wenn du mich morgen besuchen kommst, freue ich mich. [If you come to visit me tomorrow, I'll be happy.]

[N.B.: As you can see in the last example, if the secondary clause goes before the main clause, the whole secondary clause takes the first position and the verb in the main clause goes into the second position, as is normal for affirmative sentences.]

Und, *aber* and *oder* don't affect the verb, which stays in the same position as it would in a main clause.

Er liest Zeitung und dabei isst er ein Brötchen. [He reads a newspaper and while doing that he eats a sandwich.]

Wir lieben Schokolade, aber wir wissen, dass Obst gesünder ist. [We love chocolate, but we know that fruit is healthier.]

Morgen soll es Schnee geben oder vielleicht regnet es nur. [It's supposed to snow tomorrow or maybe it will just rain.]

> **Tipps & Tricks**
> **The conjunction "pushes" the conjugated verb which leaves its second position, bypasses all the other elements like pronouns, adverbs, infinitives, participles and entire secondary clauses, and goes into the last position.**

negatives

In German we say: Ich lese diesen Roman nicht. [I'm not reading this novel.]
But also: Ich lese keine Romane. [I don't read [any] novels.]

To know how to form the negative, first you have to know the difference between *nicht* and *kein*: **nicht** is used to negate the verb, **kein** to negate nouns.

nicht

Nicht negates the verb:
Ich kenne diesen Film nicht. [I don't know this film, lit. "I know this film not."]
Heute arbeitet er nicht. [He's not working today, lit. "Today he works not."]

As you can see, it behaves like a prefix of a separable verb. This is why it tends to be at the end and only infinitives, participles, separable prefixes and complements with prepositions can go after it, that is, other elements which are even more closely related to the verb.

Ich will das heute nicht machen. [I don't want to do that today.]
Ich habe es nicht verstanden. [I didn't understand it.]
Heute rufe ich dich nicht an. [I won't call you today.]
Wir sprechen nicht über Politik. [We're not talking about politics.]

Nicht can also negate an adjective or an adverb which goes straight after the negative:
Diese Kirche ist nicht schön. [This church is not pretty.]
Er spielt nicht gut Flöte. [He doesn't play the flute well.]
Er will nicht gut Flöte spielen. [He doesn't want to play the flute well.]

Kein

Kein, on the other hand, is used to negate nouns [which may be preceded by an article or by no article at all]. Grammatically it has the same meaning as "none", "no" or "not any" and it's declined like the indefinite article *ein, eine, eines*, so it always goes before the noun.

Ich habe ein Buch. – Ich habe kein Buch. [I have a book – I don't have any books.]
Er kennt ein gutes Restaurant. – Er kennt kein gutes Restaurant. [He knows a good restaurant. – He doesn't know any good restaurants.]
Ich habe Hunger. – Ich habe keinen Hunger. [I'm hungry. – I'm not hungry.] ["I have hunger." – "I have no hunger."]
Sie hat viele Geschwister. – Sie hat keine Geschwister. [She has a lot of siblings. – She doesn't have any siblings.]

Then there's the word ***nichts*** which just means "nothing":

Ich habe nichts zu tun. [I have nothing to do.]
Du hast mir nichts getan. [You haven't done anything to me.]
Es gibt nichts zu essen. [There's nothing to eat.]

There's no double negative in German! "I'm not saying anything" in German is just *Ich sage nichts.*

ein ↔ kein	one ↔ none	Möchtest du eine Pizza? – Ich möchte keine Pizza. [Would you like a pizza? – I don't want any pizza. [I want something else.]]
[irgend]jemand ↔ niemand	somebody ↔ nobody	Irgendjemand hat die Tür offen gelassen. – Aber es war doch niemand mehr da. [Somebody left the door open. – But nobody was there any more.]
irgendwo ↔ nirgendwo/ nirgends	somewhere ↔ nowhere	Irgendwo hab ich ihn schon einmal gesehen. – Ich habe ihn nirgends gesehen. [I've seen him somewhere before. – I haven't seen him anywhere.]
irgendwann ↔ niemals/nie	at some time ↔ never	Irgendwann kaufe ich mir ein Auto. Ich hatte noch nie ein eigenes Auto. [I'll buy myself a car at some point. I've never had my own car.]
etwas ↔ nichts	something ↔ nothing	Willst du etwas trinken? – Danke, ich möchte nichts. [Do you want something to drink? – Thanks, I don't want anything.]
sowohl… als auch… ↔ weder… noch…	both… and … ↔ neither… nor…	Ich mag sowohl Jazz als auch Rock. – Mir gefällt weder Techno noch Pop. [I like both jazz and rock music. – I don't like either techno or pop.]

infinitive constructions

Infinitive clauses [secondary clauses where the verb is in the infinitive] which often start with "to" in English, in German are usually formed with *zu* which goes before the infinitive which, as always, is at the end of the clause:

I have the intention **to** go to London. → Ich habe die Absicht, nach London **zu** gehen.
I'm looking forward **to** seeing him. → Ich freue mich darauf, ihn **zu** sehen.
I'm not able **to** come. → Ich schaffe es nicht, **zu** kommen.

It's very important to remember that *zu* + verb in the infinitive go to the end!
There are no constructions like "Ich habe die Absicht zu gehen nach London."

In separable verbs *zu* goes between the prefix and the root:

Es ist langweilig, im Supermarkt einzukaufen. [It's boring to go shopping at the supermarket.]
Ich habe vergessen, dich anzurufen. [I forgot to call you.]

There is **no** *zu* with *gehen, lernen, sehen, bleiben, hören, lassen* or modal verbs:
Kannst du kommen? [Can you come?]
Ich gehe einkaufen. [I'm going shopping.]
Ich lerne schwimmen. [I'm learning to swim.]
Er bleibt stehen. [He stays standing.]
Wir müssen uns beeilen. [We have to hurry.]
Er sieht/hört ihn kommen. [He sees/hears him coming.]
Wir lassen uns die Haare schneiden. [We get our hair cut.]
Ich will es versuchen. [I want to try it.]

There are also a few **prepositions** which take an infinitive with *zu*:

ohne	without	Er ist vorbeigegangen ohne zu grüßen. [He passed by without [a] greeting.]
um… zu	[in order] to	Ich arbeite, um Geld zu verdienen. [I work [in order] to earn money.]
[an]statt	instead of	Sie hört lieber Musik, anstatt selbst zu singen. [She prefers to listen to music instead of singing.]
als	[more/less/etc.] than	Es ist interessanter zu laufen, als das Auto zu nehmen. [It's more interesting to walk than to take the car.]

purpose clauses

Wozu lernst Du Deutsch?

Wozu brauchst du Geld? – … um ein Haus zu kaufen!
[What do you need the money for? – To buy a house!]

As you can see in the example, to express the purpose of an action we use *wozu?* ["what for?"/"for what purpose?"] [a lot of the time people will just use *warum?*].

The response is constructed with ***um… zu* + verb in the infinitive** at the end.

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Ich gehe ins Bad, um mir die Hände zu waschen. [I'm going to the bathroom [in order] to wash my hands.]

Ich gehe zum Friseur, um mir die Haare schneiden zu lassen. [I'm going to the hairdresser's [in order] to get my hair cut.]

Wozu hast du den Ball dabei? – Um damit zu spielen. / Zum Spielen. [What did you bring the ball for? – To play with it. / To play.]

In separable verbs *zu* goes between the prefix and the second part of the verb:

Ich mache den Fernseher an, um das Fußballspiel anzusehen. [I turn the TV on [in order] to watch the football match.]

Warum fährst du weg? – Ich fahre in die Ferien, um mich auszuruhen. [Why are you leaving? – I'm going on holiday [in order] to relax.]

um… zu… is used when you want to say "I do X [in order] to do Y", but if you want to say "I do X **for** Z" then, just as in English, you'd use the word *für*. *Für* can only be followed by a noun or a pronoun, whereas with a verb in the infinitive or a whole clause you'd use *um… zu…*:

Ich lerne, um die Prüfung zu bestehen. ↔ Ich lerne für die Prüfung. [I'm studying [in order] to pass the exam. ↔ I'm studying for the exam.]

Sie spart, um ein Auto zu kaufen. ↔ Sie spart für ein Auto. [She's saving up [in order] to buy a car. ↔ She's saving up for a car.]

Ich tue das, um dir zu helfen. ↔ Ich tue das für dich. [I'm doing it [in order] to help you. ↔ I'm doing it for you.]

conjunctions

Conjunctions allow us to combine two clauses: one main clause and one subordinate clause or two main clauses. They specify a relationship between two clauses which can be one of time, cause, manner or place.
The so-called double conjunctions [article below] are composed of two elements.
Here you'll find a list of the most important conjunctions, with examples and translations.

Conjunctions which go to position 0: they combine two elements or introduce a main clause

und	and	Ich spiele Gitarre und mein Bruder singt. [I play the guitar and my brother sings.]

sowohl… als auch…	both… and…	Er mag sowohl klassische als auch moderne Lieder. [He likes both classical and modern songs.]
aber/doch	but	Er singt gerne, aber er hat nicht viel Zeit. [He likes to sing, but he doesn't have a lot of time.]
sondern	but/rather	Er singt nicht in einem Chor, sondern in einer Band. [He doesn't sing in a choir, but in a band.]
oder	or	Sie üben am Abend oder am Wochenende. [They practice in the evening or at weekends.]
[entweder…] oder…	either… or…	Sie üben entweder am Abend oder am Wochenende. [They either practice in the evening or at weekends.]
denn	because	Mein Bruder singt oft, denn es macht ihm Spaß. [My brother sings a lot because he likes it.]

Subordinating conjunctions: they introduce a subordinate clause; the verb goes to the end
Examples with a literal translation – a good exercise for learning these unusual German constructions.

weil	because	Ich esse, weil ich Hunger habe. [I'm eating because I'm hungry.]
wenn	if	Wenn ich Zeit habe, komme ich gern. [If I have time I'll be happy to come.]
wenn	when	Ich rufe dich an, wenn ich zurückkomme. [I'll call you when I get back.]
dass	that	Ich weiß, dass du die Hausaufgaben nicht machen konntest. [I know that you couldn't do your homework.]
als	when [past tense]	Als ich ein Kind war, habe ich viel auf der Straße gespielt. [When I was a child, I played in the street a lot.]
ob	if [indirect question]	Er hat mich gefragt, ob ich so früh kommen kann. [He asked me if I could come that early.]
wie	how	Sie weiß nicht ganz genau, wie sie am schnellsten dahin kommt. [She doesn't know exactly how she can get there as quickly as possible.]
obwohl	although, even though	Wir sind in Ferien gefahren, obwohl wir kein Geld hatten. [We went on holiday even though we didn't have any money]
auch wenn	even if	Das ist wahrscheinlich richtig, auch wenn ich noch nicht ganz sicher bin. [That's probably right, even if I'm still not entirely sure.]
trotzdem	despite [the fact that]	Er ist rausgegangen, trotzdem es sehr kalt war und regnete. [He went out, despite the fact that it was very cold and raining.]

da	since [because]	Da ich noch keine genauen Informationen habe, kann ich dazu noch nichts sagen. [Since I don't have any exact information, I can't say anything about that yet.]
so dass	so that	Kannst du mir Bescheid sagen, so dass ich dich rechtzeitig abholen kann. [You can tell me so that I can pick you up on time.]
während	while	Während er noch sprach, gingen die Leute schon weg. [While he was still speaking, people were already leaving.]
seit	since [an event]	Seit ich ihn kenne, ist er immer zufrieden. [Since I've known him he's always been happy.]
bis	until	Wir warten, bis du mit der Arbeit fertig bist. [We're waiting until you're finished with work.]
solange	so long as	Solange er noch telefoniert, können wir noch einen Kaffee trinken. [So long as he hasn't called, we can drink another coffee.]
sobald	as soon as	Sobald das Haus fertig ist, ziehen wir um. [As soon as the house is ready, we'll move.]
nachdem	after	Nachdem sie das Land kennengelernt hatte, wollte sie nicht mehr weg. [After she'd gotten to know the country, she didn't want to leave again.]
bevor	before	Bevor du nach Hause kommst, kannst du bitte noch Zucker kaufen? [Before you come home, can you buy some more sugar?]
als ob	as if	Ihr tut so, als ob ihr noch nichts gehört hättet. [You're acting as though you hadn't heard anything yet.]
falls	if/in the event that	Falls es funktioniert, haben wir eine ideale Lösung gefunden. [If it works, we've found an ideal solution.]
damit	so that	Ich erzähle dir das nur, damit du auch Bescheid weißt. [I'm telling you just so that you're also up to speed.]
der, die, das etc.	who [not questions]	Das ist der Mann, von dem ich dir so viel erzählt habe. [This is the man whom I've told you so much about.]
wer, wo, was, wie viel…	who, where, what, how much/many…	Sagst du mir, wo die Bank ist? [Can you tell me where the bank is?]
woher	from where	Ich weiß nicht, woher Henry kommt. [I don't know where Henry comes from.]
wohin	to where	Wir überlegen, wohin wir in den Ferien fahren. [We're considering where we'll go on holiday.]
um…zu	[in order] to [purpose clause]	Sie geht nach Heidelberg, um dort Jura zu studieren. [She's going to Heidelberg [in order] to study law there.]
statt…zu	instead of	Fahr doch mit dem Auto, statt die Bahn zu nehmen.

		[Just go by car instead of taking the train.]
ohne…zu	without [doing sth]	Er ist losgefahren, ohne auf mich zu warten. [He left without waiting for me.]
indem	[gerund]	Ich habe ihn überzeugt, indem ich von den Vorteilen gesprochen habe. [I convinced him by talking about the advantages.]

Conjunctive adverbs: they go to position 1 followed by the verb

dann	then/next	Wir essen, dann trinken wir einen Kaffee. [We'll eat, then we'll drink a coffee.]
zuerst	first[ly]	Zuerst essen wir, dann trinken wir einen Kaffee. [First we'll eat, then we'll drink a coffee.]
später	later	Ich arbeite gerade, später gehe ich ins Fitnessstudio. [I'm working, then later I'll go to the gym.]
deshalb/deswegen/ daher	therefore	Wir waren nicht zu Hause, deshalb haben wir die Tür nicht aufgemacht. [We weren't at home, so we didn't open the door.]
also	so/therefore	Ich denke, also bin ich. [I think, therefore I am.]
jedoch	however	Ich habe es versucht, jedoch ohne Erfolg. [I tried it, but without any success.]
trotzdem/dennoch	despite that, and yet	Wir hatten keine Chance, trotzdem haben wir es versucht. [We didn't have a chance, and yet we tried it.]
außerdem	also	Sie spielt Klavier, außerdem Schlagzeug. [She plays the piano, and also the drums.]
entweder… [oder…]	either… or…	Sie üben entweder am Abend oder am Wochenende. [They practice either in the evening or at the weekend.]
weder… noch…	neither… nor…	Er ist weder sympathisch noch interessant. [He is neither nice nor interesting.]
ansonsten/sonst	otherwise/if not/or	Zieh einen Pulli an, sonst erkältest du dich! [Put a jumper on, or you'll get cold!]
einerseits…. andererseits…	on the one hand… on the other hand…	Einerseits habe ich Lust, auszugehen, andererseits muss ich sparen. [On the one hand I want to go out, but on the other hand I have to save money.]

"als" and "wenn" [when]

Wenn er krank <u>ist</u>, bleibt er zu Hause. [When he's sick, he stays at home.]
Als er krank <u>war</u>, ist er zu Hause geblieben. [When he was sick, he stayed at home.]

These sentences, which are identical in English apart from the tense, are different in German in terms of the conjugation, an important detail which has to do with the tense: to introduce a temporal subordinate clause with **when** we use…

Wenn for the present, *als* for the past:
Wenn der Wecker klingelt, stehe ich auf. [When my alarm goes off, I get up.]
Als der Wecker klingelte, schlief ich noch. [When the alarm went off, I got up.]
Wenn ich Urlaub habe, fliege ich in die Karibik. [When I'm on holiday I fly to the Caribbean.]
Als ich letztes Jahr im Urlaub war, habe ich einen Surfkurs gemacht. [When I was on holiday last year, I took a surfing class.]
Ich muss mir schnell ein Hotel suchen, **wenn** ich in Hamburg angekommen bin. [I have to quickly look for a hotel when I arrive [will have arrived] in Hamburg.]
Ich musste eine neue Wohnung suchen, **als** ich nach Hamburg gekommen bin. [I had to look for a new apartment when I came to Hamburg.]
Wenn ich eine Prüfung habe, muss ich lernen. [When I have an exam I have to study.]
Als ich noch zur Schule ging, musste ich auch immer lernen. [When I went to school, I also had to study a lot.]
Ich rufe meine Freundin an, **wenn** ich auf die Bahn warte. [I'll call my [girl]friend when I'm waiting for the train.]
Ich habe meine Freundin getroffen, **als** ich auf die Bahn wartete. [I met my [girl]friend when I was waiting for the train.]

In some cases **wenn** can also be used in a past-tense sentence, specifically when we're talking about a habit or a repeated action:
Immer wenn ich bei meiner Oma war, gab es Kuchen. [Whenever I was at my grandmother's house, there was cake.]
Ich wollte nie rausgehen, wenn es regnete. [I never wanted to go out when it was raining.]

However, the interrogative pronoun "when" is translated as *wann*?

It's used in direct questions:

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Wann kommst du? – **Wenn** ich mal Zeit habe. [When are you coming? When I have time.]

Wann warst du in Frankfurt? – **Als** ich 20 Jahre alt war. [When were you in Frankfurt? When I was 20.]

Wann hast du die Prüfung? [When is your exam?]

Wenn nicht jetzt, wann dann? [If not now, then when?]

But also in indirect questions:

Sie haben mich gefragt, wann der Zug abfährt. [She asked me when the train leaves.]

Ich weiß nicht, wann der Zug abfährt. [I don't know when the train leaves.]

"wenn" and "ob" [if]

"If" can be translated into German with *wenn* or with *ob*, depending on what kind of clause it's used in.
Wenn is used in temporal and hypothetical clauses

Wenn in German is ambiguous: when it expresses a temporal concept it means **when** [see the use of *als* and *wenn*], but when it takes on a conditional/hypothetical purpose it's translated with **se**.
To avoid this ambiguity we can replace…
… the temporal *wenn* with *sobald* [as soon as] if we're referring to the future or with *immer wenn* [whenever/every time] for habits and rules.
… the strictly conditional *wenn* with *falls* [in the event that].

But let's look at some examples:

Temporal clauses [= when]
Ich fahre in den Urlaub, wenn ich weniger Arbeit habe. /sobald ich weniger Arbeit habe.
[I'll go on holiday when I have less work.]
Ich kaufe ein neues Auto, wenn ich Geld habe. /sobald ich Geld habe. [I'll buy a new car when I have the money.]
Ich komme, wenn ich Zeit habe. /sobald ich Zeit habe. [I'll come when I have time.]
[Immer] wenn ich krank bin, gehe ich zum Arzt. [When I'm ill, I go to the doctor.]
Ich rauche, [immer] wenn ich Stress habe. [I smoke when I'm stressed.]

Hypothetical clauses [= if]
Ich komme, wenn ich Zeit habe. /falls ich Zeit habe. [I'll come if I have time.]

Wenn ich eine Reise machen könnte, würde ich in die Karibik fahren. /Falls ich… [If I could go on holiday, I would travel to the Caribbean.]

Wenn ich reich wäre, würde ich eine Wohnung kaufen. [If I were rich, I'd buy an apartment.]

Wenn ich an seiner Stelle wäre, würde ich es ihm sagen. [If I were in your place, I'd say it to him.]

Ich würde mehr Geld verdienen, wenn ich eine andere Arbeit hätte. [I would earn more money if I had a different job.]

Ob in dubitative indirect questions – and only then!

War Peter gestern hier? → Weißt du, ob Peter gestern hier war?
[Was Peter here yesterday? Do you know if Peter was here yesterday?]

Findet das Konzert heute Abend statt? → Ich wollte wissen, ob das Konzert heute stattfindet. [Is the concert on tonight? I wanted to know if the concert was on tonight.]

Haben die Kinder Hunger? → Ich fragte sie, ob die Kinder Hunger haben.
[Are the children hungry? I asked them if the children were hungry.]

Geht es ihr besser? → Ich bin nicht sicher, ob es ihr besser geht.
[Is she feeling better? I'm not sure if she's feeling better.]

Ist das Flugzeug schon gelandet? → Keiner weiß, ob das Flugzeug schon gelandet ist.
[Has the plane already landed? Nobody knows if the plane has already landed.]

Tipps & Tricks
Wenn is used in temporal and hypothetical clauses, ob is only used in indirect/dubitative questions.

temporal conjunctions [B]

In German, temporal subordinate clauses, as well as *wenn, als* and *während*, can be introduced by the following conjunctions:

seit/ seitdem	Corresponds to the English conjunction "since" and introduces a secondary clause.	Ich spiele Gitarre, seit ich sechs Jahre alt bin. [I've been playing the guitar since I was six.]
nachdem	Corresponds to "after [+ gerund/past tense verb]" and introduces a secondary clause. In a clause introduced by *nachdem*, the subject is always stated and the verb is always expressed in the infinitive.	Nachdem er den Unfall hatte, wollte er nicht mehr Auto fahren. [After he had/After having the accident, he didn't want to drive any more.]
bevor	Corresponds to "before" and introduces a secondary clause. As above, the subject is stated and the verb is conjugated in the indicative. The clause introduced by *bevor* has the same tense as the main clause.	Bevor ich zur Arbeit gehe, trinke ich einen Kaffee. [Before going to work I drink a coffee.]
solange	Corresponds to "as long as", and is used when the main clause and the subordinate clause are happening at the same time.	Solange du im Büro bist, mache ich einen Spaziergang. [As long as you're in the office, I'll go for a walk.]
bis	Translates as "until", and is used when the secondary clause refers to an action which occurs after the main clause.	Der Opa bleibt bei dem Kind, bis der Vater zurückkommt. [The grandfather stays with the child until the father comes back.]

relative clauses [B]

Das Haus, das am See steht.

A relative clause is used to specify a noun. It comes directly after the noun, similar to a description between brackets, and in this sense it doesn't take a position. So far everything is the same as in English!
Speaking of positions, however, bear in mind that relative clauses are also secondary clauses, so the verb goes to the end. The verb of the main clause, on the other hand, stays in the second position as usual. In the following example *ist* is the verb of the main clause *Der Film ist sehr interessant* and it's in the second position, after the subject + relative pronoun. The verb of the relative clause *der heute im Kino läuft* is *läuft* and it goes to the end of the clause:

Der Film, der heute im Kino läuft, ist sehr interessant.
[The film which is on in the cinema today is very interesting.]

Relative pronouns

To form these clauses you need to know how to use the relative pronouns [who, what, which, that, etc.], like *der* in the example. The difference with English is that you also have to specify the gender and number. More specifically, the relative pronoun takes the gender and number of the word it refers to in the main clause and takes the case according to its role in the relative clause. Is that too abstract? Let's look at some examples:

Der Film, **der** heute im Kino läuft, ist sehr interessant.
Explanation: *der* is masculine singular because it's the same as *der Film*, the element in the main clause it's referring to. In the relative clause *der Film* takes the role of the subject [think of *Der Film läuft heute im Kino*] so it's in the nominative.

Ich kenne den Film, **der** heute im Kino läuft, noch nicht. [I don't yet know the film which is on in the cinema today.]
Explanation: *der* stays in the nominative because it's again the subject of the relative clause like above, even though it's in the accusative in the main clause [Ich kenne *den Film* nicht].

Der Film, **den** ich heute sehen will, ist sehr interessant. [The film which I want to see today is very interesting.]
Explanation: *den* is still masculine singular, but it's in the accusative because in the relative clause it becomes an object complement [Ich will *den Film* sehen.].

Die Filme, **die** ich heute sehen will, sind sehr interessant. [The films which I want to see today are very interesting.]
Explanation: Same thing in the plural.

Die Freundin, **der** ich das Auto geliehen habe, ist nicht mehr zurückgekommen. [The friend whom I leant the car to never came back.]
Explanation: The relative pronoun is feminine singular as in *die Freundin* and it's in the dative because the meaning of the relative pronoun would be: Ich hab *der Freundin* das Auto geliehen.

As you can see, the relative pronouns are mostly exactly the same as the definite articles – only the genitive and dative plural are different.

	masculine	feminine	neuter	plural
nominative	der	die	das	die
accusative	den	die	das	die
dative	dem	der	dem	denen
genitive	dessen	deren	dessen	deren

Obviously, like in English, there are also relative clauses which start with a preposition. Here the case of the relative pronoun depends on the preposition:
Der Freund, **von dem** ich dir erzählt habe, kommt mich besuchen. [My friend whom I told you about is coming to visit me.]
Die Schuhe, mit denen ich joggen war, sind völlig kaputt gegangen. [The shoes with which I went jogging have completely fallen apart.]

Independently of this, with the relative pronoun in the genitive we can also create constructions like the following:
Den Nachbarn, für dessen Katze ich immer Futter kaufe, habe ich schon ewig nicht mehr gesehen. [I haven't seen my neighbour, whose cats I always buy food for, in a while.]

Tipps & Tricks
We always have to specify the gender and case of the relative pronoun. The relative pronouns are mostly identical to the definite articles.

double conjunctions [B]
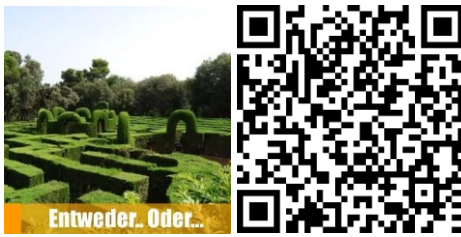
Double conjunctions – like in English – are pairs of words which connect two affirmative clauses or two elements of a clause.

weder – noch [neither – nor]	Ich habe weder Zeit noch Lust, so lange zu warten. [I have neither the time nor the desire to wait so long.]
entweder – oder [either – or]	Entweder fahren wir sofort los, oder wir kommen zu spät. [Either we leave right now or we'll get there too late.]
sowohl – als auch [both – and]	Ich will sowohl ans Meer fahren als auch ein paar Tage in die Berge. [I want to travel both to the sea and to the mountains for a couple of days.]
nicht nur – sondern auch [not only – but also]	Hier gibt es nicht nur japanische Spezialitäten, sondern auch chinesische Gerichte. [Here there are not only Japanese specialities, but also Chinese dishes.]
zwar – aber [[indeed] – but]	Diese Übungen sind zwar anstrengend, aber effektiv. [These exercises are [indeed] difficult, but effective.]

One case which is a bit unusual is **je – desto**

Je + comparative…, desto/umso + comparative translates into English as "the more/less/better/worse… the more/less/better/worse…".
Je weniger du rauchst, desto besser fühlst du dich. [The less you smoke, the better you'll feel].
Je schneller du fährst, desto gefährlicher bist du. [The faster you drive, the more dangerous you are].

- The conjunction *je*, followed immediately by the comparative, introduces a secondary clause, so the conjugated verb goes to the end.
- The conjunction *desto/umso*, also followed immediately by the comparative, introduces a main clause, so the verb goes straight after the comparative.
- The clause introduced by *je* always comes first and the two clauses are separated by a comma.

complicated sentences [B/C]

Here are two very long, very intricate [and very beautiful] sentences from *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* [*Elective Affinities*, 1809] by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe with a cheeky simplification.

Dieser stieg nun die Terrassen hinunter, musterte im Vorbeigehen Gewächshäuser und Treibebeete, bis er ans Wasser, dann über einen Steg an den Ort kam, wo sich der Pfad nach den neuen Anlagen in zwei Arme teilte. Den einen, der über den Kirchhof ziemlich gerade nach der Felswand hinging, ließ er liegen, um den andern einzuschlagen, der sich links etwas weiter durch anmutiges Gebüsch sachte hinaufwand.

Did you understand any of that? Not much? Don't worry, even Goethe's sentences are just a combination of smaller units. In simplified German it would be something like this:

Er ist die Terrassen im Garten hinuntergegangen. [He descended the terraces in the garden.]
Er hat den Garten genau angesehen. [He looked at the garden in detail.]
Er ist über eine Brücke gegangen. [He crossed a bridge.]
Er ist dann an eine Stelle gekommen. [He arrived at a place.]
An dieser Stelle waren zwei Wege. [In this place there were two paths.]
Er hat einen Weg nicht genommen. [He didn't take one of the paths.]
Dieser Weg führte zu einer Felswand. [This path led to a rockface.]
Er hat den anderen Weg genommen. [He took the other path.]
Dieser Weg führte nach oben. [This path led up.]

Now it all seems a bit easier, doesn't it? We'll slowly go through the intimidating sentence above, analysing the individual elements. You'll see that it consists of a lot of small sentences, each with its own verb, connected by conjunctions or interrupted by other relative clauses:

Dieser stieg nun die Terrassen hinunter, musterte im Vorbeigehen Gewächshäuser und Treibebeete, *bis er ans Wasser, dann über einen Steg an den Ort kam, wo sich der Pfad nach den neuen Anlagen in zwei Arme teilte.* *Den einen, der über den Kirchhof ziemlich gerade nach der Felswand hinging, ließ er liegen, um den andern einzuschlagen, der sich links etwas weiter durch anmutiges Gebüsch sachte hinaufwand.*	*Descending the terrace, and stopping as he passed to look into the hot-houses and the forcing-pits, he came presently to the water, and thence, over a narrow bridge, to a place where the walk leading to the new plants branched off in two directions.* *One path that led across the churchyard, immediately up the face of the rock, he didn't take, but took the other one, that wounded away to the left, with a more gradual ascent, through a pretty shrubbery.*

ARTICLES [DECLENSION]

What's the use of declensions?
Here you'll learn how declensions of articles work in German and why they exist.

To learn more and for concrete examples you should also take a look at the categories "adjectives", "pronouns" and "nouns".

why do we decline?

Declining a word [article, adjective, noun, pronoun] means changing its form based on its function [subject, direct object, indirect object] in the sentence.

There's a notable difference between "I hit him" and "he hits me". Both sentences involve I and he, but their roles change, and the language makes that clear by changing their forms. As you can see, English declines its pronouns ["I" vs "me"], but in German it happens to articles and adjectives as well. Changing the form helps to show what function, what role a word plays in the context of the sentence.

For example, "the coffee" has two different functions in the following sentences:

"The coffee is on the table" [Der Kaffee ist auf dem Tisch] → The coffee is standing, "acting", on the table.

"Anna drinks the coffee" [Anna trinkt den Kaffee] → Now it's Anna who is acting, while the coffee "undergoes" the action. In German, this change of role is indicated, that's right, by a change in the article: *der* becomes *den*.

How do we know what case to use?

German has 3 genders [masculine, feminine and neuter] which, depending on their role in the sentence, are declined into 4 cases: Nominativ, Akkusativ, Dativ and Genitiv.

> **Tipps & Tricks**
> **The subject is expressed with the nominative ["nominates" the person who does something], the direct object with the accusative [the person/thing who "accuses" the action, who "undergoes" it], the indirect object with the dative [whom the direct object is given to], and the possessive with the genitive [whose the subject/thing is].**
> **Also, in German the prepositions [which are "pre-positioned" before a complement of time/place/manner etc.] take specific cases so they require the use of the matching case.**

the nominative

When the sentence starts with the subject [the element which "does" something], you have to put one of the following articles [a/an, the] in front of this noun – of course you need to know the gender of the noun to choose the right article.

article	masculine	feminine	neuter	plural
definite	**der**	**die**	**das**	**die**
indefinite	**ein**	**eine**	**ein**	**-**

In grammatical terms this means declining the noun group [which consists of the article, adjective and noun] as a subject in the **nominative**.

But let's look at some more concrete examples:

masculine
der   **Der Hund** gehört meiner Freundin. [The dog belongs to my friend.]
ein   **Ein Mann** betritt das Zimmer. [A man enters the room.]

neuter
das   **Das Auto** steht in der Garage. [The car is in the garage.]
ein   **Ein Glas Wein** am Tag kann gesund sein. [A glass of wine a day can be good for you.]

feminine
die   Ist **die Tasche** neu? [Is the bag new?]
eine   **Eine Stunde** hat 60 Minuten. [An hour has 60 minutes.]

plural
die   **Die Nudeln** sind fertig! [The pasta is ready!]
–   **Wale** sind auch Säugetiere. [Whales are also mammals.]

The verb *sein* [to be] has a little quirk: the nominative is also used "on the right", that is, not just for the subject before the verb, but also for the complement after:

Sie ist **ein sehr intelligenter Mensch**. [She is a very intelligent person.]

Heute ist **ein schöner Tag**. [Today is a beautiful day.]

Der schnellste Läufer war **der Gewinner.** [The fastest runner was the winner.]

The second part of a comparative also takes the nominative:

Eine Maus ist nicht so groß wie **ein Elefant.** [A mouse is not as big as an elephant.]

Ich bin größer als **dein Bruder.** [I'm taller than your brother.]

Tipps & Tricks

The nominative is used to express the subject of the sentence. With the verb sein [to be] it's also used "on the right".

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the accusative

The accusative is just the direct object and it responds to the questions "who?" or "what?".

Usually a sentence starts with the subject in the nominative, then comes the verb and then after that is a direct object which "undergoes" what the subject does, like the apple in this example:

Markus [subject] isst [verb] den Apfel [direct object].

[Markus eats the apple.]

This direct object goes after an article in the accusative:

article	masculine	feminine	neuter	plural
definite	**den**	**die**	**das**	**die**
indefinite	**einen**	**eine**	**ein**	**-**

Also, *kein, mein/dein* [and the other possessive pronouns] and *irgendein* etc. behave like the indefinite article and take the same endings!

The accusative isn't only used for direct objects: it also goes after various prepositions: *für* [for], *ohne* [without], *gegen* [against], *um* [about], *durch* [through], *bis* [until/to], *wider* [against]

Some examples:

masculine

den	Siehst du **den Hund**? [Do you see the dog?]
	Das geht nicht <u>ohne</u> **den Techniker**. [It doesn't work without the technician.]
einen	Ich nehme **einen Kaffee**. [I'm having a coffee.]

neuter

das	Er legt **das Buch** <u>auf</u> **das Bett**. [He puts the book on the bed.]
ein	Er liest **irgendein Buch**. [He reads any [kind of] book.]

feminine

die	Ich bin <u>durch</u> **die Stadt** gelaufen. [I ran through the town.]
eine	Kennst du **meine** Schwester? [Do you know my sister?]

plural

die	Wir müssen **die Pakete** zur Post bringen. [We have to bring the packages to the post office.]
–	Er mag **keine** historischen Filme. [He doesn't like historical films.]

Tipps & Tricks
Never forget that German is "masculist". As you can see, the feminine, neuter and plural in the accusative are the same as in the nominative – only the masculine changes.

the dative

To whom? Giving something to someone…

The German dative is used for the indirect object. Unlike in English we don't have a preposition before the noun, but we just change the article as you can see in the following table.
In a certain sense, the dative is the most important case in German because, as well as expressing the indirect object, it's required by the majority of prepositions.
The dative can only be "de**m**" or "de**r**" for the singular and "de**n**" for the plural.

Here are the forms of the definite article:

article	masculine	feminine	neuter	plural
definitive	**dem**	**der**	**dem**	**den**
indefinite	**einem**	**einer**	**einem**	**-**

In the plural we also add an -n to the noun!

Kein, mein/dein [and the other possessive pronouns] and **irgendein** also change when they're in the dative: they take the same ending as the indefinite article!
Like with the accusative there are prepositions which require the dative: **mit** [with], **nach** [after], **von** [from], **zu** [to] etc.
Er geht mit **den Schülern** ins Kino. [He goes to the cinema with the students.]
Some verbs are also accompanied by the dative: **helfen** [to help], **danken** [to thank], **zuhören** [to listen], **gefallen** [to please/be liked by] etc.: Das Kuscheltier gefällt **dem Kind**. [The child likes the cuddly toy.]

Some examples:

masculine

dem   Das Fahrrad gehört **dem Nachbarn**. [The bicycle belongs to the neighbour.]
einem   Morgen gehe ich <u>zu</u> **einem Freund.** [I'm going to see a friend tomorrow.]

neuter

dem   Er schenkt **dem Kind** ein Buch. [He sends the child a book.]
einem   Das ist das Foto <u>von</u> **einem Mädchen**. [This is the photo of a girl.]

feminine

der   Ich gebe **der Frau** das Geld. [I give the money to the woman.]

einer   Nach **einer** *Pause* machen wir weiter. [We'll continue after a break.]

plural

den   Er hört **seinen Freunden** immer zu. [He always listens to his friends.]

–   Er spricht nicht <u>mit</u> **Fremden**. [He doesn't talk to strangers.]

Tipps & Tricks
The masculine and the neuter are identical in the dative!

the genitive [B]

Whose is it?

The genitive is used to refer to the possessor of another noun and it responds to the question "whose?".
Articles and nouns are declined according to the following table. Particularly in spoken German, the genitive is almost always replaced with *von* + dative:
Das ist das Haus **des Künstlers**. [This is the artist's house.]
Or in spoken German: Das ist das Haus **von dem Künstler**. [This is the house of the artist.]

article	masculine	feminine	neuter	plural
definite	**des**	**der**	**des**	**der**
indefinite	**eines**	**einer**	**eines**	-

In the masculine and the neuter we also add an -s to the noun!

Some examples:

m	**des +s** **eines +s**	Das ist das Haus **meines Vaters**. [This is my father's house.] **Eines Tages** *sagte die Großmutter zu Rotkäppchen…* [One day Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother said to her…]

n	**des +s** **eines +s**	Beim Lösen **des Problems** ist ein Fehler aufgetreten. [During the resolution of the problem an error occurred.] Die Tür **eines Hauses** stand offen. [The door of the house was open.]
f	**der** **einer**	Das Auto **der Frau** stand an der Ecke. [The woman's car was on the corner.] Das sind die Spuren **einer Wildkatze**. [Those are the tracks of a wildcat.]
pl	**der** **— +r**	Die Ideen **der Kinder** sind voller Fantasie. [The children's ideas are a complete fantasy.] Die Sachen **anderer** sind immer interessanter. [Other people's things are more and more interesting.]

Of course, even with the genitive there are some prepositions which require it: *wegen* [because of], *trotz* [despite], *statt* [instead of], *während* [during]

Examples:
Trotz de**s** Regen**s** gehe ich spazieren. [Despite the rain I'm going for a walk.]
Er hat während de**r** Vorstellung geschlafen. [I slept during the performance.]
Statt de**s** Auto**s** nehmen sie den Bus. [Instead of the car, they're taking the bus.]
Ich bleibe wegen meine**r** Erkältung zu Hause. [I'm staying at home because of my cold.]

Proper nouns

With proper nouns [names of people, cities etc.] we don't use the article; in fact in this case it's almost identical to the English possessive, just without the apostrophe:
Sie interessieren sich für **Kants** Philosophie. [They're interested in Kant's philosophy.]
Annas Freundin ist sehr sympathisch. [Anna's friend is very nice.]
Andalusien ist **Spaniens** schönste Region. [Andalucia is Spain's most beautiful region.]

Tipps & Tricks
Especially in spoken German the genitive is replaced with von + dative.
The forms of the neuter are identical to the masculine.

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possessive articles

Das ist sein Bier! ["That's his beer!"]

German, like English, distinguishes between "his" and "hers": we say *sein* if the possessor is masculine or neuter, and *ihr* if they're feminine.

Heute ist **sein** Geburtstag. [Today is his birthday.]
Heute ist **ihr** Geburtstag. [Today is her birthday.]

Of course, the ending of the possessive article depends on the thing being possessed, that is it's declined like the indefinite article [*ein, eine* etc]. In fact, the possessive in German is used like an article, not like an adjective.

Das ist s**ein** Hund. [This is his dog – the dog is masculine]
Das ist s**eine** Katze. [This is his cat – the cat is feminine]

Here are all the possessive articles – which then take the ending of the indefinite article according to the situation.

ich	**mein**	Das ist mein Freund Toni. [This is my friend Toni.]
du	**dein**	Ich habe deine Telefonnummer nicht. [I don't have your phone number.]
er	**sein**	Er hat sein Portmonee verloren. [He has lost his wallet.]
sie	**ihr**	Sie hat ihr Portmonee verloren. [She has lost her wallet.]
es	**sein**	Das Kind hat sein Portmonee verloren. [The child has lost his/her [its] wallet.]
wir	**unser**	Unsere Verwandten kommen uns besuchen. [Our relatives are coming to visit.]
ihr	**euer/eure**	Wie ist eure neue Adresse? [What's your new address?]
sie, Sie	**Ihr/ ihr**	Ist das Ihr Auto? [Is this your car?]

NOUNS

Nouns in German: genders, plurals and compounds.

In this category you'll learn all the rules [although there aren't many] for working out the gender of a noun.
Luckily only very few of them decline - you can find a list here.
The "learn it by heart" rule applies to the plural as well, but some general rules you'll find here can help.
And you'll also find some explanations on the dreaded "long words" - compound nouns.

gender

You need a bit of patience here!

Nouns are divided into masculine, feminine and neuter, and they take the articles *der, die* or *das* respectively. For the plural it's easier: everything is *die*.
But before we go on: don't get too worried or too worked up trying to learn the rules – it's more effective to learn the article, and therefore the gender, with every new noun you find. However, there are a few safe rules for working out what gender a noun is.

In any case, here are the general rules:

DER / masculine nouns

Professions and classifications ending in *-r*:
Lehrer, Offizier, Mechaniker, Italiener, Ingenieur, Fanatiker, Aktionär, Notar
[teacher, official, mechanic, Italian, engineer, fanatic, shareholder, notary]

Months, days and seasons:
August, Montag, Sommer, *…* [August, Monday, summer]

Names of cars:
BMW, Fiat, Ferrari

Nouns with the following endings:
Stud*ent*, Poliz*ist*, Pil*ot*, Astron*aut*, Archit*ekt*, Fabrik*ant*, Gymnasi*ast*, Sold*at*, Philos*oph*,
Athl*et*, Agron*om*, Biol*oge*, Mot*or*, Sozialis*mus*
[student, police officer, pilot, astronaut, architect, manufacturer, high-school student, soldier, philosopher, athlete, agronomist, biologist, motor, socialism]
Teppich, König, Zwilling [carpet, king, twin]

Other tricks:
- When you're not sure about the gender, generally you can treat the names of concrete things as masculine: der Baum*,* der Tag*,* der Markt [tree, day, market]

- A big hint that something might be masculine is if it ends in –*r* or–*[e]n*: der Hammer*, der Garten,* der Ton [hammer, garden, tone]
- One way to "cheat" when you don't know the article is to pronounce a kind of "de" [said quickly with the "e" closed] which the listener can interpret as semi-correct in place of *die, der, den, dem* [because even the Germans eat their words].

DIE / feminine nouns

Words with the endings *-heit, -keit, -ung, -schaft*:
Schönheit, Einigkeit, Mannschaft, Wohnung [beauty, unity, team, apartment]

Most nouns which end in *-e*:
Tasse, Sonne, Farbe [cup, sun, colour]
People and animals can sometimes be exceptions: der Biologe, der Matrose, der Hase [biologist, sailor, hare]

A lot of abstract nouns:
Zeit, Geduld, Liebe, Angst [time, patience, love, fear]

Trees and flours:
die Rose, die Tanne, die Blume… [rose, fir, flower]

Motorbikes and mopeds:
die Vespa, die Honda

Nouns of Latin origin with the following endings:
Nat*ion*, Aul*a*, Marmel*ade*, Gar*age*, Maion*aise*, Renaiss*ance*, Quarant*äne*, Arrog*anz*,
Zitad*elle*, Toil*ette*, Mater*ie*, Akadem*ie*, Tend*enz*, Mu*sik*, Kab*ine*, Blond*ine*,
Universi*tät*, Alternat*ive*, Neur*ose*, Anal*yse*, Kult*ur*, Brosch*üre*
[nation, lecture hall, jam, garage, mayonnaise, Renaissance, quarantine, arrogance, citadel, toilet, matter, academy, tendency, music, cubicle, blond[e], university, alternative, neurosis, analysis, culture, brochure]

With the endings *-ei* and *-in*:
Bücher*ei*, Student*in* [library, [female] student]

DAS / neuter nouns

Some big clues are
- the ending *-nis*
  Hindernis, Geheimnis, Ereignis [obstacle, secret, event]
  Exception: die Erlaubnis [permission]

- the prefix *Ge-*
  Gebäude, Gerät, Gericht [building, device, court]
  Exception: die Gemeinde [municipality]
- and also the final *-s*:
  Gas, Glas, Fass, Maß [gas, glass, barrel, measurement]

Substantivised ["nounified"] adjectives, verbs, adverbs and prepositions:
viel/nichts/etwas Gutes/Interessantes; Leben, Essen, Grün, Pro und Contra [a lot of [things that are]/nothing/something good/interesting, life, food, greenery, for and against]
Drittel, Viertel, etc. [a third, a quarter]

Diminutives with *-chen/-lein:*
Mäd*chen*, Ring*lein* [girl, little ring]

Metals, chemical elements, medicines:
Gold, Eisen, Aspirin*, …* [gold, iron, aspirin]

Recently imported foreign words:
Ambiente, Meeting, Know-how

Countries and cities with adjectives:
das schöne Italien, das alte Berlin

Various words from Latin/Greek:
Museum, Stadium, Stadion, Klima, Thema, System, Problem, Argument, Benzin, Nikotin, Auto, Foto, Niveau, Ballett

No native speaker will be angry with you if you get an article wrong! Declension is undoubtedly the most complex chapter of German grammar, but everyone will understand you whatever article you use. In this context, what you mainly need is a lot of patience, because it's humanly impossible to quickly memorise the genders of all the nouns and, on top of that, there aren't that many useful rules for identifying the gender of a noun.

The first piece of advice, however, is to not think that German has a true three-gender grammatical system. The neuter in German can essentially be considered a [numerically inferior] variant of the masculine. Also, if German "unjustly" neutralises a beautiful girl, it's not a philosophical problem – it's just a grammatical problem caused by the diminutive ["-chen" is always neuter].
The many imports from Latin/Greek and from Italian/French in German all keep their original gender.

the plural

viele Schuhe

There's no universal rule for the plurals of nouns in German. It's not just the endings which change, there are also a lot of exceptions – so, just like we also recommend for genders, it's a good idea to always memorise the plural at the same time as the word.

But there are a few [almost guaranteed] rules:

- When the singular [regardless of the gender] has a, o, u in the root, most of the time it gets an Umlaut ä, ö, ü.
  die Mutter – die Mütter, die Tochter – die Töchter, der Bruder – die Brüder, das Glas – die Gläser [mother, daughter, brother, glass]
- Short masculine words add an -e
  der Tisch – die Tische, der Ball – die Bälle, der Sohn – die Söhne, der Krieg – die Kriege, der Schuh – die Schuhe [table, ball, son, war, shoe]
- neuter nouns always add –er
  das Kind – die Kinder, das Haus – die Häuser, das Gehalt – die Gehälter, das Bild – die Bilder [child, house, salary, image]
- feminine ones add -[e]n
  die Lampe – die Lampen, die Küche – die Küchen, die Frau – die Frauen, die Fahrt – die Fahrten, die Freundschaft – die Freundschaften, die Freiheit – die Freiheiten, die Meinung – die Meinungen [lamp, kitchen, wife, journey, friendship, freedom, opinion]
- Some nouns which end in -er or -en don't change in the plural
  der Lehrer – die Lehrer, das Messer – die Messer, der Besen – die Besen, das Laken – die Laken [teacher, knife, broom, bedsheet]
- foreign words and proper nouns take –s.
  das Auto – die Autos, das Foto – die Fotos, das Niveau – die Niveaus [car, photo, level]

> **Tipps & Tricks**
> **When the singular [regardless of the gender] has a, o, u in the root, most of the time it adds an Umlaut ä, ö, ü.**
> **Masculine words often add -e, neuter words –er, and feminine words -[e]n.**

declension [B]

Normally **nouns don't decline**, that is their form doesn't change, apart from in the dative plural and the genitive.

But some masculine nouns add an *-n* in the accusative and the dative:

Usually these are masculine nouns which end with *-e.* These and similar nouns, which all refer to people and/or professions, are declined by adding an –*[e]n* in all the other cases [accusative, dative, genitive] and in the plural, and apart from some exceptions they don't take the *-s* in the genitive. Their feminine version is formed by just adding *-in.*
der Kunde > den/dem/des/die Kunden [customer] > fem.: die Kundin
der Junge > den/dem/des/die Jungen [boy]
der Name > den/dem/die Namen, des Namens [exception in the genitive] [name]

These nouns include some nationalities:
der Franzose > den/dem/des/die Franzosen [die Französin]
der Finne, der Pole, der Russe, der Portugiese, der Libanese, etc.
[Frenchman/woman, Finn, Pole, Russian person, Portuguese person, Lebanese person]

Some nouns from Latin/Greek with the following endings also add *-n* and form the feminine with *-in*:
der Student – den/dem/des/die Studenten [fem.: die Studentin]
der Polizist, der Sozialist, der Soldat, der Pilot, der Agronom, der Astronaut, der Athlet, der Architekt, der Fabrikant, der Gymnasiast, der Philosoph, der Biologe, der Soziologe, etc.

There are also some nouns which don't belong to these groups which still behave like this:
der Mensch – den/dem/des/die Menschen [person/human being]
der Herr – den/dem/des Herrn [gentleman]
der Prinz – den/dem/des/die Prinzen [prince]
der Gedanke – den/dem/des/die Gedanken [thought]

However, nouns which derive from substantivised adjectives or participles decline like adjectives in the various cases:

	masculine	feminine	plural
nom.	der Deutsch**e** ein Deutsch**er**	die Deutsch**e** eine Deutsch**e**	die Deutsch**en** viele Deutsch**e**
acc.	den Deutsch**en** einen Deutsch**en**	die Deutsch**e** eine Deutsch**e**	alle Deutsch**en** wenige Deutsch**e**
dat.	dem Deutsch**en** einem Deutsch**en**	der Deutsch**en** einer Deutsch**en**	den Deutsch**en** einigen Deutsch**en**
gen.	des Deutsch**en** eines Deutsch**en**	der Deutsch**en** einer Deutsch**en**	der Deutsch**en** vieler Deutsch**er**

compound nouns

New German learners are often frightened by how long some of the words are. But you don't need to be scared: in German you can combine nouns, adjectives, verbs etc. almost however you want. Unlike in English you don't say "children's book" [13 letters], but "childrenbook" – *das Kinderbuch* [10 letters], "credit card" [11 characters with the space] becomes "creditcard" – *die Kreditkarte* [same number] – and that's the only reason why these nouns seem to be so long.

Some of the very long words are just joke words or they come from bureaucratic language, but nobody uses them in their everyday life. Sometimes even the Germans don't know what they mean!

One example of this is *Kraftfahrzeugstellplatzverordnung* which literally means "regulation on parking space for the thing which travels with power" [to explain: this is a regulation which requires a house to be constructed with enough parking space for "the thing which travels with power", the *Kraft/fahr/zeug*, which is just a car].

Or there's the *Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz* with 63 letters! You just need to understand the last word *Gesetz* – law – and then read from right to left [or ideally don't if you're not interested in the "law on the transfer of functions regarding the monitoring of bovine meat labelling".

What words can be combined?

To create a compound noun we can combine:

- noun + noun [+ noun]:
  die Post + die Karte > die Postkarte [postcard]
  die Speise + die Karte > di Speisekarte [menu]
  die Geburt + der Tag + die Torte > die Geburtstagstorte [birthday cake]
  das Haus + die Tür + der Schlüssel > der Haustürschlüssel [house key]

  And… a very popular word among old [and younger] people and of course among students of German: das Wort + die Findung + die Schwierigkeiten > die Wortfindungsschwierigkeiten ["the difficulty in finding a word" – who isn't familiar with that?]

- verb + noun
  schreiben + die Maschine > die Schreibmaschine [typewriter]
  fahren + die Karte > die Fahrkarte [bus/train ticket]

- adjective + noun
  hoch + das Haus > das Hochhaus [skyscraper]

- adverb + noun
  nicht + der Raucher > der Nichtraucher [non-smoker]

Keep in mind that the compound word always takes the gender of the last word. It's also the last word which always gives it its basic meaning, while the nouns which go in front of it describe or specify it.

die Kartoffelsuppe [potato soup] – die Suppenkartoffel [soup potato – low-quality]
das Meisterwerk [masterpiece/masterwork] – der Werkmeister [foreman]

How do words combine?

In a lot of cases we can just put the two words together:
der Kredit + die Karte > die Kreditkarte [credit card]
das Haus + die Tür > die Haustür [house door]

A lot [but not all] of the time we add an "adhesive element" between the two words, usually -s , –[e]n, –[e]r.

-s
das Leben + der Lauf > der Lebenslauf [CV]
die Hochzeit + der Tag > der Hochzeitstag [wedding anniversary]

Guaranteed rule: with nouns which end in in -tum, -ling, -ion, -tät, -heit, -keit, -schaft, -sicht, -ung we always use -s to stick the two parts together:

die Universität + der Professor > der Universitätsprofessor [university professor]

die Meinung + die Verschiedenheit > Meinungsverschiedenheit [difference of opinion]

die Freundschaft + der Beweis > der Freundschaftsbeweis [proof of friendship]

-n

Guaranteed rule: With nouns which end in -e we always use -n to stick the two words together:

die Nase + das Bein > das Nasenbein [nasal bone]

die Schlange + der Biss > der Schlangenbiss [snake's bite]

der Alte + das Heim > das Altenheim [retirement home]

das Auge + das Lid > das Augenlid [eyelid]

-en [often the first word is in the plural and -en is the plural ending]

die Studenten + Wohnheim > das Studentenwohnheim [student residence]

die Frauen + die Ärztin > die Frauenärztin [gynaecologist]

-er [often the first word is in the plural and -er is the plural ending]

die Kinder + der Garten > der Kindergarten [preschool]

die Wörter + das Buch > das Wörterbuch [dictionary]

In the case of verb + noun, often nothing is added, but the -en is dropped:

essen + das Zimmer > das Esszimmer [dining room]

schlafen + das Lied > das Schlaflied [lullaby]

And finally: the words don't always attach!

die Kaffeetasse [coffee cup] – eine Tasse Kaffee [a cup of coffee]

das Weinglas [wine glass] – das Glas Wein [a glass of wine]

Tipps & Tricks

When creating a compound noun, it's always the last noun which determines its gender and also its basic meaning, while the nouns which go in front of it describe or specify it. When joining two nouns in the middle, an "adhesive element" [s, er, en] is often added.

Spezialtrick

Slip the sentence "Ich habe gerade Wortfindungsschwierigkeiten" into a German exam, and the examiner will forgive you for everything!

ADJECTIVES [DECLENSION]

Adjectives always change!

The declension of adjectives – along with articles - is the most difficult chapter of German. It takes a bit of patience, but with our help you can do it! At the end of each article you'll find plenty of exercises on the subject.

adjectives with definite article

Welchen Hut wählst du heute? Den roten Hut? Den blauen Hut? Oder doch lieber den gelben Hut? [Which hat will you choose today? The red hat? The blue hat? Or would you prefer the yellow hat?]

When do adjectives decline?

First of all, there's some good news: adjectives only decline when they go in front of the noun [attributive function]. But when it's at the end of the sentence, usually after a form of sein, it isn't declined [predicative function]. Here's an example with the adjective klein:

Das kleine Kind spielt. [The small child is playing.] → *klein* comes between the article *das* and the noun *Kind*, that is before the noun, so it's declined by adding **-e**.

Das Kind ist klein. [The child is small.] → *klein* goes at the end of the sentence, so it doesn't change.

How do adjectives decline?

To decline an adjective, first of all you need to know the gender of the noun because this affects what form the adjective takes. Also, the declensions vary according to the article: in this section you'll find the information about the definite article – when the article is indefinite or absent the adjective behaves differently.

Here are the endings of the adjectives when they have a **definite article** [der/die/das etc. – the]. It's not difficult: the adjective takes either **-e** or **–en**.

Good to know: The adjective takes the endings in this table not only when it's after der, die, das etc., but also after *dieser, jeder, welcher, alle, derselbe, jener, manche and solcher* [this, every, which, all, the same, each, some, such].

	masculine	neuter	feminine	the adj. takes…	plural
nom.	der nett**e** Mann	das klein**e** Kind	die jung**e** Frau		die nett**en** Männer/ Kinder/Frauen
acc.	den nett**en** Mann	das klein**e** Kind	die jung**e** Frau	**-e**	die nett**en** Männer/ Kinder/Frauen

dat.	dem nett**en** Mann	dem klein**en** Kind	der jung**en** Frau	**-en**	den nett**en** Männern/ Kindern/Frauen
gen.	des nett**en** Manns	des klein**en** Kinds	der jung**en** Frau		der nett**en** Männer/ Kinder/Frauen

For example:

groß in the nominative masculine becomes: Der groß**e** Hund macht mir Angst. [The big dog scares me.]

alt in the accusative plural: Wir haben die alt**en** Möbel verkauft. [We sold the old [pieces of] furniture.]

neu in the dative feminine: Mit der neu**en** Brille kann ich besser sehen. [With my new glasses I can see better.]

Exceptions

As always, there can be some irregularities:

- When the adjective ends with –el or –[vowel]er, in the declined forms it loses the e:
  dunkel: eine dunkle Brille [dark glasses]
  edel: ein edler Wein [a noble [high-quality] wine]
  teuer: das teure Auto [the expensive car]
- The adjective hoch loses the c when it declines: der hohe Berg, ein hoher Berg [the/a tall mountain]

These exceptions also apply when the adjective is with an indefinite article or doesn't have an article.

adjective with indefinite article

Was hast du heute an? Ein weißes Hemd? Oder einen pinken Pullover? Eine blaue Hose?

[What are you wearing today? A white shirt? Or a pink jumper? Blue trousers?]

Here are the endings of the adjectives when they have an indefinite article: we add **–er, -es, -e** or **–en** to the adjective.

The same thing happens when the adjective is preceded by a form of *kein* or a possessive article [*mein, dein* etc.].

	masculine	neuter	feminine	the adj. takes…
nom.	ein rot**er** Hut	ein groß**es** Auto	eine neu**e** Tasche	**-er -es -e**
acc.	einen rot**en** Hut	ein groß**es** Auto	eine neu**e** Tasche	
dat.	einem rot**en** Hut	einem groß**en** Auto	einer neu**en** Tasche	**-en**
gen.	eines rot**en** Huts	eines groß**en** Autos	einer neu**en** Tasche	

For example:

groß in the nominative neuter becomes: Ein groß**es** Auto wäre jetzt sehr praktisch. [A big car would be very convenient right now.]

neu in the accusative feminine: Deine neu**e** Tasche finde ich wirklich schön! [I think your new bag is really pretty!]

rot in the dative masculine: Ich habe sie mit einem rot**en** Hut gesehen. [I saw her with a red hat.]

adjectives without an article [B]

When there's no article in front of the adjective, it takes the ending the article would have taken. [Only the genitive doesn't follow this rule, but these days it's almost never used.]

For example *Das [italienische] Essen schmeckt gut* without an article becomes: *Italienisches Essen schmeckt gut* [[The] Italian food tastes good]: the *-s* from the article is just "relocated" to the end of the adjective. So you just need to know the endings of the articles!

	masculine	neuter	feminine	plural
nom.	de**r** schöne Swimmingpool schöne**r** Swimmingpool	da**s** schlechte Wetter schlechte**s** Wetter	di**e** kleine Terrasse klein**e** Terrasse	di**e** netten Leute nett**e** Leute
acc.	de**n** schönen Swimmingpool schöne**n** Swimmingpool	da**s** schlechte Wetter schlechte**s** Wetter	di**e** kleine Terrasse klein**e** Terrasse	di**e** netten Leute nett**e** Leute
dat.	de**m** schönen Swimmingpool	de**m** schlechten Wetter schlechte**m** Wetter	de**r** kleinen Terrasse kleine**r** Terrasse	de**n** netten Leuten nett**en** Leuten

| gen. | des schönen Swimmingpools schönen Swimmingpools | des schlechten Wetters schlechten Wetters | der kleinen Terrasse kleiner Terrasse | der netten Leute netter Leute |

The adjective behaves the same as it does without an article when it's after *viel/e, wenig/e, etwas, mehr* [a lot/very, a little/few, somewhat, more]!

For example:

frisch in the nominative neuter: da**s** frische Gemüse → frische**s** Gemüse → Frisches Gemüse ist besser. [Fresh vegetables are better.]

klein in the dative feminine: mit eine**r** kleinen Terrasse → mit kleine**r** Terrasse → Zu verkaufen: Schönes Haus mit kleiner Terrasse. [For sale: Beautiful house with small terrace.]

schön in the dative masculine: mit eine**m** schönen Swimmingpool → mit schöne**m** Swimmingpool → Hotel mit schönem Swimmingpool [Hotel with beautiful swimming pool]

klein in the accusative plural: di**e** kleinen Kinder → klein**e** Kinder → Immer **mehr** kleine Kinder sind übergewichtig. [More and more small children are overweight.]

schlecht in the genitive masculine: wegen des schlechten Wetters → wegen schlechten Wetters → Wegen schlechten Wetters wurde das Konzert abgesagt. [Because of the bad weather the concert has been cancelled.]

comparative and superlative

Comparatives and superlatives are adjectives too! This means that when they're between the article and the noun they're declined!

Das ist die einfachste Lösung. [This is the easiest solution.]

Das ist das schönste Geschenk, das ich je bekommen habe! [This is the most beautiful present I've ever received!]

The comparative

It's very easy to form the comparative: you just need to add **-er** to the adjective/adverb:

schnell → schnell**er** [faster]

schön → schön**er** [more beautiful]

intelligent → intelligent**er** [more intelligent]

N.B.: There are **no** constructions like ~~"mehr intelligent"~~

When the adjective only has one syllable, in the comparative – and also in the superlative – it takes an Umlaut:

stark → st**ä**rk**er** [stronger]

kurz → k**ü**rz**er** [shorter]

groß → gr**öß**er** [bigger]

There are also irregular forms:

gut → **besser** [better] – Das kannst du aber besser! [But you can do that better!]

viel → **mehr** [more] – Er verdient mehr Geld als wir. [He earns more money than us.]

gern → **lieber** [rather/"more willingly"] – Ich gehe lieber ins Kino als ins Theater. [I'd rather go to the cinema than to the theatre.]

hoch → **höher** [taller/higher] – Der Mount Everest ist höher als der K2. [Mount Everest is taller than K2.]

dunkel → **dunkler** [darker] – Anna hat dunklere Haare als ich. [Anna has darker hair than me.]

teuer → **teurer** [more expensive] – In München ist die Wohnungen teurer als in Nürnberg. [The apartments in Munich are more expensive than in Nuremberg.]

As you've already seen from the examples, where in English you'd use "**than**" [more than, less than] to compare two elements, in German there's the little word *als*:

Sie ist *schöner als* ich! [She's prettier than me!]

Das Haus ist *größer als* ich dachte! [The house is bigger than I thought!]

Das Auto ist *breiter als* die Garage. [The car is wider than the garage.]

Du bist *kleiner als* Karl. [You're shorter than Karl.]

Er spricht *schneller als* er denkt! [He speaks faster than he thinks.]

For an equivalence comparative, that is when we want to say that something is **"as"** beautiful **"as"** something else, in German we use *so…wie* and the adjective doesn't change:

Florenz ist so schön wie Rom. [Florence is as beautiful as Rome.]

Lesen ist für mich so entspannend wie Spazierengehen. [Reading is as relaxing for me as going for a walk.]

The superlative

To form the **relative superlative** all you have to do is to add the suffix *-ste* [very similar to English] to the adjective/adverb. So, to say "the fastest horse", we'd say *das schnellste Pferd*.

klein → kleiner → **der kleinste Teil** [the smallest part]

schön → schönes → **die schönste Stadt** [the most beautiful city]

jung → jünger → **das jüngste Kind** [the youngest child]

This rule applies when the superlative [that is the adjective] is between the article and the noun. But when it's at the end of the sentence without a noun you can alternatively also form the superlative with **am… -sten**:

Meine Stadt ist die schönste / Meine Stadt ist am schönsten. [My city is the most beautiful.]

When this superlative is an adverb, this variation is obligatory:
Lisa singt am schönsten. [Lisa sings the most beautifully.]

With the superlative, like with the comparative, there are some irregular forms:
gut → besser → **der beste/am besten** [the best] → Du hast dir den besten Platz ausgesucht. [You chose the best place.]
viel → mehr → **am meisten** [the most] → Am meisten ärgert mich deine Ungeduld. [What most annoys me is your impatience.]
gern → lieber → **am liebsten** ["most willingly"] → Am liebsten esse ich die Spaghetti mit Tomatensauce. [I most enjoy eating spaghetti with tomato sauce.]

You can also combine an adjective with another word to make it even more "dramatic": *wunderschön* [wonderful], *riesengroß* [huge], *klitzeklein* [tiny], *superschnell* [very fast], *hundemüde* [dog-tired] etc.

complex attributives [B/C]

An attributive is an element which specifies the properties of a noun and which always goes before the noun in German [and usually in English].

An attributive can be…
- an adjective
  eine schöne Wohnung [a beautiful house]
  kalte Getränke [cold drinks]
- a past participle:
  das gebaute Haus [the built house]
  ein gesunkenes Schiff [a sunken ship]
- a present participle:
  ein lächelndes Kind [a laughing child]
  fließendes Wasser [flowing water]

The attributive can also be formed with more than one word, that is we add other elements which describe the adjective or the participle in more detail:

- eine sehr schöne Wohnung [a very beautiful house]
- das im Jahre 1955 gebaute Haus [the house built in 1955]
- ein immer lächelndes Kind [an always laughing child/a child who always laughs]

These constructions can be very long, especially in written German:

Das im Jahre 1919 von Walter Gropius in Weimar mit verschiedenen Schwierigkeiten gegründete Bauhaus war… [The Bauhaus, founded in Weimar in 1919 by Walther Gropius with various difficulties, was…]

Mit dieser schwer bedienbaren und aus vielen Einzelteilen bestehenden Maschine kann man … [With this machine, which is difficult to use and composed of a lot of individual parts, one can…]

These instructions can be used, for example, to eliminate the relative sentence which would also be possible:

Das Bauhaus, das Walter Gropius im Jahre 1919 in Weimar gegründet hat und das mit verschiedenen Schwierigkeiten zu kämpfen hatte, war…

Mit dieser Maschine, die schwer bedienbar ist und die aus vielen Einzelheiten besteht, kann man…

PRONOUNS

German pronouns, how they decline and where they go in the sentence.

Personal, possessive, indefinite, interrogative. Little words, but they're essential for expressing oneself correctly. What's the difference between formal and informal you? To somebody, anybody or nobody? Is it mine, yours or theirs?

personal pronouns in the nominative

These are the pronouns you can use in place of the noun in the nominative:

ich	**Ich** nehme den Bus. [I take the bus.]
du	Kannst **du** mir helfen? [Can you [singular] help me?]
er sie es	**Er** ist groß. [He's tall.] **Sie** spielt Cello. [She plays the cello.] **Es** regnet. [It's raining.]
wir	Nächste Woche fahren **wir** weg. [We're leaving next week.]
ihr	Kommt **ihr** mit ins Kino? [Are you [all] coming to the cinema?]
sie Sie	**Sie** sprechen Italienisch und Englisch. [They speak Italian and English.] Woher kommen **Sie**? [Where are you [formal] from?]

the formal you

Ich habe SIE gestern angerufen…
This sentence is very ambiguous! Who is SIE? Her, them? There's a third option, the formal "you", but you can only tell that from the context or when the sentence is written down.

For the formal form, in both singular and plural, the pronoun we use is always *Sie* with a capital S. It's the form of the third-person plural and so the verb is in the plural too:
Ich habe Sie gestern angerufen, aber Sie haben nicht geantwortet. [I called you yesterday, but you didn't answer.]

The formal you is always in the third-person plural, regardless of whether it's referring to one or more people.

The possessive pronoun is also in the third-person plural: "your [formal]" in German is always *Ihr*.

Wie ist Ihr Name? [What is your name?]

Woher kommen Sie? [Where are you from?]

Wie geht es Ihnen? [How are you?]

Wir haben Ihren Brief vom 3. Mai erhalten. [We received your letter from the 3rd of May.]

But *ihr/euer* is the informal you for multiple people!

personal pronouns in the accusative

Here are the personal pronouns in the accusative. If you want to express the direct object with a pronoun, instead of a noun, here are the ones to use:

ich	**mich**	Sie hat **mich** nicht beachtet. [She didn't consider me.]
du	**dich**	Der Kuchen ist für **dich**. [The cake is for you [singular].]
er sie es	**ihn** **sie** **es**	Das geht nicht ohne **ihn**. [It won't work without him.] Ich habe **sie** nicht gesehen. [I didn't see her.] Welches Problem? Vielleicht kann ich **es** lösen. [What problem? Maybe I can solve it.]
wir	**uns**	Nimmst du **uns** mit nach Paris? [Are you taking us to Paris?]
ihr	**euch**	Kann ich **euch** um einen Gefallen bitten? [Can I ask you [all] for a favour?]
sie Sie	**sie** **Sie**	Ich habe **sie** nicht gesehen. [I didn't see them.] Ich habe **Sie** nicht gesehen. [I didn't see you [formal].]

personal pronouns in the dative

To express the indirect object with a pronouns, here are the forms – all the personal pronouns in the dative:

ich	**mir**	Kannst du **mir** helfen? [Can you help me?]
du	**dir**	Wie geht es **dir**? [How are you [singular]?]
er sie es	**ihm** **ihr** **ihm**	Sie hat ein Foto von **ihm** bei sich. [She has a photo of him with her.] Er ist nur einmal mit **ihr** ausgegangen. [He only went out with her once.] Das Kind ist krank. Ich bin die ganze Nacht bei **ihm** geblieben. [The child is sick. I stayed up with him/her [it] all night.]
wir	**uns**	Gib **uns** Bescheid! [Let us know!]
ihr	**euch**	Um 21 Uhr kommen wir zu **euch**! [We'll come to your [plural] house at 9pm!]
sie Sie	**ihnen** **Ihnen**	Sie hat **ihnen** ein Auto gekauft. [She bought them a car.] Ich danke **Ihnen**! [I thank you [formal]!]

interrogative pronouns

There are various ways to introduce a question. Here are the interrogative pronouns, the most important "W-Wörter", accompanied by examples:

wer	who	Wer bist du? [Who are you?]
was	what	Was machst du? [What do you do?]

wo	where	Wo ist Peter? [Where is Peter?]
wohin	to where	Wohin gehst du? [Where are you going?]
woher	from where	Woher kommst du? [Where do you come from?]
wann	when	Wann ist Ostern? [When is Easter?]
wie	how	Wie geht's? [How are you?]
warum	why	Warum hat sie Angst? [Why are you scared?]

Then there are interrogatives which are used to ask about quantity, which are formed with *wie* [how] + adjective, for example:

wie viel?	how much	Wie viel kostet ein Kilo Kartoffeln? [How much does a kilo of potatoes cost?]
wie lange?	how long	Wie lange bleibst du? [How long are you staying?]
wie groß?	how big	Wie groß ist das Haus? [How big is the house?]
wie alt?	how old	Wie alt ist sie? [How old is she?]

Maybe you're wondering: what about **which**? It's important to distinguish between the interrogative pronouns *welcher* [which] and *was für ein …* [what kind of/how].

"welcher" and "was für ein" [which]

The interrogative pronouns *welcher* [which] and *was für ein* [what kind of] are used depending on the answer we expect to receive to the question:

With **welcher** we're asking the other person to make a choice between two or more objects.
It declines like a definite article: *welcher, welche, welches, welchen* etc.

Welche Schule besuchst du? – Which school do you go to? [What's the school's name?]
Welcher Pullover gefällt dir besser? – Which jumper do you like more/most? [The blue one or the black one?]

With **was für ein** we're asking about the quality or the nature of the object.

Ein is an indefinite article so it's declined: *was für ein, was für eine, was für einen* etc. Given that the indefinite article only exists in the singular, in the plural we just say *was für.*

Was für eine Schule besuchst du? – What kind of school do you go to? [Is it a comprehensive school, a grammar school…?]

Was für Schulen sind das? – What kind of schools are they? [What are those schools like?]

Was für einen Pullover ziehst du an? – What kind of jumper are you wearing? [A stylish jumper? A high-neck jumper?]

Sometimes *was für* and *welche* can be combined. In a shoe shop in English we'd say:

"I'd like some shoes" – "What kind of shoes would you like exactly?"

In German we don't repeat the object, the shoes, but we replace it with <u>welche</u> [which becomes an indefinite pronoun].

Ich möchte Schuhe kaufen. – Was für welche möchten Sie genau?

reflexive pronouns [B]

go to [reflexive verbs] in the section [verbs/present]

summary [personal pronouns]

Personal pronouns decline depending on their role in the sentence. They correspond to the English "I – me – mine" etc. In German objects also maintain their grammatical gender when they're replaced by a pronoun: *der Baum* [the tree] is a "he", like a person, *die Nase* [the nose] is a "she".

nominative	accusative	dative	reflexive	possessive
ich	mich	mir	mich	mein
du	dich	dir	dich	dein
er	ihn	ihm	sich	sein
sie	sie	ihr	sich	ihr
es	es	ihm	sich	sein
wir	uns	uns	uns	unser
ihr	euch	euch	euch	euer
sie, Sie	sie, Sie	ihnen, Ihnen	sich	ihr, Ihr

Examples:
*Kannst **du mich** vom Bahnhof abholen?* (Can you pick me up at the station?).
Mir *gefallen die Gemälde von Schiele.* (I like Schiele's paintings).
*Wie geht **es ihm**?* (How's he doing?)
Wir *haben **uns** in einem Café getroffen.* (We met at a bar).
*Ist das **dein** Auto?* (Is this your car?)

The first- and second-person reflexive pronoun can change to the dative when there is already another complement in the sentence in the accusative:
Ich wasche **mich.**
But: Ich wasche **mir** die Hände. (I wash myself. I wash my hands).

<div style="background-color:#F5D77E;">

Tipps und Tricks
To remember for the form of politeness: Always use the third plural, both for one and more persons (singular and plural), i.e. Sie, Ihnen, etc. (with a capital letter)- with ihr/euch you are on a first-name basis!

</div>

adverbial pronouns [B]

What are the adverbial pronouns and how are they translated?

Some verbs take a preposition which they use to introduce their object.
The object with the preposition can be substituted by an adverbial pronoun which is formed with **da[r] + preposition**. In the interrogative the interrogative pronoun is formed with **wo[r] + preposition**:

Let's look at an example with *denken **an***:

***Woran** denkst du gerade? – Ich denke **an** die nächsten Ferien.* [What are you thinking about? – I'm thinking about the next holidays.]
***Woran** denkst du? – Ich denke gerade **daran**, wohin ich in den Ferien am liebsten fahren würde.* [What are you thinking about? – I'm thinking about where I'd like to go during the holidays.]

This answer is a very "German" form and it's difficult to translate into English. As you can see, *daran* in this case introduces or anticipates the secondary clause.

The simple answer "It depends!" is translated with *Es hängt davon ab!* or *Es kommt darauf an!*
In fact, the verb "to depend" in German is *abhängen von* or *ankommen auf*, two separable verbs which require the prepositions *von* and *auf* respectively. Remember that, in a German sentence, we always have to express both the subject and the object. In this case [when the subject is something indeterminate] we have to put *es* as the subject [just like we'd use "it" in English], *davon* to replace the object and finally the separable prefix at the end of the sentence. And that's how we get the complete sentence *Es hängt davon ab*!

Other examples

Other examples are… [to form the question here, obviously you just have to replace *da* with *wo*].

darüber	Er denkt darüber nach, ein Jahr ins Ausland zu gehen. [nachdenken über – I'm thinking about going abroad for a year.]
damit	Spielst du noch Fußball? – Ich habe letztes Jahr damit aufgehört. [aufhören mit – Do you still play football? I gave it up last year.]

dafür	Ich kann nichts dafür. [etwas können für – It's not my fault.]
darauf	Fährst du in den Urlaub? – Das kommt darauf an, ob ich Geld habe. [ankommen auf – Are you going on holiday? It depends if I have the money.]
davor	Fliegst Du gerne? – Ich habe Angst davor. [Angst haben vor – Do you like flying? I'm scared of it.]
davon	Davon hat er mir schon erzählt. [erzählen von – He's already told me about it.]
dabei	Ich muss eine Präsentation vorbereiten, kannst du mir dabei helfen? [helfen bei – I have to prepare a presentation, can you help me with that?]
danach	Oh, meine Brille! Ich habe den ganzen Tag danach gesucht. [suchen nach – Oh, my glasses! I've been looking for them all day.]
daran	Daran hab ich nicht gedacht! [denken an – I haven't thought of that!]
dazu	Warst du schon einkaufen? – Ich bin nicht dazu gekommen. [kommen zu – Have you been shopping yet? I haven't had the time.]
darum	Ich kümmere mich darum. [sich kümmern um – I'll take care of it.]
dagegen	Ich hab nichts dagegen. [etwas haben gegen – I've got nothing against it.]

When are they not used?

Of course, there are also exceptions in this chapter: when the object with a preposition is an animate being we can't replace it with *davon, darüber* etc., but we need to write the preposition and a normal pronoun. Here's the difference:

Sabine träumt von ihrem Sommerurlaub > Sie träumt davon. [Sabine dreams of her summer holidays. She dreams of them.]

Sabine träumt von Peter. > Sie träumt von ihm. [Sabine dreams of Peter. She dreams of him.]

Denkst du an die Steuererklärung? – Ja, ich denke daran. [Are you thinking about your tax return? – Yes, I'm thinking about it.]

Denkst du an deine Eltern? – Ja, ich denke an sie. [Are you thinking about your parents? – Yes, I'm thinking about them.]

possessive and indefinite pronouns [B]

Indefinite pronouns can replace a noun which refers to an unspecified person or thing, like "somebody" or "nobody".

Here's how to decline *einer* [one] and *keiner* [none]. In the same way we can also decline the possessive pronoun *meiner/deiner/seiner/ihrer/unserer/eurer/ihrer* which is used to say "my/mine" etc. without mentioning the noun.

	masculine	feminine	neuter	plural
nom.	einer keiner meiner	eine keine meine	eins keins meins	einige keine meine
acc.	einen keinen meinen	eine keine meine	eins keins meins	einige keine meine
dat.	einem keinem meinem	einer keiner meiner	einem keinem meinem	einigen keinen meinen

For example:

Hast du ein Haustier? – Nein, aber ich hätte gerne **eins**. [Do you have a pet? – No, but I'd like to have one.]

Kannst du mir einen Stift leihen? – Tut mir leid, ich habe **keinen**. [Can you lend me a pen? – Sorry, I don't have one.]

Mein Handy ist kaputt. – Du kannst gerne mit **meinem** telefonieren! [My phone is broken. – You can make a call with mine!]

Die Fahrräder da, sind das **eure**? [The bicycles there, are they yours?]

Jemand [somebody] and *niemand* [nobody] are also declined:

nom.	jemand niemand

acc.	jemanden
	niemanden
dat.	jemandem
	niemandem

For example:

Ich kenne **niemanden**, der mir helfen kann. [I don't know anybody who can help me.]

Wir müssen mit **jemandem** von der Verwaltung sprechen. [We have to speak to someone from the administration.]

functions of "es" [B]

Es regnet

Pronoun

When *es* **replaces a neuter noun** it's just a pronoun. It can be in the nominative or the accusative:

Ich habe mir ein Kleid gekauft. Es [=das Kleid] ist dunkelrot. [I bought a dress. It's dark red.]

Das Auto ist kaputt. Ich habe es [=das Auto] in die Werkstatt gebracht. [The car is broken. I brought it to the workshop.]

You can also **substitute an entire part of a sentence** which is still implied:

Hast du das Bad geputzt? – Ich mache es [=das Bad putzen] in 10 Minuten. [Did you clean the bath? I'll do it in 10 minutes.]

Wenn du einkaufen gehst, nimm bitte Brot und Milch mit. – Ich schreibe es [=Brot und Milch mitnehmen] mir auf. [When you go shopping, get some bread and milk, please. I'll write it down.]

Subject of certain [impersonal] verbs

As you already know, in German the subject can never be left out. So, like in English, verbs which don't have a determined person or thing doing them still have to be accompanied by a subject, and – again just like in English – this is where *es* comes into play.

These kinds of scenarios usually involve weather or time:

Es schneit/regnet. [It's snowing/raining.]

Es ist kalt. [It's cold.]

Wieviel Uhr ist es? Es ist gleich vier. [What time is it? It's almost four.]
Es ist schon spät. Es wird Nacht. [It's already late. Night is falling.]

Then there are other verbs or **fixed expressions** which go with *es* and which you've probably already seen. Here are some of the main ones:
Wie geht es dir? – Es geht mir gut. [How are you? – I'm good.]
es gibt [+singular/plural]… [There is/are…]
Es geht um [+accusative]… [It's about…/This relates to…]
Es hängt davon ab./Es kommt darauf an. [It depends.]
Es ist interessant/wichtig/wahrscheinlich, dass… [It's interesting/important/likely that…]

Often *es* is also used with verbs which describe **feelings or rumours**. Here *es* isn't obligatory, it can also be replaced with a "real" subject.
Es gefällt mir in der Toskana. Mir gefällt die Toskana. [I like [being] in Tuscany. I like Tuscany.]
Du kochst wirklich sehr gut, es schmeckt mir sehr. Die Pizza schmeckt mir sehr. [You cook really well, I like it a lot. I like the pizza a lot.]
Es riecht nach Rosen. Rosen riechen gut. [It smells of roses. Roses have a nice smell.]
Es hat an der Tür geklingelt. Jemand hat an der Tür geklingelt. ["It rang the doorbell". Somebody rang the doorbell.]

Stopgap

Es can function as a "stopgap" to occupy the initial position in a sentence in which we change the order of the words [for stylistic reasons, like in the previous point].
Gleich kommt noch ein Bus. = Es kommt gleich noch ein Bus. [Another bus will come along soon.]
Gestern wurde viel über Politik geredet. = Es wurde gestern viel über Politik geredet. [People talked a lot about politics yesterday.]

In this sense *es* can represent an entire subordinate clause, if it comes after the main clause. However, if the main clause comes after the subordinate clause, *es* is no longer necessary:
Es ist schön, in den Urlaub zu fahren. but: In den Urlaub zu fahren ist schön. [It's nice to go on holiday.]
Ich finde es toll, dass du auch kommst. but: Dass du auch kommst, finde ich toll. [I think it's great that you're coming too.]
Es ist egal, ob du Weißwein oder Rotwein kaufst. but: Ob du Weißwein oder Rotwein kaufst, ist egal. [It doesn't matter if you buy white wine or red wine.]

PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are used to orient ourselves in time and space, to describe the way in which an action is carried out. Movement or static? When? Where? From where? How? Why?

The little words we call prepositions are necessary to respond to these essential questions!

Most prepositions require the dative.

temporal prepositions

Temporal prepositions…

… respond to the question **wann**? [wenn] and

… all require the **dative** – with the exception of **um** [+accusative] which is only used to indicate the hour [where we don't see the declension], and **bis** [+accusative] which is only used alongside **zu**, which itself requires the dative.

Here's a list of the most important prepositions:

in	in [from now]	in zwei Jahren [in 2 years[' time]]
seit	for [since]	seit einem Monat [for a month/since a month ago]
vor	ago	vor drei Wochen [three weeks ago]
nach	after	nach einer Woche [after a week]
bis [zu]	until/up to	bis zu deinem Geburtstag [until your birthday]
von… bis [zu]	from… to	vom ersten bis zum letzten Tag [from the first to the last day]
an	on [date]	am ersten Mai [on the first of May]
um	at [time]	um 14 Uhr [at 2pm]
ab	[starting] from	ab dem zweiten September [from the 2nd of September]
im	in	im Sommer [in summer], im August [in August]
gegen	around	gegen 8 Uhr [around 8 o'clock/8-ish]
während	during	während der Pause [during the break]

what time is it?

There are two ways to ask for the time: ***Wie spät ist es?*** and ***Wie viel Uhr ist es?***
And the answer is: ***Es ist 14 Uhr***.
"At what time?" is: ***Um wie viel Uhr?***
e.g.: Um wie viel Uhr kommst du? – Ich komme **um 22 Uhr**. [What time are you coming? I'm coming at 10pm.]

Like in English, you can give the time in "digital" format [11:45] and in a more "familiar" format [quarter to 12]:

	you'd say…	or…
9.00 Uhr	Punkt 9	9 Uhr
8.55 Uhr	5 vor 9 ["5 [minutes] before 9"]	8 Uhr 55
9.10 Uhr	10 nach 9 ["10 [minutes] after 9"]	9 Uhr 10
8.45 Uhr	viertel vor 9 ["quarter before 9"]	8 Uhr 45
9.15 Uhr	viertel nach 9 ["quarter after 9"]	9 Uhr 15
8.30 Uhr	**halb 9 > refers to the next hour!**	8 Uhr 30

In the "familiar" way we just say the numbers from 1 to 12. To indicate both 10.15 and 22.15 we'd just say *Es ist viertel nach 10/Um viertel nach 10* and the context will show if it's 10 in the morning or in the evening.

For times around half past the hour, up to 10 minutes before or after, the same principle as before applies, except that instead of referring to the full hour we refer to the half hour, e.g.:

8.20 Uhr	10 vor halb 9 ["10 [minutes] before half 8"]	8 Uhr 20
8.35 Uhr	5 nach halb 9 ["5 [minutes] after half 8"]	8 Uhr 35

The hours go from 0 to 24. So, for example, for 17:00 we can say "17 Uhr" or "5 Uhr [am Nachmittag]". For midnight we can say *Es ist Mitternacht*, for midday *Es ist Mittag*.

location prepositions
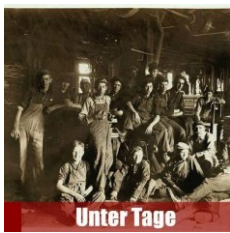
Here are the translations of the prepositions which help you to orientate yourself in space:

in	in[to]	Ich bin in der Küche. [I'm in the kitchen.] Wir gehen ins Kino. [We're going [in]to the cinema.]
über	over/above	Über dem Tisch hängt eine Lampe. [A lamp is hanging over the table.]
auf	on [top of]	Auf dem Tisch steht eine Flasche. [There's a bottle on [top of] the table.]
unter	under	Der Hund liegt unter dem Tisch. [The dog is under the table.]
hinter	behind	Sie steht hinter dem Auto. [She's standing behind the car.]
vor	before/ in front of	Er wartet vor dem Haus. [He's waiting in front of the house.]
zwischen	between	Ich sitze zwischen meiner Schwester und meinem Bruder. [I'm sitting between my sister and my brother.]
neben	next to/near	Mein Büro ist direkt neben dem Bahnhof. [My office is right next to the station.]
an	on [vertical – also used in certain contexts]	Wir hängen ein Bild an die Wand. [We're hanging a picture on the wall.] Da ist jemand an der Tür. [There's somebody at the door.]
nach	to [cities/ countries]	Er fährt nach München. [He's going to Munich.] Ich gehe in den Urlaub nach Frankreich. [I'm going to France for my holidays.]

Location prepositions are sometimes followed by the dative, sometimes by the accusative. In one of the upcoming articles you'll find out when to use which case!

location [dative] vs direction [accusative]

Location prepositions take either the dative or the accusative, depending on the situation:

In order to talk about a **static position**, location prepositions always take the **dative**. They respond to the question *wo?* and go with verbs like *sein, wohnen, bleiben, stehen, liegen, sitzen*		When a **change in position** is involved, the prepositions take the **accusative** [exception: *zu*]. They respond to a question with *wohin*? and go with verbs like *fahren, gehen, stellen, setzen, legen, fliegen*	
Ich bin…	**location** where someone/something is/was	*Ich gehe…*	**direction** where someone/something is going/was going
in	cities/countries without an article: in Florenz, in Deutschland, in Italien	nach	cities/countries without an article: nach Florenz, nach Deutschland, nach Italien
zu	zu Hause [at home]	nach	nach Hause [[to] home]
bei	people, institutions, present at: beim Arzt, beim Friseur, bei der Bank, beim/am Bahnhof [at the doctor's, at the hairdresser's, at the bank, at the station]	zu + dative	people, institutions, in the direction of: zum Arzt, zum Friseur, zur Bank, zum Bahnhof [to the doctor's, to the hairdresser's, to the bank, to the station]
in	closed locations, countries with an article: im Kino, in der Schule, in der Schweiz, im Ausland [in the cinema, in school, in Switzerland, [located] overseas]	in	closed locations, countries with an article: ins Kino, in die Schule, in die Schweiz, ins Ausland [in[to] the cinema, in[to] school, to Switzerland, [travelling] overseas]

an	water, next to sth "with contact": am Meer, am Rhein, am Gardasee, an der Nordsee, am Tisch [by the sea, on the Rhine, on Lake Garda, on the North Sea, on the table]	an	water, next to sth "with contact": ans Meer, an den Rhein, an den Gardasee, an die Nordsee, an den Tisch [to the sea[side], to [the banks of] the Rhine, to [the shores of] Lake Garda, to [the shores of] the North Sea, on[to] the table]
auf	open locations, squares, streets: auf dem Land, auf der Straße, auf dem Balkon [in the countryside, on the street, on the balcony]	auf	open locations, squares, streets: aufs Land, auf die Straße, auf den Balkon [to the countryside, to the street, onto the balcony]

The same thing also applies to other location prepositions like *unter, neben* etc.

For some prepositions with an article there are contracted forms – which are also used in spoken German. This happens with *in, an, zu* and *bei* and in spoken German with *auf, über* and *um* as well. For example: *in+das = ins, in+dem = im → Ich gehe ins Theater. Ich bin im Bus.* [I'm going to the theatre. I'm on the bus.] [*in+der* can't be contracted because there's no way to pronounce *"inr"*; but *zu+der* for example does work: *zur*.]

summary [prepositions and cases]

The most important prepositions:

+accusative

für	for	Das ist für dich. [This is for you.]
durch	through	Wir fahren durch einen Tunnel. [We're driving through a tunnel.]
ohne	without	Wir kommen ohne das Auto. [We're coming without the car.]

gegen	against	Sie spielen gegen eine starke Mannschaft. [They're playing against a strong team.]
um	around	Ich renne um den See. [I run around the lake.]
bis	until	Bis morgen bin ich fertig. [I'll be ready by tomorrow.]

+dative

mit	with	Gehst du mit dem Hund raus? [Are you going out with the dog?]
bei	at a place/ sb's house	Sie arbeitet bei einer Bank. [She works in a bank.] Ich bin bei Julia. [I'm at Julia's house.]
zu	to	Morgen muss er zum Arzt. [He has to go to the doctor tomorrow.]
von	from	Von wem ist das Geschenk? [Who is the present from?]
vor	because	Heute bin ich vor dem Frühstück joggen gegangen. [Today I went running before breakfast.]
nach	to/after	Morgen fahren wir nach Mailand. [We're travelling to Milan tomorrow.] Wir treffen uns nach dem Abendessen. [We'll meet after dinner.]
seit	since	Seit dem 5. Mai wohne ich in Paris. [I've been living in Paris since the 5th of May.]
aus	from/out of	Er kommt aus der Schweiz. [He comes from Switzerland.]
außer	except for	Außer dir waren alle da. [Everyone was there except you.]

+accusative and dative

in	in[to]	Er geht ins Fitnessstudio [He's going [in]to the gym.] – movement to a location Er ist im Fitnessstudio. [He's in the gym.] – static in a location
hinter	behind	Die Katze rennt hinter die Tür. [The cat runs behind the door.] Die Katze ist hinter der Tür. [The cat is behind the door.]
vor	in front of	Er fährt mit dem Auto vor das Haus. [He's driving the car in front of the house.] Sein Auto steht vor dem Haus. [His car is in front of the house.]
neben	next to	Er stellt das Glas neben den Teller. [He puts the glass down next to the plate.] Das Glas liegt neben dem Teller. [The glass is next to the plate.]
unter	under	Die Gabel ist unter den Tisch gefallen. [The fork fell under the table.] Die Gabel liegt unter dem Tisch. [The fork is under the table.]

über	over	Er fährt über die Autobahn. [He takes the motorway.] Er fliegt über die Schweiz nach Deutschland. [He flies over Switzerland to Germany.]
zwischen	between	Ich setzte mich zwischen meinen Bruder und meine Schwester. [I sit down between my brother and my sister.] Zwischen dem ersten und dem fünften Juli habe ich keine Zeit. [I don't have any time between the 1st and 5th of July.]
an	to/at	Ich komme an die Bushaltestelle. [I'm coming to the bus stop.] Ich warte an der Bushaltestelle. [I'm waiting at the bus stop.]
auf	on	Sie nimmt den Rucksack auf den Rücken. [She puts the rucksack on her back.] Sie hat einen Rucksack auf dem Rücken. [She has a rucksack on her back.]

+genitive

wegen	because of	Wegen des Feiertags bleibt das Geschäft geschlossen. [The company is closed because of the [public] holiday.]
trotz	despite	Trotz des schlechten Wetters kamen viele Leute zum Konzert. [Despite the bad weather, a lot of people came to the concert.]
während	during	Während dieser Zeit habe ich kaum an meine Arbeit gedacht. [During this time I barely thought about my work.]
[an]statt	instead of	Statt der Schokolade solltest du lieber einen Apfel essen! [You should eat an apple instead of chocolate!]
innerhalb	within	Er hat den Arbeitsplatz innerhalb der Firma gewechselt. [He changed his job within the company.]
außerhalb	outside [of]	Außerhalb der Sprechzeiten sind wir per Mail erreichbar. [Outside of our office hours we can be reached by email.]
oberhalb	above	Mein Büro befindet sich oberhalb eines Restaurants. [My office is above a restaurant.]
unterhalb	underneath	Die neue Straße verläuft unterhalb der alten. [The new road runs underneath the old one.]
auf Grund	because of	Auf Grund der großen Nachfrage verlängern wir das Angebot. [Because of the huge demand we're extending the offer.]

the particles "hin" and "her" [B]

The particle *hin* indicates a movement away from the speaker.

e.g.: Markus hat mich zu seiner Party eingeladen, aber ich gehe nicht hin. [Markus invited me to his party, but I won't go there.]

It's often combined with the verbs *gehen/fahren/stellen/legen* and responds to the question **wohin?**

e.g.: Wohin gehst du? Ich gehe hinein/rein. [Where are you going? I'm going inside.]

The particle *her*, on the other hand, indicates a movement towards the speaker. It's combined with the verb *kommen*:

e.g.: Komm [mal] her! [and not "komm hier"] [Come here!]

Herein! is used to say "come in", when someone knocks on the door – or the longer form:

Kommen Sie bitte herein! [Come in!]

hin and *her* are often combined with location prepositions to form movement adverbs:

hinauf [up], **hinunter** [down], **hinein** [inside], **hinaus** [outside], **hinüber** [over there] + *gehen*,

herauf [up, towards me], **herunter** [down, towards me], **herein** [inside, towards me], **heraus** [outside, towards me], **herüber** [over here] + *kommen*

In spoken German, this distinction between *hin* and *her* is often ignored and the substitutes **rein, raus, runter, rauf, rüber** are used instead.

verbs with preposition [B/C]

Some verbs can require a preposition to introduce their object [like in English e.g. "depend on", "apply for"]. There's no rule to say which verb goes with which preposition. Every time you learn a new verb you have to learn not just the preposition, but also the case it takes. *In, an, auf, unter, über* always take the accusative, but there are some exceptions.

Here's the long list of verbs with prepositions which take the dative [D] or the accusative [A].

abhängen [to depend]	von	D	Das hängt von der Situation ab. [It depends on the situation.]
abraten [to advise]	von	D	Ich rate dir vom Kauf des Computers ab. [I'll advise you on buying a PC.]
achten [to pay attention]	auf	A	Achte bitte auf Fehler! [Please watch out for mistakes!]
anfangen [to start]	mit	D	Ich fange mit der Arbeit an. [I'm starting work.]
Angst haben [to be afraid]	vor	D	Ich habe Angst vor Spinnen. [I'm scared of spiders.]
ankommen [to depend]	auf	A	Es kommt nur auf deine Fähigkeiten an. [It only depends on your abilities.]
arbeiten [to work]	an	D	Sie arbeitet an einem neuen Projekt. [She's working on a new project.]
ärgern [sich] [to get angry]	über	A	Sie ärgert sich über deine Bemerkung. [She's angry about your comment.]
aufhören [to stop]	mit	D	Ich höre mit dem Tanzkurs auf. [I'm stopping the dance course.]
aufpassen [to take care]	auf	A	Ich muss auf meine Schwester aufpassen. [I have to look after my sister.]
ausruhen [sich] [to rest]	von	D	Er ruht sich vom Stress aus. [He's recovering from stress.]
bedanken [sich] [to be grateful]	für	A	Sie bedankt sich für die Blumen. [She's grateful for the flowers.]

beginnen [to begin]	mit	D	Wir beginnen mit der Lektion 5. [Let's start with Unit 5.]
beklagen [sich] [to complain]	über	A	Sie beklagen sich über das Chaos im Hotel. [She's complaining about the chaos in the hotel.]
beneiden [to envy]	um	A	Ich beneide dich um dein Wissen. [I envy your knowledge.]
beschäftigen [sich] [to deal with]	mit	D	Ich beschäftige mich mit Vielem. [I'm dealing with a lot of things.]
beschweren [sich] [to complain]	über	A	Wir beschweren uns über den Lärm. [We're complaining about the noise.]
bestehen [to consist of]	aus	D	Das Kostüm besteht aus Jacke und Rock. [The outfit consists of a jacket and a skirt.]
bestehen [to insist]	auf	D	Er besteht auf seinem Recht. [He insists on his rights.]
beteiligen [to participate]	an	D	Ich beteilige mich am Spiel. [I'm taking part in the game.]
betrachten [to consider]	als	A	Sie betrachtet ihn als Freund. [She sees him as a friend.]
bewerben [sich] [to apply]	um	A	Er bewirbt sich um eine neue Stelle. [He's applying for a new job.]
beziehen [sich] [to refer]	auf	A	Ich beziehe mich auf den zweiten Absatz. [I'm referring to the second paragraph.]
bitten [to ask]	um	A	Er bittet sie um einen Gefallen. [He asks her for a favour.]
danken [to thank]	für	A	Ich danke dir für die Hilfe. [I thank you for your help.]
denken [to think of]	an	A	Er denkt an dich. [He's thinking of you.]
denken [to think about]	über	A	Er denkt gut über dich. [He thinks well of you.]
eignen [sich] [to adapt [oneself]]	für	A	Er eignet sich für jede Arbeit. [He adapts to any type of work.]
einigen [sich] [to agree]	mit	D	Wir einigen uns mit dir. [We agree with you.]
einladen [to invite]	zu	D	Ich lade dich zum Essen ein. [I'm inviting you to eat.]
einverstanden sein [to agree]	mit	D	Ich bin mit deinem Vorschlag einverstanden. [I agree with your recommendation.]
entscheiden [sich] [to decide]	für	A	Ich entscheide mich für die Freiheit. [I'm deciding in favour of freedom.]

entschließen [sich] [to decide]	zu	D	Er hat sich zu ihren Gunsten entschlossen. [He decided in her favour.]
erinnern [sich] [to remember]	an	A	Er erinnert sich an sie. [He remembers her.]
erzählen [to tell, recount]	von	D	Er erzählt vom Weltkrieg. [He's telling a story of the World War.]
folgen [to follow]	auf	A	Der Sommer folgt auf den Frühling. [Summer follows spring.]
fragen [to ask]	nach	D	Er fragt nach deiner Telefonnummer. [He's asking for your phone number.]
freuen [sich] [to look forward]	auf	A	Ich freue mich schon sehr auf die Ferien. [I'm looking forward to going on holiday soon.]
freuen [sich] [to be happy]	über	A	Ich freue mich über deinen Erfolg. [I'm happy about your success.]
fürchten [sich] [to be afraid]	vor	D	Du fürchtest dich vor der Dunkelheit? [Are you scared of the dark?]
gehören [to belong]	zu	D	Dieses Gebäude gehört zur Schule. [This building belongs to the school.]
gewöhnen [sich] [to get used to]	an	A	Wir hatten uns gerade an sie gewöhnt. [We'd just got used to her.]
gratulieren [to congratulate]	zu	D	Ich gratuliere Dir herzlich zu deiner Hochzeit. [I congratulate you warmly on your marriage.]
grüßen [to greet on somebody's behalf]	von	D	Schöne Grüße von Andrea. [Greetings from Andrea.]
viel/nichts halten [to think well/badly of sb/sth]	von	D	Ich halte nichts von ihm. [I don't like him.]
halten [to consider sb/sth to be]	für	A	Er hält ihn für ein Genie. [He thinks of him as a genius.]
handeln [sich] [to be about]	um	A	Es handelt sich um einen Präzedenzfall. [This is a precedent.]
helfen [to help]	bei	D	Er hilft ihr bei den Aufgaben. [He helps her with her tasks.]
interessieren [sich] [to be interested in]	für	A	Wir interessieren uns für viele Dinge. [We're interested in a lot of things.]
interessiert sein [to be interested in]	an	D	Er ist sehr interessiert an dieser Arbeit. [He's very interested in this work.]
kümmern [sich] [to take care of]	um	A	Er kümmert sich um die Kinder. [He takes care of the children.]

lachen [to laugh]	über	A	Er lacht über den Witz. [He's laughing about the joke.]
leicht fallen [to be easy]		D	Sprachenlernen fällt mir leicht. [Learning languages is easy for me.]
leiden [to suffer [illness]]	an	D	Sie leidet an einer Allergie. [She suffers from an allergy.]
leiden [to suffer [situation]]	unter	D	Sie leiden unter der Trennung. [They're suffering from the separation.]
liefern [to deliver]	an	A	Wir liefern nur an Privatkunden. [We only deliver to private customers.]
nachdenken [to reflect [think]]	über	A	Sie denkt über ihr Handeln nach. [She's reflecting on her behaviour.]
passen [to match, go well]	zu	D	Rot passt nicht zu rosa. [Red doesn't go with pink.]
protestieren [to protest]	gegen	A	Sie protestieren gegen rechte Gewalt. [They're protesting against far-right violence.]
demonstrieren [to demonstrate]	für	A	Sie demonstrieren für eine autofreie Zone. [They're holding a demonstration for a car-free zone.]
raten [to advise]	zu	D	"Ich rat' dir auf den Rat zu pfeifen…" ["I advise you to forget the advice…"]
reagieren [to react]	auf	A	Sie reagiert nicht auf diesen Namen. [She doesn't react to this name.]
reden [to talk]	über	A	Er redet nur über Medizin. [He only talks about medicine.]
sagen [to say]	zu	D	Er sagt zu allem "Ja und Amen". [He agrees to everything.]
schreiben [to write]	an	A	Sie schreiben Briefe an ihre Freunde. [They're writing letters to their friends.]
sorgen [to look after]	für	A	Sie sorgt für dich. [She's looking after you.]
sorgen [sich] [to worry]	um	A	Sie sorgt sich um dein Wohlergehen. [She's worried about your wellbeing.]
spielen [to play]	mit	D	Sie spielt mit ihren Tieren. [She's playing with her animals.]
sprechen [to speak]	mit	D	Sie spricht deutsch mit ihm. [She speaks German with him.]
sprechen [to speak]	über	A	Er spricht über Lessings "Emilia Galotti". [He's talking about Lessing's "Emilia Galotti".]
stimmen [to vote for]	für	A	Wir stimmen für ihn. [We're voting for him.]

streiten [sich] [to argue, quarrel]	um	A	Sie streiten sich um das Geld. [They're arguing about the money.]
suchen [to search, look for]	nach	D	Ich suche nach einer Lösung für mein Problem. [I'm looking for a solution to my problem.]
teilnehmen [to participate]	an	D	Wir nehmen nicht an der Verlosung teil. [We're not taking part in the raffle.]
träumen [to dream]	von	D	Er träumt vom großen Glück in Amerika. [He's dreaming of great luck in America.]
überreden [to persuade]	zu	D	Sie überredete ihn zu diesem Vergehen. [She persuaded him to carry out this transgression.]
übersetzen [to translate]	in	A	Wir übersetzen ins Deutsche. [We translate into German.]
überzeugen [to convince]	von	D	Ich bin von deinem Vorschlag nicht überzeugt. [I'm not convinced by your proposal.]
unterhalten [sich] [to converse]	mit	D	Ihr unterhaltet euch mit Freunden. [You're speaking with friends.]
unterhalten [sich] [to converse]	über	A	Wir haben uns über Dalí unterhalten. [We talked about Dalí.]
unterscheiden [to distinguish]	von	D	Ich kann sie nicht voneinander unterscheiden. [I can't tell them apart from one another.]
verabreden [sich] [to make an appointment]	mit	D	Wir verabreden uns mit zwei Franzosen. [We're making an appointment with two French people.]
verabschieden [to send off]	von	D	Sie verabschiedet sich von ihrer Familie. [She's saying goodbye to her family.]
vergleichen [to compare]	mit	D	Sie vergleicht sich mit ihr. [She compares herself to her.]
verkaufen [to sell]	an	A	Sie verkaufen auch an Minderjährige? [Do you also sell to minors?]
verlassen [sich] [to rely]	auf	A	Er verlässt sich auf dich. [He's relying on you.]
verlieben [sich] [to fall in love]	in	A	Er hat sich in sie verliebt. [He fell in love with her.]
verstehen [sich] [to get on]	mit	D	Wir verstehen uns gut mit ihr. [We get on well with her.]
verzichten [to relinquish, forgo]	auf	A	Ich verzichte auf meine Rechte. [I'm relinquishing my rights.]
warnen [to warn]	vor	D	Wir warnen Sie vor möglichen Gefahren. [We're warning you of possible dangers.]
warten [to wait]	auf	A	Sie warten auf eine Antwort. [They're waiting for an answer.]

wenden [sich] [to address, refer to]	an	A	Wenden Sie sich bitte an meinen Vorgesetzten! [Address my superior, please!]
wissen [to know [a fact]]	über	A	Ich weiß nichts über dich. [I don't know anything about you.]
wundern [sich] [to wonder]	über	A	Er wundert sich über sich selbst. [He wonders about himself.]
zählen [to count]	zu	D	Sie zählt zur Familie. [She's considered part of the family.]
zunehmen [to take on, increase]	an	D	Er nimmt an Gewicht zu. [He's gaining weight.]

MISCELLANEOUS

Here you'll find a checklist to avoid making mistakes and also some notes about typical vocabulary errors. It's usually quite "intuitive" to translate from English to German and vice versa, because the grammars are relatively similar, as are many of the most common words, though some more complicated words may cause issues.

writing well: checking your grammar

A checklist… so you'll never go wrong!

When writing a text, strictly follow the points below to eliminate any avoidable mistakes. There will still be some unavoidable doubts and expression errors, but you can be sure that the text will at least be grammatically correct.

1. I've checked the whole text for the positions and forms of the verbs:
   - Does the finite verb have the ending and is it in the second position?
   - Are the participles, infinitives, separable prefixes in last position?
   - Is there a separable verb? Have I separated the prefix?
   - Is the form [agreement] of the verb correct?
   - Are the participles formatted correctly?
   - Is it a reflexive verb [past with *haben*, i.e. *sich*]?

2. I've checked the subordinate clauses and conjunctions:
   - Is there an *und, aber, oder, denn, sondern* or *doch* [in position zero, so they don't count]?
   - Is there a subordinating conjunction [*weil, wenn, dass, als, ob, seit, bevor, nachdem, obwohl*, …] and therefore a secondary clause, an indirect/dubitative question and the conjugated verb is in last position?
   - Is there a comma before the subordinate clause [and only there]?
   - Is there a *zu* with the infinitive or one *zu* too many [where it's not used, like with modal verbs and *gehen*]?
   - Is there *um… zu* [final clause] and is this really a sentence where I want to use *um* [purpose]?
   - Is the infinitive at the end of the sentence?

3. I've checked the gender and plural form of all nouns and the declension of articles and adjectives in the dictionary or in my "grammatical memory":
   - What's the subject? Are the article, adjective, noun in the nominative?
   - Is there the verb *sein/war* which requires an object in the nominative?
   - Is there an adjective all on its own which doesn't decline?
   - What's the direct object? Is it all in the accusative?
   - Is there an indirect object? Is it all in the dative?
   - Is there a possessor object? Is it all in the genitive?
   - Am I absolutely sure about the genders of the nouns?

4. I've checked all the prepositions used and responded to these questions for every preposition:
- Is it really the right preposition?
- I've checked the use of these prepositions in my "grammatical memory":
  in – closed locations, *an* – water, *auf* – surfaces, *nach/in* – cities, *zu/bei* – people
- Does it involve movement [accusative] or staying in a place [always dative]?
- Articles, adjectives, nouns are declined in the right case? [In any doubt use the dative, put an "**m**" or "**r**" pl. "**n-n**".]
- Am I sure about the gender and number of the noun?
- Verbs with prepositions: is the preposition the right one?

5. I've read the whole text from right to left for one last spelling check:
- Are all the words spelt right?
- Capital letters on nouns?
- "h" in the right place, "ck"/"k", "sch"?
- Commas only before the subordinate clause?

"nur" and "erst" [only]

Viele sehr schnelle Autos

Here we'll look at a pair of words which in English can be translated with just "only", but which in German depends on the context.

Nur expresses exclusivity, as in "only that and no more":
Sie trinkt nur einen Kaffee am Tag. [She only drinks one coffee a day.]
Das Büro ist nur sonntags geschlossen. [The office is only closed on Sunday.]
Ich sehe nur selten fern. [I only rarely watch TV.]

Erst can refer to a point in time ["not before"] or imply "no more than", so it's kind of the opposite of "already":
Das Büro macht erst am Montag auf. [The office doesn't open until Monday.]
Es ist erst 6 Uhr! [It's only 6! [it's not even 7 yet]]
Sie ist erst 4 Jahre alt. [She's only 4. [she isn't 5 yet]]
Wir lernen erst seit kurzem Deutsch. [We only started learning German recently.]

Here are two examples to show you the difference:

Hast du das Buch gelesen?
– Ich habe nur die Hälfte gelesen. – I only read half. I stopped halfway and that's enough, I won't read any more.
– Ich habe erst die Hälfte gelesen. – I've only read half. So far I've only managed to read half, but I'll keep going.

Hast du schon gegessen?
– Ich habe nur ein Stück Pizza gegessen. – I've only eaten one slice of pizza and that's enough.
– Ich habe erst ein Stück Pizza gegessen. – For now I've only eaten one slice of pizza, but I intend to eat more.

Allein is the adjective which corresponds to "alone" or "on one's own":
Er fühlt sich allein. [He feels alone.]
Sie kann schon alleine essen. [She can already eat on her own.]
Ich fahre allein nach Rom. [I'm going to Rome on my own.]

In one use it can also be an adverb:
Allein schon der Gedanke ist beängstigend. [Just the thought makes me nervous.]

"vorher" und "nachher" [before and after]

In English "before" and "after" can express a lot of different things, in a lot of different contexts. But in German there are much more subtle differences you need to pay attention to. Here's how they're translated in various contexts:

Before – bevor, zuerst, vor, vorher/zuvor, früher

bevor
= conjunction which requires a subject:
Bevor ich gehe, trinke ich ein Glas Wasser. [Before I go/Before going I'll drink a glass of water.]

N.B.: in German there is no equivalent to the gerund construction "before going..." – as you can see from the example you instead need to use a whole secondary clause.

zuerst
= adverb which indicates the first element of a sequence of actions ["first"]:
Zuerst trinke ich ein Glas Wasser, dann gehe ich, dann… [First I'll drink a glass of water, then I'll go, then...]

vor
= preposition which is always combined with a noun:
Vor dem Weggehen trinke ich ein Glas Wasser. [Before going ["the going"] I'll drink a glass of water.]

vorher/zuvor [synonyms]
= adverbs which indicate an action taking place before the current point of view:
Ich gehe um neun. Aber zuvor/vorher trinke ich noch ein Glas Wasser. [I'll go at 9. But before that I'll drink a glass of water.]
Ich bin um neun gegangen. Vorher/Zuvor habe ich ein Glas Wasser getrunken. [I went at 9. Before that I drank a glass of water.]

früher
= adverb which can be used to refer to distant events, like "in the past/back then"
Früher gab es noch kein Internet. [Back in the day there was no internet.]
Warum hast du mir das nicht früher gesagt? [Why didn't you tell me before?]
= adjective früh [early/soon].
Es war früher Abend, als er das Haus verließ.
[It was early evening when I left the house.]

After – nachdem, dann/danach, nach, nachher, später

nachdem
= conjunction which requires a subject and expresses anteriority:
Nachdem er gegessen hatte, machte er einen Spaziergang. [After he'd eaten, he went for a walk.]
N.B.: remember again that "after having eaten" can only be translated like that, not with an infinitive.

dann/danach
= adverb which indicates a sequence of actions in the sense of "then":
Er isst, danach macht er einen Spaziergang und dann geht er schlafen. [He eats, then he goes for a walk, then he goes to bed.]

nach
= preposition always followed by a noun in the dative:
Nach dem Abendessen macht er einen Spaziergang. [After dinner he goes for a walk.]

nachher

= adverb which indicates a action after the present:

Ich esse gerade. Nachher mache ich einen Spaziergang. [I'm eating. Later I'll go for a walk.]

später

= adverb similar to **nachher** meaning "later":

Ich esse jetzt. Später mache ich einen Spaziergang. [I'm eating right now. Later I'll go for a walk.]

Das mache ich später, jetzt habe ich keine Zeit. [I'll do that later, I don't have time right now.]

= adjective *spät* [late]:

Das ist ein Gemälde aus dem späten 18. Jahrhundert. [This is a painting from the late 18th century.]

modal particles [B/C]

In German there are a lot of little words which it's difficult to find an exact translation for. These are called modal particles. These words don't act on the level of the meaning of the sentence, but they express the speaker's attitude towards what they're saying. So they have the task of giving a particular connotation, a certain flavour to a sentence. In fact, they were once called "Würzwörter" [würzen = to spice up]!

Modal particles typically come from the class of adverbs and behave like them. However, there is a big functional difference.

The position of the modal particles in the sentence isn't very rigid. They generally appear in the middle part of the sentence, after the finite verb and before the other adverbs.

This isn't the easiest chapter in the German language - even Germans have a hard time explaining the meanings of particles! - but since these little words are very common in the spoken language, we should at least show you the most common ones.

The modal particle **ja** can express

– that the speaker is surprised by a fact: *Es ist ja schon hell!* [The sun's already up!, implying: oh, I thought it was still dark outside!]

– that the speaker is talking about a fact which, according to them, is already known to everyone or at least to the person they're speaking to: Ich gehe ja im Juli in Rente. [I'm retiring in July, implying: as you already knew].

It can't be used in questions.

denn as a modal particle

This is mainly used in questions. Here it depends a lot on the tone: it can have the function of showing greater interest, surprise, impatience… try to say this sentence with different tones!

Woher hast du das denn? [Where did you get that? I'm really amazed that you have it.]

The emphasis in the sentence can fall on almost any word; however, it sounds particularly natural to place it on the *das*; in this case the surprise relates to the object which the conversation partner is showing to the speaker.

Wie geht es dir denn? [But how are you? We've only talked about me, now I want to hear about you.]

The emphasis on *dir* shows the desire/impatience to hear news about the other person.

As you can see, it's often found in questions.

halt and eben

These words express that a fact is known to the speaker [and probably also to the person being spoken to] and that this fact is definitive. It can therefore contain resignation, but not only in a negative sense. An elderly lady might say with a cheerful expression:

Ich bin eben schon 80 Jahre alt [I'm 80 years old – and that's why I can't come up to the mountains with you, but it doesn't matter!];

or a kid might say after losing a match: Dann muss ich halt fürs nächste Mal noch besser trainieren [Then I'll have to train better for the next match. Even though it'll be hard, there's no other choice].

auch

Mainly used for explanations.

Sie kann super Deutsch! – Sie hat ja auch zwei Jahre in Berlin gelebt! [She speaks German really well. – She lived in Berlin for two years [You're right, and here's why she speaks it so well.]

Note the combination of the particles *ja* [we all know that she lived in Germany] and *auch* [it's obvious why she's good at German].

With the particle doch

we're attempting to rule out any objection a priori and to ensure the consent of the interlocutor. It's as if we were adding "You must agree with me" to the sentence. Depending on the tone, a sentence with *doch* can sound a bit impatient, but it can also just be convincing or encouraging.

Wie alt bist du? – Das habe ich dir doch schon erzählt*!* [How old are you? – I've already told you, even if you may have forgotten.]

Ich schaffe das nicht. – Versuch es doch nochmal*!* [I can't do it. – Try again, even if it seems like it won't work.]

Du bist doch Geographielehrer, oder? [You're a geography teacher, right? – expecting an affirmative response]