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BASICS 1

Capitalizing nouns

In German, **all nouns are capitalized**. For example, "my name" is *mein Name*, and "the apple" is *der Apfel*. This helps you identify which words are the nouns in a sentence.

German genders are strange

Nouns in German are either **feminine, masculine or neuter**. For example, *Frau* (woman) is feminine, *Mann* (man) is masculine, and *Kind* (child) is neuter.

While some nouns (Frau, Mann, …) have **natural gender** like in English (a woman is female, a man is male), **most nouns have grammatical gender** (depends on word ending, or seemingly random).

For example, *Mädchen* (girl) is neuter, because all words ending in *-chen* are neuter. *Wasser* (water) is neuter, but *Cola* is feminine, and *Saft* (juice) is masculine.

It is important to **learn every noun along with its gender** because parts of German sentences change depending on the gender of their nouns.

For now, just remember that the **indefinite article** (a/an) *ein* is used for masculine and neuter nouns, and *eine* is used for feminine nouns. Stay with us to find out how "cases" will later modify these.

gender	indefinite article
masculine	**ein** Mann
neuter	**ein** Mädchen
feminine	**eine** Frau

Verb conjugations

Conjugating regular verbs

Verb conjugation in German is more complex than in English. To conjugate a regular verb in the present tense, identify the stem of the verb and **add the ending** corresponding to any of the grammatical persons, which you can simply memorize. For now, here are the singular forms:

Example: *trinken* (to drink)

English person	ending	German example
I	-e	ich trink**e**
you (singular informal)	-st	du trink**st**
he/she/it	-t	er/sie/es trink**t**

Conjugations of the verb *sein* **(to be)**

Like in English, *sein* (to be) is completely irregular, and its conjugations simply need to be memorized. Again, you will learn the plural forms soon.

English	German
I am	ich **bin**
you (singular informal) are	du **bist**
he/she/it is	er/sie/es **ist**

Umlauts

Umlauts are letters (more specifically vowels) that have two dots above them and appear in some German words like *Mädchen*.

Literally, "Umlaut" means "around the sound," because its function is to change how the vowel sounds.

no umlaut	umlaut
a	ä
o	ö
u	ü

An umlaut change may change the meaning. That's why it's important not to ignore those little dots.

No continuous aspect

In German, there's **no continuous aspect**. There are no separate forms for "I drink" and "I am drinking". There's only one form: *Ich trinke*.

There's no such thing as *Ich bin trinke* or *Ich bin trinken!*

When translating into English, how can I tell whether to use the simple (I drink) or the continuous form (I am drinking)?

Unless the context suggests otherwise, either form should be accepted.

THE

Definite articles

As mentioned in *Basics 1*, German nouns have one of **three genders**: **feminine, masculine or neuter**.

While they sometimes correspond to a *natural gender* ("der Mann" is male), most often the gender will depend on the word, not on the object it describes. For example, the word "das Mädchen" (the girl) ends in "-chen", hence it is neuter. This is called *grammatical gender*.

Each gender has its own definite article. *Der* is used for masculine nouns, *das* for neuter, and *die* for feminine. Later in this course you will learn that these might be modified according to "case".

gender	definite (the)	indefinite (a/an)
masculine	**der** Mann	**ein** Mann
neuter	**das** Mädchen	**ein** Mädchen
feminine	**die** Frau	**eine** Frau

Conjugating verbs

Here are the conjugation tables from "Basics 1" (where you can find a more detailed explanation) again.

trinken (to drink)

English person	ending	German example
I	-e	ich trinke
you (singular informal)	-st	du trinkst
he/she/it	-t	er/sie/es trinkt

sein (to be)

English	German
I am	ich **bin**
you (singular informal) are	du **bist**
he/she/it is	er/sie/es **ist**

Generic vs. specific (German is not Spanish or French)

Just like in English, using or dropping the definite article makes the *difference between specific and generic*.

I like *bread* = Ich mag *Brot* (bread in general)

I like *the bread* = Ich mag *das Brot* (specific bread)

A good general rule is to use an article when you would use on in English. If there is none in English, don't use one in German.

There are some slight differences when using a few abstract nouns, but we'll see about that later.

BASICS 2

German plurals are also strange :)

In English, making plurals out of singular nouns is typically as straightforward as adding *-(e)s* at the end of the word. In German, the transformation is more complex. You will learn details about this in a later lesson.

In some languages (such as French or Spanish), genders are also differentiated in the plural. In German, the **plural form does not depend on what gender** the singular form is.

Regardless of grammatical gender, **all plural nouns take the definite article *die*.** (You will later learn how "cases" can modify this.) This *does not make them feminine*. The grammatical gender of a word never changes. Like many other words, *die* is simply used for multiple purposes.

Just like in English, there's **no plural indefinite** article.

English	German
a man	ein Mann
men	Männer

You, you and you

Most languages use different words to address one person, or several people.

In German, when **addressing a single person, use *du***:

- *Du* bist mein Kind. (*You* are my child.)

If you are talking to **more than one person, use *ihr***:

- *Ihr* seid meine Kinder. (*You* are my children.)

Some English speakers would use "y'all" or "you guys" for this plural form of "you".

Note that these only work for people you are familiar with (friends, family, …). For others, you would use the formal "you", which we teach later in this course. So stay tuned :)

Ihr vs. *er*

If you're new to German, *ihr* and *er* may sound confusingly similar, but there is actually a difference. *ihr* sounds similar to the English word "ear", and *er* sounds similar to the English word "air" (imagine a British/RP accent).

Don't worry if you can't pick up on the difference at first. You may need some more listening practice before you can tell them apart. Also, try using headphones instead of speakers.

Learn the pronouns together with the verb endings. This will greatly reduce the amount of ambiguity.

Verb conjugation

Here is the complete table for conjugating regular verbs:

Example: *trinken* (to drink)

English person	ending	German example
I	-e	**ich** trink**e**
you (singular informal)	-st	**du** trink**st**
he/she/it	-t	**er/sie/es** trink**t**
we	-en	**wir** trink**en**
you (plural informal)	-t	**ihr** trink**t**
they	-en	**sie** trink**en**

Notice that the first and the third person plural have the same ending.

And here's the complete table for the irregular verb *sein* (to be):

English	German
I am	**ich bin**
you (singular informal) are	**du bist**
he/she/it is	**er/sie/es ist**
we are	**wir sind**
you (plural informal) are	**ihr seid**
they are	**sie sind**

You will learn about the distinction between "formal" and "informal" later (it's easy).

PHRASES

Common phrases

Commonly used phrases are often *shortened versions of a longer sentence*. Or they might be *leftovers from some old grammar* that has otherwise fallen out of use. That means that their grammar might appear strange.

For now, just learn them like you would learn a long word.

Wie geht's?

There are many ways to ask someone how they are doing. Take "How are you?," "How do you do?" and "How is it going?" as examples. In German, the common phrase or idiom uses the verb *gehen* (go): *Wie geht es dir?* (How are you?).

This can be shortened to *Wie geht's?*.

Willkommen can be a false friend

In German, *Willkommen* means welcome as in "Welcome to our home", but it does not mean welcome as in "Thank you - You're welcome". The German for the latter is *Gern geschehen* (or just *Gern!*) or *Keine Ursache*.

Entschuldigung!

Sometimes, German words can be a mouthful. Later on, you will find that you can take long words apart, and recognize the meaning from its elements.

Here's an example:

Part	Meaning
ent-	de-
Schuld	guilt
-ig	-y
-gung	noun suffix

So, *Entschuldigung* literally means something like "deguiltification": "Take the guilt away from me" :)

ACCUSATIVE CASE

German Cases

In English, the words "he" and "I" can be used as subjects (the ones doing the action in a sentence), and they change to "him" and "me" when they are objects (the ones the action is applied to). Here's an example:

Subject	Verb	Object
I	see	him
He	sees	me

This is called a **grammatical case**: the same word changes its form, depending on its relationship to the verb. In English, only pronouns have cases. In German, **most words** other than verbs **have cases**: nouns, pronouns, determiners, adjectives, etc..

You'll learn more about cases later; for now you just need to understand the difference between the two simplest cases: **nominative and accusative**.

The **subject** of a sentence (the one doing the action) is in the **nominative** case. So when we say *Die Frau spielt.* (The woman plays.), "die Frau" is in the nominative.

The *accusative object* is the thing or person that is directly receiving the action. For example, in *Der Mann sieht den Ball.* (The man sees the ball.), *der Mann* is the (nominative) subject and *den Ball* is the (accusative) object.

For the articles, nominative and accusative are nearly the same. Only the masculine forms change:

"a(n)"	masc.	neut.	fem.
Nominative	ein	ein	eine
Accusative	**einen**	ein	eine

"the"	m.	n.	f.	pl.
Nom.	der	das	die	die
Acc.	**den**	das	die	die

Flexible sentence order

The fact that most words in German are affected by the case explains why the **sentence order is more flexible than in English**. For example, you can say *Das Mädchen hat den Apfel.* (The girl has the apple.) or *Den Apfel hat das Mädchen..* In both cases, *den Apfel* (the apple) is the accusative object, and *das Mädchen* is the subject (always nominative).

However, take note that in German, the **verb always has to be in position 2**. If something other than the subject takes up position 1, the **subject will then move after the verb**.

- Normally, **I drink** water.
- Normalerweise **trinke ich** Wasser.

Vowel change in some verbs

A few common verbs change the vowel in the **second and third person singular**.

Here is the table for a verb without vowel change:

En. person	person	*trinken*
I	ich	trink**e**
you (sg.)	du	trink**st**
he/she/it	er/sie/es	trink**t**
we	wir	trink**en**
you (pl.)	ihr	trink**t**
they	sie	trink**en**

And here are three verbs with that vowel change. Notice that in the first two verbs, the 2nd and 3rd person singular seem the same. This is just because the *du* ending *-st* merged with the *-s-* of the verb stem. This is unrelated to the vowel change.

person	*lesen*	*sprechen*
ich	lese	spreche
du	**liest**	spr**i**chst
er/sie/es	**liest**	spr**i**cht
wir	lesen	sprechen
ihr	lest	sprecht
sie	lesen	sprechen

Similarly, *essen* turns to *du isst/er isst*.

Sprechen (to speak) will be introduced in one of the next lessons.

Isst **vs.** *ist*

Isst and *ist* sound exactly the same. So do *Es ist ein Apfel.* and *Es isst ein Apfel.* sound the same?

Yes, but you can tell it's *Es ist ein Apfel*: *Es isst ein Apfel* is ungrammatical. The **accusative** of *ein Apfel* is *ein**en** Apfel*. Hence, *It is eating an apple* translates as *Es isst ein**en** Apfel*.

Of course, this only works for *masculine* nouns. Other forms will look the same in nominative and accusative:

- Er isst eine Banane.
- Er ist eine Banane.

Only context will tell you here :)

Ich habe Brot

In English, you can say "I'm having bread" when you really mean that you're eating or about to eat bread. **This does not work in German.** The verb *haben* **refers to possession only.** Hence, the sentence *Ich habe Brot* only translates to *I have bread*, not *I'm having bread.* Of course, the same applies to drinks. *Ich habe Wasser* only translates to *I have water,* not *I'm having water.*

Conjugation is also slightly irregular: two forms lose the *-b-*.

English person	German example

I	ich habe
you (sg.)	du **hast**
he/she/it	er/sie/es **hat**
we	wir haben
you (pl.)	ihr habt
they	sie haben

FOOD 1

Ich habe Hunger!

As mentioned in the "Accusative" lesson, *haben* is not used in the sense of "I'm having bread" or "I'm having tea" in German. *Ich habe Brot* only translates to "I have bread".

German uses *haben* in some instances where English uses "to be":

- Ich *habe* Hunger. (I am hungry.)
- Ich *habe* Durst. (I am thirsty.)
- Sie *hat* Recht. (She is right.)
- Er *hat* Angst. (He is afraid.)

Compound words

A compound word is a word that consists of two or more words. These are **written as one word (no spaces)**.

The **gender** of a compound noun is always **determined by its last element**. This shouldn't be too difficult to remember, because the last element is always the most important one. All the previous elements merely describe the last element.

- *die* Auto*bahn* (das Auto + *die* Bahn)
- *der* Orangen*saft* (die Orange + *der* Saft)
- *das* Hunde*futter* (der Hund + *das* Futter)

Sometimes, there's a connecting sound (*Fugenlaut*) between two elements.

- die Orange + der Saft = der Orange*n*saft
- der Hund + das Futter = das Hund*e*futter (the dog food)

- die Liebe + das Lied = das Liebe*s*lied (the love song)
- der Tag + das Gericht = das Tag*es*gericht (dish of the day)

Mittagessen — lunch or dinner?

We're aware that "dinner" is sometimes used synonymously with "lunch", but for the purpose of this course, we're defining *Frühstück* as "breakfast", *Mittagessen* as "lunch", and "dinner/supper" as *Abendessen / Abendbrot.*

Cute like sugar!

The word *süß* means "sweet" when referring to food, and "cute" when referring to living beings.

- Der Zucker ist *süß*. (The sugar is *sweet*.)
- Die Katze ist *süß*. (The cat is *cute*.)

Does *Gemüse* mean "vegetable" or "vegetables"?

In German, *Gemüse* is used as a mass noun. That means it's grammatically singular and takes a singular verb.

ANIMALS 1

Recognizing noun gender

While noun genders might seem random for many words, there are quite a few ways to at least land a likely hit.

For example, many German nouns have some kind of ending, which will always or often come with a particular gender.

- **Non-living objects that end in *-e***: these will almost always be **feminine** (*Schokolade, Erdbeere, Orange, Banane, Suppe, …*). One of the very few exceptions is *der Käse*. This also works for many, but not all animals (*die Katze, Ente, Spinne, Biene, Fliege, …*).
- Nouns **beginning with *Ge-*** are often **neuter**. This is the only prefix determining gender. (*das Gemüse, …*)

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There are many more endings like these. You will learn more about them throughout this course.

Fressen vs. essen

Unlike English, German has two similar but different verbs for "to eat": *essen* and *fressen*. The latter is the standard way of expressing that an animal is eating something. Be careful **not** to use *fressen* to refer to humans – this would be a serious insult. Assuming you care about politeness, we will not accept your solutions if you use *fressen* with human subjects.

The most common way to express that a human being is eating something is the verb *essen*. It is not wrong to use it for animals as well, so we will accept both solutions. But we strongly recommend you accustom yourself to the distinction between *essen* and *fressen*.

Fortunately, both verbs have the same conjugation:

essen	*fressen* (for animals)
ich esse	ich fresse
du isst	du frisst
er/sie/es isst	er/sie/es frisst
wir essen	wir fressen
ihr esst	ihr fresst
sie essen	sie fressen

PLURALS

German plurals

In English, making plurals out of singular nouns is typically as straightforward as adding an *-(e)s* at the end of the word:

- the dog, the dog**s**

In German, different nouns have different ways of forming the plural.

Generally, you will probably have to memorize the plurals in the beginning. Later on, your brain will notice regular patterns that are not easily explained.

However, there are some major regularities that are very helpful to know. If you apply these, the task of mastering German plurals will become much easier :)

Ending in *-(e)n*

All nouns ending in *-e*, and **most feminine nouns** will add an *-(e)n* ending in the plural.

- die Frau, die Frau**en**
- die Ente, die Ente**n**
- der Junge, die Junge**n**

Ending in *-s*

Most nouns **ending in a full vowel** will add an *-s* in the plural.

- das Sof**a**, die Sofa**s**
- das Aut**o**, die Auto**s**
- das Bab**y**, die Baby**s**
- das Caf**é**, die Café**s**

This does not apply to nouns ending in *-e* (which is not a full vowel).

Many of these words are of foreign origin. Some other foreign words will also get the *-s* plural:

- der Chef (the boss), die Chef**s**
- die Email, die Email**s**
- der Job, die Job**s**

No ending change

There is **no change** for **neuter or masculine** nouns that have **any of these singular endings**:

-chen, -lein, -el, or -er.

- das Mädchen, **die** Mädchen
- der Computer, **die** Computer
- der Löffel (the spoon), **die** Löffel

Some words for close family members will have an umlaut change:

- der Bruder (the brother), die Br**ü**der

If words with these endings are **feminine, the plural will end in *-n***:

- die Schwester (the sister), die Schwester**n**
- die Gabel (the fork), die Gabel**n**

Ending in *-e/-er*

Most German **one-syllable nouns** will add an *-e* in their plural form. There might be an umlaut change.

- das Brot (the bread), die Brot**e**
- der Tisch (the table), die Tisch**e**
- der Ball (the ball), die B**ä**lle

Many other **masculine or neuter** nouns will need the *-er* ending, and there may be umlaut changes.

- das Kind (the child), die Kind**er**
- der Mann (the man), die M**änn**er

German feminine plurals - nouns ending in *-in*

Job descriptions are usually masculine:

- der Koch (the male cook)
- der Fahrer (the male driver)
- der Lehrer (the male teacher)
- der Arzt (the male physician)

To refer to a female, German adds *-in*:

- die K**ö**ch**in** (the female cook)
- die Fahrer**in** (the female driver)
- die Lehrer**in** (the female teacher)
- die **Ä**rzt**in** (the female physician)

As you can see, some of these get an umlaut change. The same umlaut change will happen in the plural.

The plural of the masculine forms usually refers to mixed, as well as all-male groups:

- die K**ö**che (the cooks)
- die Fahrer (the drivers)
- die Lehrer (the teachers)
- die **Ä**rzte (the physicians)

If you want to specify that you are talking about a group consisting of women, use the feminine plural forms. These will add *-innen* in the plural.

- die Köch**innen**
- die Fahrer**innen**
- die Lehrer**innen**
- die Ärzt**innen**

ADJECTIVES

Predicate adjectives

Predicate adjectives, i.e. **adjectives that don't precede a noun, are not inflected**.

- Der Mann ist *groß*.
- Die Männer sind *groß*.
- Die Frau ist *groß*.
- Die Frauen sind *groß*.
- Das Haus ist *groß*.
- Die Häuser sind *groß*.

As you can see, the adjective remains in the base form, regardless of number and gender.

NOT

German Negatives - *nicht*

There are different ways to negate expressions in German (much like in English you can use "no" in some cases, and "does not" in others). The German adverb *nicht* (not) is used very often, but sometimes you need to use *kein* (not a). *Kein* will be taught in a later lesson.

Use *nicht* in the following situations:

Nicht + definite article

Nicht negates a **noun that has a definite article**:

- Das ist **nicht** *der Junge*. (That is not the boy.)

Nicht + possessive pronoun

Nicht negates a **noun that has a possessive pronoun**:

- Das ist **nicht** *mein Glas*. (That is not my glass.)

Nicht negates a verb

When negating a verb, use *nicht*.

- Ich *trinke* **nicht**. (I do not drink.)

Why does the *nicht* appear at the end here?

Refer to the section "Position of *nicht*" below to find the answer.

Nicht negates an adverb

Nicht appears before an **adverb or adverbial phrase**:

- Ich tanze **nicht** *oft*. (I don't dance often.)

Nicht negates an adjective at the end of a sentence

When an adjective is part of a verb, also use *nicht*.

- Du bist **nicht** *hungrig*. (You are not hungry.)

The infinitive here is *hungrig sein* (to be hungry).

Position of *Nicht*

Adverbs end up in different places in different languages. You cannot simply place the German adverb *nicht* where you would put "not" in English.

The general rule is:

Nicht appears before the item it negates.

- Du bist **nicht** *hungrig*. (not *hungry*)
- Ich tanze **nicht** *oft*. (not *often*)
- Das ist **nicht** *mein Glas*. (not *my glass*)
- Das ist **nicht** *der Junge*. (not *the boy*)

So, what about *Ich trinke nicht*?

♫ The German Sentence Bracket ♫

Consider this English sentence:

- I *wake up* in China.

The verb would be "wake up", the infinitive "to wake up". English keeps its verb elements close together. German, on the other hand, has a peculiar sentence structure:

- Ich *wache* in China *auf*.

The infinitive here is *auf/wachen*. German will normally put the last element of the infinitive (the part that changes with the person) in position 2 of the sentence. Everything else will end up at the very end. The rest of the sentence (for example, adverbs), will appear between this "sentence bracket".

Here's a longer example:

- Infinitive: *mit Freunden ins Restaurant **gehen*** (to *go* to the restaurant with friends)
- Ich *gehe* mit Freunden ins Restaurant.

If you're confused now, don't worry :) This will become clearer as you get lots of practice throughout this course.

Why are we telling you this here? This bracket is the reason *nicht* might end up at the end of a sentence.

Consider these examples:

- Ich lerne Deutsch. (I learn German.) — *Deutsch lernen* (to *learn German*)
- Ich trinke Bier. (I drink beer.) — *Bier trinken* (to *drink beer*)
- Ich trinke nicht. — *nicht trinken* ("to *not drink*")

QUESTION 1

Yes/No Questions

When **asking a yes/no question** in English, you would say:

- "**Is** it cold?", but
- "**Do** you **have** a dog?" or
- "**Does** the man **drink** water?".

German will not use "do" here. We will **switch subject and verb for all verbs**.

- **Ist** es kalt?
- **Hast** du einen Hund?
- **Trinkt** der Mann Wasser?

PRESENT 1

Verb conjugation

Conjugating regular verbs

Here again is the complete table for conjugating regular verbs:

Example: *gehen* (to go)

English person	German example
I	ich geh*e*
you (sg. informal)	du geh*st*
he/she/it	er/sie/es geh*t*
we	wir geh*en*
you (pl. informal)	ihr geh*t*
they	sie geh*en*

Notice that the **1st and the 3rd person plural have the same ending**.

The *-h-* in *gehen* tells you that the *-e-* before it will have a "long" pronunciation. It is not pronounced!

Vowel change in some verbs

A few common verbs change the vowel in the **second and third person singular**.

Normally the vowel will change:

- from *a* to *ä*
- from *e* to *i(e)*

person	*schlafen*	*sehen*
ich	schlafe	sehe
du	schl**ä**fst	s**ie**hst
er/sie/es	schl**ä**ft	s**ie**ht
wir	schlafen	sehen

ihr	schlaft	seht
sie	schlafen	sehen

Other verbs in this skill are

- fahren (to ride) — du f**äh**rst
- waschen (to wash) — du w**ä**schst

In addition, when a **verb stem ends in -s**, *second and third person plural* forms will look the same:

- lesen (to read) — du **liest**, er **liest**

This is because the *-s-* from *du ...-st* and the *-s* from the verb stem merge.

Wollen and mögen

Wollen (to want) and *mögen* (to like) follow a different conjugation system:

English	pronoun	wollen	mögen
I want/like	ich	w**i**ll	m**a**g
you (sg. inf.)	du	w**i**ll**st**	m**a**g**st**
he/she/it	er/sie/es	w**i**ll	m**a**g
we	wir	w**olle**n	m**ög**en
you (pl. inf.)	ihr	w**oll**t	m**ög**t
they	sie	w**olle**n	m**ög**en

Notice that here, the first and third person are the same (plural **and** singular). The vowel in singular is different from the vowel in plural.

How do you like things in German?

Use the verb *mögen* to express that you **like something or someone**.

Mögen **cannot be used for verbs!**

In a later lesson, you will learn to **use the adverb gern(e)** *to express that you like* **doing* something**.

(The similar verb *möchten* can be followed by a verb, but *Ich möchte Fußball spielen* translates as "I *would like to* play soccer", not "I *like* playing soccer".)

Mögen **is used for things, animals, and people:**

- Ich *mag* Bier. (I like beer.)
- Sie *mag* Katzen. (She likes cats.)
- Wir *mögen* dich. (We like you.)
- Ihr *mögt* Bücher. (You like books.)

CLOTHING

Kleider - dresses or clothes?

Das Kleid means "the dress", and *die Kleider* means "the dresses", but the plural *die Kleider* can also mean "clothes" or "clothing". In most cases, "clothing" (or "clothes") translates to *Kleidung* (usually uncountable), but it's important to be aware that *Kleider* can be used in that sense as well.

Hose or *Hosen*?

Both *Hose* and *Hosen* translate to "pants" ("trousers" in British English), but they're not interchangeable. The singular *Hose* refers to one pair of pants, and the plural *Hosen* refers to multiple pairs of pants.

NATURE 1

Lakes and seas - false friends ahoy!

The German for "the lake" is *der See* (masculine) and the most commonly used word for "the sea" is *das Meer* (neuter).

There's another slightly less commonly used word for "the sea": *die See* (feminine).

Be careful not to confuse *der See* (the lake) and *die See* (the sea). Remember that when you learn a noun, you should always learn the gender with it.

singular	(masc.: "lake")	(fem.: "sea")
nominative	**der** See	**die** See
accusative	**den** See	**die** See

The plural forms are identical (only the plural of *der See* is commonly used).

plural	(masc.: "lakes")	(fem.: "seas")
nominative	die Seen	die Seen
accusative	die Seen	die Seen

There are not many noun pairs like this in German. Here is the most extreme example, with plural forms:

- *das* Band (die Bänder) - the tape (band)
- *der* Band (die Bände) - the volume/tome
- *die* Band (pronounced as in English) (die Bands) - the music band

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Personal Pronouns in the Nominative Case

A pronoun is a word that represents a noun, like *er* does for *der Mann*. In the nominative case, the personal pronouns are simply the grammatical persons you already know: *ich*, *du*, *er/sie/es*, *wir*, *ihr*, and *sie*.

Possessive pronouns

German uses possessive pronouns similar to the English ones. For example "my" is *mein* in German, "his" is *sein*, and "her" is *ihr*.

personal pronouns	possessive pronouns
ich	mein
du	dein
er/es	sein
sie (feminine)	ihr
wir	unser
ihr	euer
sie (plural)	ihr

Remember that in German, *eu* sounds like "b*oy*", and the ending *-er* normally roughly sounds like "m*a*".

Nominative forms

Unlike English, these possessive pronouns change their endings in the same way as the indefinite article *ein*.

- mein Bruder (ein Bruder)
- mein**e** Mutter (ein**e** Mutter)

This is mostly straightforward (just append the correct ending according to the noun). There is a slight irregularity: *euer* does not become *eu**e**re*, but *eu**re*** (it loses an internal *-e-*).

The following table has the forms in the nominative case. These are used for subjects, as in

- *Meine Katze* ist super. (My cat is great.)

	der **Hund**	*das* **Insekt**	*die* **Katze**	*die* **Hunde**
indef. article	ein	ein	ein**e**	(kein**e**)
ich	mein	mein	mein**e**	mein**e**
du	dein	dein	dein**e**	dein**e**
er/es	sein	sein	sein**e**	sein**e**
sie (fem.)	ihr	ihr	ihr**e**	ihr**e**
wir	unser	unser	unser**e**	unser**e**
ihr	euer	euer	eu**re**	eu**re**
sie (plural)	ihr	ihr	ihr**e**	ihr**e**

As you might notice, *ihr* has several different functions, so make sure you understand the context it is used in.

Demonstrative Pronouns

The demonstrative pronouns in English are: **this, that, these, and those**. In German, in Nominative and Accusative, the **demonstrative pronouns are the same as the definite articles**.

That means, *der*, *die* and *das* can also mean "that (one)" or "this (one)" depending on the gender of the respective noun, and "die" (plural) can mean "these" or "those."

- **Der** ist komisch! (*That one* is strange!)
- Meine Kinder? **Die** sind in England. (My kids? *They/Those* are in England.)

When spoken, the definite articles can serve a similar function:

- **Der** Junge liest eine Zeitung, **der** Junge liest ein Buch.

- *This* boy is reading a newspaper, *that* boy is reading a book.

The articles would be stressed in that case.

NOMINATIVE PRONOUNS

Some other pronouns

Some other words can function as pronouns.

The following ones change their endings like definite articles:

	der	das
this/these	die**ser**	die**ses**
every	jed**er**	jed**es**
some	manch**er**	manch**es**

die (fem.)	die (pl.)
diese	dies**e**
jede	---
manche	manch**e**

- *Dieser* Junge isst, *dieser* (Junge) trinkt.
- *This* boy eats, *that* (boy/one) drinks.
- *Jedes* Kind mag Pizza. (*Every* kid likes pizza.)
- *Manche* Kinder mögen Käse. (*Some* kids like cheese.)

Viel vs. *viele*

These roughly correspond to English "much/many". Use *viel* with uncountable nouns, *viele* with countable ones.

- Ich trinke **viel** Wasser.
- Ich habe **viele** Hunde.

Alles oder *nichts*

Just like *nicht* (not) has a look-alike *nichts* (nothing), *alle* (all) has *alles* (everything) as a counterpart.

- Ich esse **nicht**. (I do not eat.)
- Ich esse **nichts**. (I eat nothing.)
- Ich esse **alles**. (I eat everything.)
- Ich esse **alle** (Orangen). (I eat all (oranges).)

Ein paar vs. *ein Paar*

Ein paar (lowercase *p*) means "a few", "some" or "a couple (of)" (only in the sense of **at least two, not exactly two!**).

Ein Paar (uppercase *P*) means "a pair (of)" and is only used for things that typically come in pairs of two, e.g. *ein Paar Schuhe* (a pair of shoes).

So this is quite similar to English "a couple" (a pair) vs. "a couple of" (some).

NEGATIVES

German Negatives

There are different ways to negate expressions in German (much like in English you can use "no" in some cases, and "does not" in others). The German adverb *nicht* (not) is used very often, but sometimes you need to use *kein* (not a).

Nicht

As mentioned in the lesson "Not", you should use *nicht* in the following situations:

- Negating a **noun that has a definite article** like *der Junge* (the boy) in *Das ist nicht der Junge.* (That is not the boy).

- Negating a **noun that has a possessive pronoun** like *mein Glas* (my glass) in *Das ist nicht mein Glas.* (That is not my glass).

- Negating **the verb**: *Ich trinke nicht.* (I do not drink.).

- Negating **an adverb or adverbial phrase**. For instance, *Ich tanze nicht oft.* (I do not dance often)

- Negating **an adjective that is used with** *sein* (to be): *Ich bin nicht **hungrig***. (I am not hungry).

For details, and to learn where to put *nicht* in a sentence, refer to the "Not" lesson.

Kein

Simply put, *kein* **is composed of *k* + *ein*** and placed where the indefinite article would be in a sentence. **If you want to negate *ein*, use *kein*.**

Just like *mein* and the other possessive pronouns, *kein* **changes its ending like *ein*.**

For instance, look at the positive and negative statement about these two nouns:

- Er ist ein Mann. (He is a man) — Sie ist kein Mann. (She is not a/no man.)
- Ich habe ein*e* Katze. (I have a cat.) — Ich habe kein*e* Katze. (I have no cat.)

Here are the endings of the indefinite article so far:

	masc	neut	fem	plural
nominative	ein	ein	ein*e*	---
accusative	ein**en**	ein	ein*e*	---

Here is the list of the respective *kein* forms:

	masc	neut	fem	plural
nominative	kein	kein	kein*e*	kein*e*
accusative	kein**en**	kein	kein*e*	kein*e*

Kein is also used for **negating nouns that have no article**: *Er hat Brot.* (He has bread.) versus *Er hat kein Brot.* (He has no bread.).

As a general rule:

- If you **can use "not a/no" in English, use *kein***.
- If you **need to use "not", use *nicht***.

Nicht **vs.** *Nichts*

Nicht is an adverb and is useful for negations. On the other hand, *nichts* (nothing/anything) is a pronoun and its meaning is different from that of *nicht*.

- Ich esse *nicht*. (I do not eat.)
- Ich esse *nichts*. (I eat nothing.)

Using *nicht* simply negates a fact, and is less overarching than *nichts*. For example, *Der Schüler lernt nicht.* (The student does not learn.) is less extreme than *Der Schüler lernt nichts.* (The student does not learn anything.).

Keiner, keine, keines

In German, "nobody" can be expressed in several ways.

As long as at refers to people, *niemand* works just fine:

- Niemand schläft. (Nobody sleeps.)

There is also *keiner*. It changes endings like the definite articles:

	masc.	neut.	fem.	plural
nominative	de**r**	da**s**	di**e**	di**e**
accusative	de**n**	da**s**	di**e**	di**e**

	masc.	neut.	fem.	plural
nominative	kein**er**	kein**es**	kein**e**	kein**e**
accusative	kein**en**	kein**es**	kein**e**	kein**e**

For now, we teach only the default version (which is *masculine* in German):

- Keiner schläft. (None of them sleeps.)

ADVERBS 1

How do you like things in German?

Use the verb *mögen* to express that you like something or someone, and use the adverb *gern(e)* to express that you like doing something.

Mögen is used for things, animals, and people:

- Ich mag Bier. (I like beer.)
- Sie mag Katzen. (She likes cats.)
- Wir mögen dich. (We like you.)
- Ihr mögt Bücher. (You like books.)

Please refer to lesson "Present 1" for more details on *mögen*.

Gern(e) is used for verbs/activities:

- Ich trinke gern(e) Bier. (I like to drink beer/I like drinking beer.)
- Er spielt gern(e) Fußball. (He likes to play soccer/He likes playing soccer.)
- Wir lesen gern(e) Bücher. (We like to read books/We like reading books.)
- Sie schreibt gern(e) Briefe. (She likes to write letters/She likes writing letters.)

Position of *gerne*

If you're not sure **where to put *gern(e)***: It goes to the same position as *oft* (often).

- Ich trinke **oft** Bier. (I drink beer often.)
- Ich trinke **gern** Bier. (I like to drink beer.)

Gern/gerne, allein/alleine

What's the difference between ***gern and gerne***? They're just variations of the same word. There's no difference in terms of meaning or style. You can use whichever you like best.

The same goes for *allein(e)*.

Position of *auch*

Auch corresponds to English "also, too".

The positioning follows different rules in both languages. Soon you will learn more about the peculiarities of German sentence structure. For now, remember that *auch* takes roughly the same position as *nicht*. When both occur together, *auch* will come before *nicht*.

Consider these two examples to get a first idea about this:

- Ich laufe. Du läufst **auch**. Er läuft **nicht**. Sie läuft **auch nicht**.
- Ich komme aus China. Du kommst **auch** aus China. Er kommt **nicht** aus China. Sie kommt **auch nicht** aus China.

Here's one more adverb, to see how they work together:

- Ich trinke **oft** Bier. Du trinkst **auch oft** Bier. Er trinkt **nicht oft** Bier. Sie trinkt **auch nicht oft** Bier.

For reasons that will become clearer soon, *Sie kommt aus China auch.* is **not a valid sentence** in German.

PLACES 1

Recognizing noun gender

As mentioned before, you can often know the **gender of a noun** by **looking at the word ending**.

- non-living objects that end in *-e*: these will almost always be feminine (*die Lampe, Schokolade, Erdbeere, Orange, Banane, Suppe, Hose, Jacke, Sonne, Straße, Brücke, Schule, …*)

- nouns beginning with *Ge-* are often neuter. This is the only prefix determining gender. (*das Gebäude, Gemüse, Gesicht, Gesetz, …*)

In addition, rhyming can often help. If you already know a noun that rhymes with the new one, there's a good chance they will have the same gender. Go for it :)

- der Fisch, der Tisch
- der Raum, der Traum, der Baum
- der Kopf, der Knopf

Pronunciation of French loanwords

When English uses a word from French, it usually pronounces it according to English sound rules. German will often sound more close to the original.

An example for this is *Restaurant*. Like in French, the last syllable will sound roughly like "raw". The *-t* will be silent. Some people will pronounce the ending similar to English "rung" instead. Of course, the *R-* will sound like the German *r*, not the English one.

STUFF

Combining stuff

German is well known for its long words that can be made up on the go by concatenating existing words. In this skill you will learn one very simple and commonly used way of forming compounds: adding *-zeug* (="stuff") to existing words.

Remember that the last element determines gender and plural. So all new words in this lesson will be neuter.

OK, because you asked: the longest "real" German word (so far) is:

Rindfleisch-etikettierungs-überwachungs-aufgaben-übertragungs-gesetz

(Without the hyphens. We had to add those in order to be able to show the whole word…)

It's a law on how to transfer tasks about the monitoring of the labeling of beef. At least that's what the word says.

If you enjoyed this, check out "Rhabarberbarbara" on Youtube.

No, words like this don't normally happen in German :)

ACCUSATIVE PRONOUNS

Pronouns

Personal Pronouns in the Accusative Case

Aside from the nominative case, most of the German **pronouns are declined** according to case. Like in English, when the **subject becomes the object**, **the pronoun changes**. For instance, *ich* changes to *mich* (accusative object) as in *Sie sieht mich.* (She sees me.).

Nominative (subject)	Accusative (object)
ich (I)	**mich** (me)
du (you singular informal)	**dich** (you singular informal)
er (he) sie (she) es (it)	**ihn** (him) **sie** (her) **es** (it)
wir (we)	**uns** (us)
ihr (you plural informal)	**euch** (you plural informal)
sie (they)	**sie** (them)

Notice that apart from masculine singular, the **third person forms are the same** in nominative and accusative. The masculine form, which does change, has the same endings as the definite article (*der* becomes *den*).

Possessive Pronouns in the Accusative Case

You might remember from the lesson "Personal Pronouns" that German possessive pronouns change their endings like the indefinite article:

- *ein* Hund, *mein* Hund
- *eine* Katze, *meine* Katze

This extends to all cases. You already know that **in the accusative case, only masculine singular changes**:

- **Ein** Hund schläft.½ Er sieht **einen** Hund.

but:

- **Eine** Katze schläft. Sie sieht **eine** Katze. (no change)

So, if you see *einen*, *meinen*, *unseren* and so forth with a singular noun, you will know two things:

- the noun is masculine
- the noun is in the accusative case (probably the object of the sentence)

Consider this example:

- Meinen Hund mag die Frau nicht.

It is clear here that the dog must be the object (accusative). So actually the woman does not like the dog.

Here is the table of possessive pronouns for the accusative case:

Accusative	*der* Hund	*das* Insekt	*die* Katze	*die* Hunde
indef. article	ein**en**	ein	ein**e**	(kein**e**)
ich	mein**en**	mein	mein**e**	mein**e**
du	dein**en**	dein	dein**e**	dein**e**
er/es	sein**en**	sein	sein**e**	sein**e**
sie (fem.)	ihr**en**	ihr	ihr**e**	ihr**e**
wir	unser**en**	unser	unser**e**	unser**e**
ihr	eu**ren**	euer	eu**re**	eu**re**
sie (plural)	ihr**en**	ihr	ihr**e**	ihr**e**

Other declining words

Viel vs. viele

These roughly correspond to English "much/many". Use *viel* with uncountable nouns, *viele* with countable ones.

- Ich trinke **viel** Wasser.
- Ich habe **viele** Hunde.

Viele changes endings like the articles. But because the plural forms are the same for nominative and accusative, for now it will look always the same.

Jeder

Jeder changes endings like definite articles:

- die Frau, jede Frau
- das Mädchen, jedes Mädchen
- der Mann, jeder Mann — de**n** Mann, jede**n** Mann (accusative)

HOUSEHOLD 1

Möbel

Möbel corresponds to English "furniture". While "furniture" is singular, *Möbel* is normally only used in the plural.

- Die Möbel sind super! (The furniture is great!)

CONJUNCTIONS

German Conjunctions

A conjunction like *wenn* (when) or *und* (and) connects two parts of a sentence together.

Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions form a group of coordinators (like *und* (and), *aber* (but)), which combine two items of equal importance; here, each clause can stand on its own and the word order does not change.

- Ich mag Schokolade. Sie mag Pizza.
- Ich mag Schokolade **und** sie mag Pizza.

Examples: *und, oder, aber, denn*

Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions combine an independent clause with a dependent clause; the dependent clause cannot stand on its own and its word order will be different than if it did. In these **subordinate clauses**, the verb switches from the second position to the last.

- Ich bin gesund. Ich **laufe** oft.
- Ich bin gesund, **weil** ich oft **laufe**.
- Ich spreche gut Deutsch. Ich **lerne** oft Deutsch.
- Ich spreche gut Deutsch, **weil** ich oft Deutsch **lerne**.

Examples: *weil, wenn, dass, obwohl*

Correlative conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions work in pairs to join sentence parts of equal importance. For instance, *entweder...oder* (either...or) is such a pair and can be used like this: *Der Schuh ist entweder blau oder rot.* (This shoe is either blue or red.).

In German, conjunctions do not change with the case (i.e. they are not declinable).

- Du trägst einen Rock. Du trägst eine Hose.
- Du trägst **entweder** einen Rock **oder** eine Hose.
- Du wäschst den Rock. Du trägst eine Hose.
- **Entweder** du wäschst den Rock, **oder** du trägst eine Hose.
- Du wäschst **entweder** den Rock **oder** (du) trägst eine Hose.

Examples: *entweder … oder, nicht nur … sondern auch, weder … noch*

Sondern

Sondern works like "but … instead" in English. It only takes the element that is different:

- Ich trage *kein Kleid*. Ich trage *eine Hose*.
- Ich trage *kein Kleid*, **sondern** *eine Hose*.
- Sie kommt nicht *aus Deutschland*. Sie kommt *aus China*.
- Sie kommt nicht *aus Deutschland*, **sondern** *aus China*.

PEOPLE 1

Leute

In English, you refer to one "person", but multiple "people". In German, *Leute* is also only used in the plural. The singular is *eine Person*.

Ich bin Türke. Ich komme aus Berlin.

Germany has many Turkish people. These are not necessarily from Turkey. Most have had their parents or even their grandparents born in Germany.

QUESTION 2

Yes/No Questions

Questions can be asked by **switching the subject and verb**. For instance,

- *Du verstehst* das. (You understand this.)

becomes

- *Verstehst du* das? (Do you understand this?).

These kinds of questions will generally just elicit yes/no answers. In English, the main verb "to be" follows the same principle. "You are hungry." becomes "Are you hungry?".

In German, all verbs follow this principle. **There's no do-support**.

Asking a Question in German With a W-Word

There are seven W-questions in German:

English	German
what	was
who	**wer**
where	**wo**
when	wann
how	wie
why	warum
which	welcher

Don't mix up *wer* and *wo*, which are "switched" in English :)

Some of these will change according to case.

Was (**what**)

If you ask *was* with a preposition, the two normally turn into a new word, according to the following pattern:

English	preposition	wo-
for what	für	wofür
about what	über	wo**r**über

with what	mit	womit

If the preposition starts with a vowel, there will be an extra *-r-* to make it easier to pronounce.

This *wo-* prefix does **not** mean "where".

Wer (who)

Wer is declinable and needs to **adjust to the cases**. The adjustment depends on what the question is targeting.

If you ask for the subject of a sentence (i.e. the nominative object), *wer* (who) remains as is:

- *Wer* ist da? (Who is there?).

If you ask for the direct (accusative) object in a sentence, *wer* changes to *wen* (who/whom). As a mnemonic, notice how *wen* rhymes with *den* in *den Apfel*.

- *Wen* siehst du? — Ich sehe *den* Hund.
- (Whom do you see? — I see the dog.)

You will soon learn about the Dative case. You have to use *wem* then. And there is a forth case in German (Genitive). You would use *wessen* here. This corresponds to English "whose".

The endings look like the endings of *der* (but don't change with gender/number):

case	masc.	Form of *wer*
nominative	der	wer
accusative	den	wen
dative	dem	wem

Welche(r/s) (which)

Welche- words are used to ask about for a specific item out of a group of items, such as "which car is yours?".

This declines not only for case, but also for gender. The endings are the same as for definite articles:

article	welch*
der	welche**r**
das	welche**s**

die	welch**e**
die **(pl.)**	welch**e**
den	welche**n**

Wo (where)

In German, you can inquire about locations in several ways.

Wo (where) is the general question word, but if you are **asking for a direction** in which someone or something is moving, you may **use *wohin*** (where to).

Consider these examples:

- *Wo* ist mein Schuh? (Where is my shoe?)
- *Wohin* gehst du? (Where are you going (to)?)

Furthermore, *wohin* is separable into *wo* + *hin*:

- *Wo* ist mein Schuh *hin*? (Where did my shoe go?)

The same goes for *woher* (where from):

- *Woher* kommst du? (Where are you from)

might become

- *Wo* kommst du *her*?

English	German
where	wo
where to	wo*hin*
where from	wo*her*

Wann (when)

Wann (when) does not change depending on the case. *Wann* can be used with conjunctions such as *seit* (since) or *bis* (till):

- *Seit wann* wartest du? (Since when have you been waiting?)
- *Bis wann* geht der Film? (Till when does the movie last?).

Don't confuse *wann* with *wenn* which you learned in Conjunctions. Both translate to "when" in English, but they have different functions in German.

- *Wann* kommst du? (When are you coming?)
- Ich schlafe nicht, *wenn* ich Musik höre. (I don't sleep when I listen to music)

Warum (why)

Warum (why) is also not declinable. It will never change endings. *Wieso*, *Weshalb*, and *Weswegen* can be used instead of *Warum*. There's no difference in meaning.

Here is an example. All four following sentences mean "Why is the car so old?".

- *Warum* ist das Auto so alt?
- *Wieso* ist das Auto so alt?
- *Weshalb* ist das Auto so alt?
- *Weswegen* ist das Auto so alt?

Wie viel vs. wie viele

Wie viel is used with uncountable or countable nouns (how much/how many), and **wie viele is only used with countable nouns** (how many). Some people think that "wie viel" can only be used with uncountable nouns, but that is not true.

- *Wie viel* Milch trinkst du? (How much milk do you drink?)
- *Wie viel(e)* Tiere siehst du? (How many animals do you see?)

FAMILY 2

Informal and formal words for family members

Just like in English, there are informal and formal words for "mother", "father", "grandmother", and "grandfather". Note that in German, the difference between formal and informal is a lot more pronounced than in English. The informal terms are pretty much only used within your own family.

formal	informal
die Mutter (the mother)	die Mama (the mom)
der Vater (the father)	der Papa (the dad)
die Großmutter (the grandmother)	die Oma (the grandma)
der Großvater (the grandfather)	der Opa (the grandpa)

Family plurals

You might notice that most members of the close family have their own "system" of plurals:

singular	plural
die Mutter	die M**ü**tter
der Vater	die V**ä**ter
der Bruder	die Br**ü**der
die Tochter	die T**ö**chter
die Schwester	die Schwester**n**

Schwester has an extra *-n*, because it can't change its vowel (*e* has no umlaut).

Eltern

Eltern (parents) has no singular, unlike in English. We normally refer to *Mutter* or *Vater* then.

If necessary, there is a word *das Elternteil* (literally, "the parents part"). But this is only used in formal settings, for example on forms.

Alternative words for family members

There are countless alternative words for certain family members. A lot of them are regionalisms or influenced by your own family's heritage. Some of them are ambiguous as well. For instance, some people call their father "papa", and some people call their grandfather "papa".

We can't accept all these terms, and since translations used in the German course for English speakers may also pop up in the English course for German speakers, we don't want to confuse German speakers with these words. Please understand that we're not going to add more alternatives. In your own interest, stick to the ones suggested by Duolingo (see above).

ACCUSATIVE PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions

Prepositions take a noun (or a noun phrase):

- I talk *with a friend from school*.

In German, prepositions will change this noun into one of the cases (but never into nominative).

Here, you learn those that always trigger the accusative case.

Remember that as long as the noun is not masculine singular, the nominative and the accusative will look the same.

- *Der* Hund trinkt *den* Saft. (both are masculine)
- *Die* Katze trinkt *die* Milch. (both are feminine)

Accusative prepositions

Accusative prepositions *always* trigger the accusative case.

- Nicht **ohne meinen Hund**! (Not without my dog!)
- Die Suppe ist **für den Mann ohne Zähne**. (The soup is for the man without teeth.)

German has these common accusative prepositions: **durch, für, gegen, ohne, um**

Entlang

Entlang is a strange word :) It is commonly used with the accusative case. But then it has to appear **after the noun**.

- Ich gehe *den Fluss entlang*. (I walk along the river.)

It can be used before the noun, but then triggers a different case. This sounds a bit old-fashioned or stilted today. So better use it after the noun.

NUMBERS 1

German numbers

You might notice that German numbers look very similar to those in English. The two languages are closely related. So any time you encounter a new word, it's worth checking whether you can find a similar-looking word in English.

At some point, you might realize that there are several more or less consistent changes between English and German. Here are some:

Change	English	German
t > s/z	**t**en, **t**wo	**z**ehn, **z**wei
gh > ch	ei**gh**t	a**ch**t
v > b	se**v**en	sie**b**en
th > d/t	**th**ree	**d**rei
o > ei	**o**ne, tw**o**	**ei**ns, zw**ei**

Generally, the vowels change faster than the consonants. So go for the consonants when looking for related words.

Zahlen, zahlen, zählen

You learned *bezahlen* (to pay) earlier. There's also the word *zahlen*, which also means to pay. In this lesson, you learn *zählen*, which means "to count". Don't confuse the two.

In addition, you will see *Zahlen*. The upper-case initial tells you this is a noun. It is the plural of *die Zahl* (the number).

FOOD 2

Küche vs. *Kuchen*

Die Küche (the kitchen) and *der Kuchen* (the cake) are often confused by learners. To German ears, they sound quite different. One reason is that in *Küche*, the vowel is short, while the vowel in *Kuchen* is long.

singular	plural
die Küche	die K**ü**chen
der Kuchen	die K**u**chen

Kochen (to cook) also has a short vowel.

Schmecken

Schmecken is very similar to the English word "to taste":

- Ich schmecke Knoblauch! (I taste garlic!)
- Knoblauch schmeckt super! (Garlic tastes great!)

In addition, *schmecken* can be used by itself:

- Die Pizza schmeckt nicht! (The pizza does not taste *good*!)

Some popular food

Müsli

Müsli originally refers to "Bircher Müesli", a Swiss breakfast dish, based on rolled oats and fresh or dried fruits.

Nowadays, people will use it for all kinds of cereals or granola, often with high sugar content.

Hähnchen

Hähnchen usually refers to a chicken that has been turned into a dish. While derived from the word for "male chicken" (*der Hahn*), the only distinction today is that it is a food item.

Remember that words ending in *-chen* are always neuter: *das Hähnchen*.

Salat

Salat can refer to the dish, as well as to the green leaves (usually lettuce) that often go into it.

DATIVE CASE

The Dative Case

Welcome to the third important case in German :) Later on, there will be a last, less important one.

Remember the Accusative ?

You already saw that the **accusative case** can be used in different ways.

It can signify the *object of a sentence*:

- Der Hund frisst *den Vogel*. (The dog is eating the bird.)

This is called the **direct object** (or **accusative object**).

It can also be used *in combination with some prepositions*:

- Sie geht *ohne den Hund*. (She walks without the dog.)
- Er hat einen Mantel *ohne Knöpfe*. (He has a coat without buttons.)

Dative object

The **dative case** also **has a range of different functions**.

In this lesson, you learn to use it with the **indirect object**. This is also called the **dative object**.

The indirect object in a sentence is the **receiver of the direct (accusative) object**.

For example, *Frau* is the indirect (dative) object in

- Das Mädchen gibt *einer Frau* den Apfel. (A girl gives the apple *to a woman*.)

You can think about it as "the other person involved" in a transaction.

- Ich gebe *dem Mann* einen Apfel. (I give *the man* an apple.)

- Sie zeigt *dem Kind* den Hund. (She shows *the child* the dog.)

Generally, the **dative object comes before the accusative object**.

Dative verbs

The dative is also used for certain dative verbs such as *danken* (to thank) and *antworten* (to answer), or *helfen* (to help):

- Ich danke *dem Kind*. (I thank the child.)
- Ich helfe *der Frau*. (I help the woman.)
- Ich antworte *meinem Bruder*. (I answer my brother.)

These verbs don't have an accusative object.

Dative articles

Note that the **dative changes all articles for the words**.

For example, *die Katze* is a feminine noun. However, the article in dative will be *der*. This might look like the masculine article. But in the context of a sentence, there will never be any confusion between the two, as long as you know your genders. This is one reason why it's so important to know the gender of a word.

definite articles	Nominative	Accusative	Dative
masculine	der	den	**dem**
neuter	das	das	**dem**
feminine	die	die	**der**
plural	die	die	**den**

indefinite articles	Nominative	Accusative	Dative
masculine	ein	einen	**einem**
neuter	ein	ein	**einem**
feminine	eine	eine	**einer**
plural	(keine)	(keine)	**(keinen)**

Notice how **masculine and neuter look the same in Dative** (just like they look the same for Nominative indefinite articles).

This also means that if you see a noun in the Dative, and the article ends in *-r*, it will be a feminine word. Alternatively, if it ends in *-m*, it won't.

It is very much **worth remembering these Dative endings**, because they will pop up in different context, and help you a lot to sort out the grammar. In a way, Dative is the "simplest" case :)

	Dative endings
Masculine/Neuter	-m
Feminine	-r
Plural	-n

Plural Nouns in Dative

Here's a great rule:

Plural Dative: Everything gets an *-n*

You just saw that articles (also pronouns etc.) get an *-n* ending in dative plural.

Later, you will learn that the German ending system for adjectives is a bit complicated. However, in dative plural, you just **add an *-n***.

It goes so far that even **plural forms of nouns get an extra *-n* in the Dative**.

- Er hat *drei Hunde*. Er spielt *mit drei Hunden*. (He plays with three dogs.)
- Die Computer sind alt. Ich antworte *den Computern*. (I answer the computers.)

There are two "exceptions":

- If the plural already end in *-n*, you're set.
- If the plural ends in *-s*, there's also no change.

Even more *-n*

Some masculine nouns add an *-en* or *-n* ending in the dative and in **all other cases besides the nominative**. For example in the dative, it is *dem Jungen* (the boy).

If you want to look these up, the term for them is "n-Declension".

MONEY

Euro or *Euros*?

In German, the singular is *Euro* and the **plural is usually *Euro*** as well. As a rule of thumb, use *Euro* when talking about a specific amount, e.g. *200 Euro*.

In some contexts, the form *Euros* is used as well. For instance, you can say *Euros* to refer to individual euro coins, an unquantified amount of euros, or euros as opposed to a different currency, e.g.:

- Ich habe hundert Schweizer Franken, aber keine *Euros* (I have a hundred Swiss francs but no euros).

Many native speakers use either plural form regardless of context.

In English, either plural form is perfectly fine. The plural form *euro* tends to be preferred in the Republic of Ireland, and the plural form *euros* tends to preferred pretty much anywhere else. Originally, the plural form *euro* was supposed to be used in official EU documents, but that's no longer the case.

DATIVE PRONOUNS

Personal Pronouns in the Dative Case

Many words change in the dative case. For the third person pronouns, the following are different from the nominative case: the masculine pronoun is *ihm* (to him), the feminine is *ihr* (to her), the neuter is *ihm* (to it), and the plural is *ihnen* (to them).

Nominative	Accusative	Dative
ich (I)	mich (me)	**mir** (to me)
du	dich	**dir**
er / es / sie	ihn / es / sie	**ihm / ihm / ihr**
wir	uns	**uns**
ihr	euch	**euch**
sie	sie	**ihnen**

Some observations:

- In dative, *mir, dir, ihr* (to me / you / her) rhyme.
- In the **third person**, the **endings are the same as for the articles**: *-m, -r, -n*. However, plural dative is "ihn**en**" (not *ihn*, as you might expect).
- In the second person plural, accusative and dative pronouns are the same.

Now you can understand why, when thanking a female person, it is only correct to say *Ich danke ihr* ("I thank her", literally "I give-thank to her") and not *Ich danke sie* (that sounds like "I thank she" would sound to an English speaker).

Dative verbs

Remember that some verbs have a dative object. This is just a quirk of German. There was a reason for it when these words were created, but it's not easy to understand anymore, after a lot of language change.

In short, you just have to learn these :) There aren't very many.

Gehören literally means to "belong to". But don't translate too literally, often a different translation will be more natural.

- Wem gehört das Kleid? ("Whose dress is it?" - Literally, "Whom does the dress belong to?")

FAMILY 2

Tall and short people

Tall people are *groß*, not *hoch*, and short people are *klein*, not *kurz*.

This is why German people will often refer to tall people as "big" :)

Cousin, *Cousine*

These are French words. While it is possible to write *Cousine* as *Kusine* now, German never found a way to actually spell *Cousin* differently. This is because German originally does not have the French sound at the end. Some people pronounce it like "Kusäng" instead.

Die Frau kennt seinen Onkel - Why not *ihren Onkel*?

Both *Die Frau kennt ihren Onkel* and *Die Frau kennt seinen Onkel* are grammatically correct, but they don't have the same meaning.

When you say *Die Frau kennt ihren Onkel*, you're either talking about the woman's own uncle, another female person's uncle, or the uncle of multiple people.

When you say *Die Frau kennt seinen Onkel*, you're talking about another person's uncle, and that person is male. People can know other people's relatives.

DATIVE PREPOSITIONS

Dative prepositions

Earlier, you learned that some prepositions always trigger the accusative case.

The most common ones are **durch, für, gegen, ohne, um**.

In the same way, dative prepositions **always** trigger the dative case.

Again, here are the common ones: **aus, bei, gegenüber, mit, nach, seit, von, zu**.

Contractions

Some prepositions and articles can be contracted.

preposition + article	contraction
bei + dem	beim
von + dem	vom
vor + das	vors
zu + dem	zum
zu + der	zur

There are some more, which you will learn later.

Seit

Seit roughly means "since". However, it works a bit differently.

First, it always denotes something that is **still going on**.

Second, it has **three different ways** of usage.

Consider these examples:

- Ich lerne *seit sechs Jahren* Englisch. (I'm learning English for six years now.)
- Ich lerne *seit 2012* Englisch (I've been learning English since 2012.)
- Ich lerne Englisch, *seit ich denken kann*. (I've been learning English since I can think.)

In the first example, *seit* defines a stretch of time, which reaches into the present.

In the second example, it also defines a stretch of time, reaching into the present. But it defines this stretch of time by its starting point.

Seit can also be a subordinating conjunction (check the lesson "Conjunctions"). In these, the verb leaves the second position of the sentence, and ends up at the end. This is why in the last example, *ich kann denken* (I can think) turns into *seit ich denken **kann***.

Zu Hause vs. nach Hause

Zu Hause means *at home*, and *nach Hause* means *home* (*homewards*, not *at home*).

The *-e* at the end of *zu Hause* and *nach Hause* is an archaic dative ending, which is no longer used in modern German, but survived in certain fixed expressions.

- Ich bin zu Hause. (I am at home.)
- Ich gehe nach Hause. (I am walking home.)

BODY 1

Hals

Der Hals refers to the whole connection between head and shoulders. German does have more specialized words for "neck" and "throat", but we normally use *Hals* for both.

Haare

Das Haar normally refers to a single hair. It *can* be used to refer to all the hair on someone's head, but is considered slightly outdated or poetic.

- Seine Haare sind lang. (ok)
- Sein Haar ist lang. (sounds a bit old)

Bein

Das Bein refers to the leg. It used to mean "bone" a long time ago. This meaning survives in some word combinations:

- Elfenbein (ivory, literally "elephant bone")
- Eisbein (pork knuckle, literally "ischias bone", because it referred to hip meat before)
- Beinhaus (bone house)
- Gebein(e) (a collection of bones)

Magen

Der Magen is the stomach, the part of your body that starts digestion. It is not commonly used to refer to the belly (*der Bauch*).

Brust

Die Brust can have several meanings, depending on context.

- Komm an meine Brust! - This means the chest area. It will always be used in the singular.
- Vögel haben keine Brüste. (Birds don't have breasts) - This refers to female breasts. It can be used in the singular.

FORMAL YOU

Surprise! There's another way of addressing people. The good news is: it's super easy. Just use the "they" forms when talking to people you're not close with.

Need more details? Then read on :)

German You: Who are you talking to?

In English, "you" can be either singular or plural, and no distinction is made between formal and informal. In German, there are **three ways of saying "you"**.

Du

If you are *familiar* **with someone, you use** *du* (which is called "duzen"). For example, if you talk to your mother, you would say:

- "Hast *du* jetzt Zeit, Mama?" (Do you have time now, Mommy?).

Use this form for family members, co-students, children and young adults.

Ihr

If you **refer to more than one person, you use** *ihr*. This is also a "familiar" form, so use it in the same settings as *du*.

The German *ihr* you learned earlier is the **informal plural** of "you," like in

- Hans und Karl, habt ihr Zeit? (Hans and Karl, do you have time?)

Sie (formal you)

If you are **not familiar** with someone or still wish to stay **formal and express respect**, you use *Sie* (so-called "siezen"). For example, you would always address your professor like this:

- Haben *Sie* jetzt Zeit, Herr Schmidt? (Do you have time now, Mr. Schmidt?)

Sie is also used for multiple people. But you can't translate it well with "you all" or "you guys", because that would sound too informal.

Here are the three forms of "you", and "they" for comparison:

English person	ending	German example
you (singular informal)	-st	du trink*st*
you (plural informal)	-t	ihr trink*t*
you (formal)	-en	Sie trink*en*
they	-en	sie trink*en*

When spoken, **"they" and formal "you" are identical**. So, in a way, Germans formally address people like "How are they today?"

How do you know if *sie* means "she", "they", or "you"?

You can distinguish the formal *Sie* from the plural *sie* (they) because the **formal *Sie* will always be capitalized**. However, it will remain ambiguous at the beginning of written sentences.

For instance, *Sie sind schön.* can either refer to a beautiful individual or a group of beautiful people. The verbs for *sie* (they) and *Sie* (you) are conjugated the same. On Duolingo, either should be accepted unless the context suggests otherwise. In real life, there's always context. Don't worry about misunderstandings.

Fortunately, the **verb for *sie* (she) is different**. *Sie ist schön.* only translates to "She is beautiful." There's no ambiguity.

Other formal "you"s

There are more ways to address people formally in German, but they are not in common use and/or outdated, so we don't support them in this course. You might encounter them in Middle Ages reenactments or so :)

The *third person singular* was used:

- Hat *er* heute gut geschlafen? (literally, "Has *he* slept well today?")

The *second person plural* was also used, and is still used locally:

- *Ihr* habt einen schönen Hut. (literally, "*You all* have a nice hat.")

You will encounter the informal you in this skill as well

As some of the sentences in this skill are shared among multiple skills, you will encounter the informal you in this skill as well. For technical reasons, this cannot be changed at this point. Please do not send a report regarding this issue.

SHOPPING

Kaufen vs. *einkaufen*

Kaufen is normally used in the meaning of "to buy":

- Ich **kaufe** einen Hut.

Einkaufen is normally used without an object, and often refers to shopping. It can be used in conjunction with *gehen*:

- Ich *kaufe* im Supermarkt *ein*. (I shop in the supermarket)
- Wann gehst du *einkaufen*? (When do you go shopping?)

Verkaufen means "to sell". The prefix *ver-* is often associated with an "away" notion.

Laden, *Geschäft*

A variety of words exist for "shop". These are two common ones, with roughly exchangeable usage.

TRAVEL

Sehenswürdigkeiten?!

The word *Sehenswürdigkeit* (*sight* as in *sightseeing*) is made up of several meaningful parts: *sehen + s + würdig + keit*.

Let's look at each part and its meaning.

Part	Meaning
sehen	to see
-s-	connecting element
würdig	to be worthy
-keit	noun suffix

Literally *Sehenswürdigkeit* means *something which is worthy to see*.

The connecting element *-s-* is used to link words together.

The ending *-keit* turns an adjective into a noun.

Often the ending of a compound noun is a good indicator for the gender of the noun. For example, if a noun ends in *-keit*, it will always be feminine (die).

Urlaub vs. *Ferien*

Just like in English there's "holidays" and "vacation", in German there are *Ferien* and *Urlaub*. They can be used interchangeably to some extent.

Ferien only exists as a plural noun:

- Die Ferien sind im Sommer. (The holidays are in summer.)

Urlaub only exists as a singular noun:

- Wann ist der Urlaub? (When is the vacation?)

Visum

In English, you need "a visa". In German, the singular is *das Visum*, *Visa* is the plural (as it is in Latin, the source language of this word).

Weg vs. *weg*

- *Der Weg* (with a long *-e-*) roughly means "the path".
- Der Weg ist lang. (The path is long.)

The word *weg* (with a short, open *-e-*) roughly means "away". Here are some examples:

- Geh *weg*! (Go away!)
- Ich bin *weg*! (I'm gone!)

NUMBERS 2

German numbers

You learned earlier that the numbers from 1-19 are very similar to those in English.

This mostly continues in German, with one important quirk. Did you ever notice that the digits in numbers 13-19 are kind of "switched" in English? German continues that through to 99.

So **84 would be *vier/und/acht/zig*** (literally, four and eighty).

This might take some getting used to, but at least it's consistent ;)

Hundert

For "100", people would usually just say *hundert*, not *einhundert* (as in English).

Huge numbers

There used to be two different systems for huge numbers, called "short scale" and "long scale". Unfortunately, German and American English ended up with different ones. British English used to use the long scale, but switched to short scale.

Number	US English (short scale)	German (long scale)
10^6	million	Million
10^9	billion	Milliarde
10^12	trillion	Billion
10^15	quadrillion	Billiarde
10^18	quintillion	Trillion

(10^6 means a one with six zeros)

COLORS

Adjective endings

When an adjective comes before a noun, its ending will change according to this noun.

- Die Katze ist *alt*.
- Das ist *eine alte Katze*.

Article + Adjective

You can think of the adjective endings as "markers", that kind of mark what part of speech the adjective belongs to.

Nominative

Remember that Nominative is used for the subject of a sentence. These are the **nominative adjectives**:

gender	article	adjective	noun
masc.	de**r**	rot**e**	Hut
	ein	rot**er**	Hut
neut.	da**s**	rot**e**	Hemd
	ein	rot**es**	Hemd

fem.	die	rot**e**	Rose
	ein**e**	rot**e**	Rose
Plural	die	rot**en**	Schuhe
	keine	rot**en**	Schuhe
	-	rot**e**	Schuhe

While that might look a bit chaotic, there is not so much going on:

1) **Masculine**: **Either the article, or the adjective** must have the *-r* ending. The same goes for **neuter and -s**.

- *Der kleine* Hund spielt.
- *Ein kleiner Hund* spielt.

2) **Feminine and Plural end in *-e***. If you **add an article**, you also have to **add an *-n***.

- ***Die** alte Katze* schläft.
- *Alte Katzen* schlafen.
- ***Die** alten Katzen* schlafen.
- Das sind ***keine alten Katzen***.

Accusative

Do you remember that quite often, the accusative looks like the nominative? Specifically, only the articles for masculine nouns change.

The same goes for the adjectives. The accusative endings are the same as for Nominative; the only exception is for masculine nouns. The changes are marked in bold in the table below.

3) **Masculine accusative: adjective ends in *-en***

- *Die alte Katze* schläft. *Der alte* Mann sieht *die alte Katze* (no change)
- Die alte Katze sieht *den alten Mann*.

gender	article	adjective	noun
masc.	de**n**	rot**en**	Hut
	ein**en**	rot**en**	Hut
neut.	das	rote	Hemd
	ein	rotes	Hemd
fem.	die	rote	Rose

	eine	rote	Rose
Plural	die	roten	Schuhe
	keine	roten	Schuhe
	-	rote	Schuhe

Dative

Dative, as always, is even simpler.

4) **Dative**: **all adjectives get an *-en* ending**

- Der Hund *mit der roten Nase* schläft. (The dog *with the red nose* is sleeping.)

gender	article	adjective	noun
masc.	de**m**	rot**en**	Hut
	eine**m**	rot**en**	Hut
neut.	de**m**	rot**en**	Hemd
	eine**m**	rot**en**	Hemd
fem.	de**r**	rot**en**	Rose
	eine**r**	rot**en**	Rose
Plural	de**n**	rot**en**	Schuhe**n**
	keine**n**	rot**en**	Schuhe**n**
	-	rot**en**	Schuhe**n**

Remember that in dative,

- masculine/neuter articles end in *-m*
- feminine articles end in *-r*
- plural articles end in *-n*
- and plural nouns (almost) always end in *-n*.

IMPERATIVE

The imperative mood is used to express commands, just like in English.

There are three different forms, according to the three types of "you" in German.

Du imperative

The imperative for *du* is very similar to English:

- *Du gehst* nach Hause. (You go home.)
- *Geh* nach Hause! (Go home!)

For most verbs, to come up with the correct verb form, just lose the *-st* ending:

- Du arbeite**st** nachts. (You work at night)
- Arbeite nachts! (Work at night!)
- Du nimm**st** das Taxi. (You take the taxi.)
- Nimm das Taxi! (Take the taxi!)

You might have noticed that some common verbs have an extra umlaut in the 2nd/3rd person singular:

- f**a**hren, du f**ä**hrst
- schl**a**fen, du schl**ä**fst

In the imperative, **these do not have an umlaut**:

- Du f**ä**hrst mit dem Taxi.
- F**a**hr mit dem Taxi!

Ihr imperative

The second one is used to address more than one person informally. It uses the same conjugation as the regular *ihr* form of the present tense. This form of the imperative does not include a personal pronoun.

- *Ihr fahrt* nach Paris. (You go to Paris.)
- *Fahrt* nach Paris! (Go to Paris!)

Sie imperative

The third one is used to address one or more people formally. It uses the same conjugation as the regular *Sie* form of the present tense. The formal imperative is the only form to include the personal pronoun (*Sie*). Note that the word order is reversed. The verb always precedes the pronoun. It essentially looks like a question.

- *Sie lernen* Deutsch. (You learn German.)
- *Lernen Sie* Deutsch! (Learn German!)
- Lernen Sie Deutsch**?** (Do you learn German?)

Imperative for *sein*

The verb *sein* (to be) is highly irregular. It even has its own imperative version:

normal	imperative
du bist	**sei**
ihr seid	seid
Sie sind	**seien** Sie

The following sentences all mean "Please be quiet!":

- *Sei* bitte ruhig! (one friend)
- *Seid* bitte ruhig! (several friends)
- *Seien Sie* bitte ruhig! (some person in the cinema)

Nehmen, du nimmst??

As mentioned before, a small number of common verbs changes the vowel in the second + third person singular.

The change will normally be from *a* to *ä* or from *e* to *i(e)*.

	nehmen	geben	essen	lesen	lassen
ich	nehme	gebe	esse	lese	lasse
du	n**imm**st	g**i**bst	**i**sst	l**ie**st	l**ä**sst
er/sie/es	n**imm**t	g**i**bt	**i**sst	l**ie**st	l**ä**sst
wir	nehmen	geben	essen	lesen	fahren
ihr	nehmt	gebt	esst	lest	lasst
sie/Sie	nehmen	geben	essen	lesen	lassen

OCCUPATION 1

Student or *Schüler*?

***Ein Student* is a university student** and a *Schüler* is a pupil/student at a primary, secondary or high school. Students attending other types of schools such as language or dancing schools may also be called *Schüler*.

Dropping articles

When talking about your or someone else's profession in sentences such as *I'm a teacher* or *She's a judge*, German speakers **usually drop the indefinite article** *(ein/eine)*.

- Ich bin Lehrer. (I am **a** teacher.)

It sounds more natural to say *Ich bin Lehrer* and *Sie ist Richterin* than *Ich bin ein Lehrer* and *Sie ist eine Richterin*. This rule also applies to students.

If you **add an adjective**, you **can't drop the article**. *Er ist ein schlechter Arzt* (He's a bad doctor) is correct, but *Er ist schlechter Arzt* is not.

Also note that **you can't drop the definite article** *(der/die/das)*.

Male and female variants

The grammatical gender usually matches the biological sex of the person you're referring to.

So the word that refers to a male baker is grammatically masculine, and the word that refers to a female baker is grammatically feminine.

In the vast majority of cases, **the female variant is formed by simply adding the suffix *-in* to the male variant**, e.g. *der Bäcker* becomes *die Bäckerin* and *der Schüler* (the pupil) becomes *die Schülerin*.

The plural of the female variant **is formed by adding the ending *-innen*** to the singular of the male variant, e.g. *die Bäckerinnen* and *die Schülerinnen*.

Keep in mind that, in some cases, the plural comes with an umlauted stem vowel. This applies to the female variant as well.

	singular	plural
male	der Koch	die Köche
female	die Köchin	die Köchinnen

You learn one more word like this in this lesson:

- der **A**rzt, die **Ä**rztin (the doctor)

Sie ist der Boss!

There are a few words for people where the grammatical and the natural gender differ. One of them is *der Boss*. There is no feminine version for it, although there are certainly female bosses.

- **Mein** Boss heißt Linda Ackermann.
- **Meine** Chef**in** heißt Linda Ackermann.

PREPOSITIONS

Accusative prepositions

Accusative prepositions **always** trigger the accusative case.

Here are the most common ones: **durch, für, gegen, ohne, um**

Dative prepositions

Dative prepositions **always** trigger the dative case.

Here are the most common ones: **aus, außer, bei, gegenüber, mit, nach, seit, von, zu**

Two-way prepositions

Two-way prepositions take the **dative case or the accusative case**, depending on the context.

This is an unusual, but central part of German grammar.

If there's **movement from one place to another**, use the **accusative** case.

- Die Katze geht *in die Küche*. (The cat walks into the kitchen.)

If there's **no movement**, or if there's **movement within a certain place**, use the **dative** case.

- Die Katze schläft *in der Küche*. (The cat sleeps in the kitchen.)
- Die Katze geht *in der Küche*. (The cat walks within the kitchen.)

These prepositions can switch case: **an, auf, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen**

When *not* to think about location change

Two-way prepositions are very common in everyday speech, so it's a good idea to practice them to fluency.

However, don't forget that **for some prepositions, you don't have to decide**:

Durch and *um* will always be accusative, although they might signify an activity without location change:

- Das Kind rennt *durch den* Wald. (The child is running through the forest.)
- Die Stühle stehen *um den* Tisch. (The chairs are standing around the table.)

Aus, *von*, *zu* will always be dative, although they might signify a location change.

- Er kommt *aus der* Küche (He comes out of the kitchen.)
- Ich fahre *zur* Arbeit. (I go to work.)
- Ich komme *von der* Arbeit. (I come from work.)

Other uses for two-way prepositions

Some verbs use one of these prepositions in a way that is *not about location*. This is part of language change, where things get repurposed all the time.

- *Über* will always trigger the accusative case:

Sie diskutieren *über den* Krieg. (They discuss the war.)

When used with these verbs, *vor* will always trigger the Dative:

- Er warnt *vor dem* Hund. (He warns about the dog.)

An, *in* and *auf* are more complicated: in some verbs, they trigger the accusative, in others the dative. You'll just have to memorize these.

- Er *denkt an seinen* Bruder. (He thinks of his brother.)
- Er *arbeitet an einem* Film (He's working on a film.)
- Ich *warte auf den* Bus. (I'm waiting for the bus.)
- Der Film *basiert auf meinem* Leben. (The film is based on my life.)

Contractions

Some prepositions and articles can be contracted.

an + das	ans
an + dem	am
auf + das	aufs
bei + dem	beim
in + das	ins
in + dem	im
hinter + das	hinters

über + das	übers
um + das	ums
unter + das	unters
von + dem	vom
vor + das	vors
zu + dem	zum
zu + der	zur

- Wir gehen *ins* Kino (We go to the cinema.)

If you would use "that" in English, you would not use a contraction:

- In *das* Kino gehe ich nicht! (I won't go into *that* cinema!)

Preposition at the end of a sentence??

An important part of German grammar is that some verbs can split off their prefix. This often ends up at the end of a sentence. Some of these prefixes look exactly like a preposition.

So when you see a "preposition" at the end of a sentence, try to combine it with the verb. You might just have learned a new word :)

- Sie *macht* die Lampe *an*. (*anmachen* means "turn on" here)
- Ich *denke nach*. (*nachdenken* means "to think")
- *Pass* auf dich *auf*! (*aufpassen* means "to take care")
- Wann *fährt* der Zug *ab*? (*abfahren* means "to depart")
- *Nimm* deinen Hut *ab*! (*abnehmen* means "to take off" in this context)

Unfortunately, the way Duolingo is built does not allow to selectively teach German sentence structure. We hope this will change soon :)

MATERIALS

Plastik

Plastik is one of the few words that changes meaning, depending on which gender it is.

- das Plastik (artificial material, normally from petroleum)
- die Plastik (a word for "sculpture")

Holz, Wald, Forst

In English, "wood" can refer to a material, and to a forest.

In German, *Holz* only refers to the material. *Der Wald* is "the forest". We also have a word *der Forst*, but it only refers to a maintained forest (something like a garden for trees), where the trees are grown for commercial purposes.

NUMBERS 3

Ordinal numbers

German ordinal numbers are pretty regular. The general rule is:

number range	ending
1-19	-te
> 19	-ste

	Irregular forms
1.	erste
3.	dritte
7.	siebte

Ordinal numbers behave like adjectives, so their endings will change accordingly:

- Er kennt de**n** erste**n** Sänger.
- Er ist a**m** sechste**n** August geboren.
- Ich bin sein**e** tausendst**e** Lehrerin.

COMPARISON

German is simpler than English! (sometimes)

In English, there are two systems for making comparisons:

- She is *older* than him.
- Icelandic is *more complicated* than German.

German only uses the first system:

- Sie ist *älter* als er.
- Isländisch ist *komplizierter* als Deutsch.

This is pretty straightforward. However, quite often, the vowel of short adjectives will **get an umlaut change**:

normal	comparative	superlative
alt (old)	**ä**lter	am **ä**lt*e*sten
groß (big)	gr**ö**ßer	am gr**ö**ßten
oft (often)	**ö**fter	am **ö**ft*e*sten

You might notice that there will be an extra *e* in the superlative, if the word stem ends in *t* (or *d*). This is a general sound rule, just like in *ich arbeite, er arbeitet*.

In addition, in some adjectives an *e* gets lost:

- teuer, **teurer** (not teu*e*rer), am teuersten

Again, this is a general sound rule. You might have noticed it for *euer* (plural *your*), which becomes *eure*, not *euere* when it gets an ending.

There is a small number of irregular forms:

normal	comparative	superlative
gut (good)	besser	am besten
viel (much)	mehr	am meisten
gern (to like)	lieber	am liebsten
hoch (high)	höher	am höchsten

Comparative adjectives are just adjectives

Consider these examples:

- Sie hat eine schön**e** Uhr.
- Sie hat eine schöner**e** Uhr (als ich).

As you can see, comparative adjectives get adjective endings, just like any "normal" adjective.

This can sometimes look a bit confusing:

- Er ist mein jung**er** Bruder. (He's my little brother.)

- Er ist mein jüng**erer** Bruder. (He's my younger brother.)

In the second example, the first *-er* is for the comparative, the second *-er* is the ending from *der Bruder*.

If you find that really confusing, why not practice adjective endings a bit? :) You can do so in the earlier lesson "Colors".

QUALIFIERS

Superlative

Please refer to the lesson "Comparisons" for a table of comparative and superlative forms, especially how to form the irregular forms.

Superlative as an adverb

In the last lesson, you learned the comparative:

- Der Hund ist *alt*. Die Katze ist *älter*.

As in English, there is also a superlative:

- Der Papagei ist **am ältesten**. (The parrot is the oldest.)

- Sie rennt **am schnellsten**. (She runs the fastest.)

Am ältesten works like an adverb (How *is* he? - the oldest; How does she run? the fastest). That means its endings will never change.

Superlative as an adjective

Like in English, you can also use superlatives as adjectives.

Remember that adjectives change their endings according to the noun, if they come before the noun:

- Er ist *der älteste* Hund. (He is the oldest dog.)
- Wir haben *den ältesten* Hund.

Now, consider these two sentences:

- Mein Hund ist *der älteste*. (imagine a second "Hund" at the end)
- Mein Hund ist *am ältesten*.

Both translate to "My dog is *the oldest*", and both are possible in German. The last one is more common though, and we recommend you only use this one for now.

On the other hand, **you cannot say**:

- Er der *am ältesten* Hund. (**This is wrong!!**)

This is because you can't put an adverb in front of a noun. That's what adjectives are for.

Don't forget that with adjectives, you have to use the right ending to match with the noun:

- Das ist *die kleinste* Katze der Welt! (This is the world's *smallest* cat!)
- Wir geben *der schönsten* Katze einen Preis. (We give a prize to the *most beautiful* cat.)

As a rough guideline, use a form like *die älteste, den ältesten, ...* before a noun, and *am ältesten* at the end of a sentence.

Ganz

As an adjective: easy

The word "ganz" has several functions in German. As an adjective, it means "whole":

- Ich esse den ganzen Apfel. (I eat the whole apple.)

As an adverb: tricky!

As as adverb, it can **intensify** *or* **de-intensify** other words (depending on which other word you use).

Here's a table to get an idea of the problem:

Intensifier	De-Intensifer
schlecht	gut
oben	nett
vorne	sympathisch
früh	schön
sicher	interessant
toll	gern
furchtbar	lustig
…	ok

Consider these examples:

- Der Film war *ganz gut*. (The film was quite nice.)
- Der Film war *ganz toll*! (The film was really great!)

You see the problem :) *Ganz* is tricky to use for beginners. For now, better **use these two words instead**:

- *ziemlich* (always means "quite")
- *total* (always means "really")
- Der Film war *total* gut. (The film was really nice.)
- Der Film war *ziemlich* toll. (The film was quite great.)

HOUSEHOLD 2

Das Handtuch (the towel) vs. *das Tuch* (the cloth)

A *Handtuch* is a towel, not a hand towel. Of course, a towel can be a hand towel, but this does not mean that the two words are interchangeable. A pet can be a dog, but this does not mean that the words "pet" and "dog" are interchangeable.

DATES 1

Days of the week

Earlier, the weekday started with Sunday:

English	German
Sunday	**Sonntag** (sun)
Monday	**Montag** (moon)
Tuesday	**Dienstag** (god "Tyr"?)
Wednesday	**Mittwoch** (middle of week)
Thursday (Thor!)	**Donnerstag** (thunder)
Friday	**Freitag** (goddess Freya)
Saturday (Saturn)	**Samstag** (sabbath)

However, we changed to Monday as the start of the week, which makes *Mittwoch* sound a bit silly now :)

LOCATION

Hier, da, dort

When talking about locations in English, you can use *here*, *there*, *this*, and *that* to express that something is close or far away. In German the word *da* is commonly used when talking about locations. The good thing about *da* is, you don't have to worry about the distance! It can mean anything close or far away.

Let's look at a few examples:

- Wir sind *da*. (We are here/there.)
- *Da* ist ein Apfel. (Here/There is an apple.)

With *hier* (here) and *dort* (there) you can be more specific about the distance.

- hier (here)
- da (here/there)
- dort (there)

You can also say *da oben* for "up there" and so on:

- Die Katze ist *da oben*. (The cat is up there.)
- *Da hinten* wohnt er. (He lives there in the back.)

Das hier

You can combine all of them with articles, and use them similar to *this* and *that* !

- das hier (this)
- das da (this/that)
- das dort (that)

Many people use this with the other articles as well. Note that while all of the following constructs are commonly used in spoken language, they are not appropriate for written, formal language.

- der/die/das hier (this)
- der/die/das da (this/that)
- der/die/das dort (that)

To refer to one specific thing, you can put a noun between the article and *hier/da/dort*.

For example:

- Der Apfel *da* ist groß. (That apple is big.)
- Die Katzen *da* sind süß. (Those cats are cute.)

Some people might add *drüben*. This translates to *over there*.

- Der Apfel *da drüben* ist groß. (That apple *over there* is big.)
- Die Katzen *dort drüben* sind süß. (Those cats *over there* are cute.)

Innen, drinnen

Innen and *außen* mostly refer to the inside and outside of objects.

Drinnen and *draußen* are normally only used for rooms (more generally, enclosed spaces that people can be in).

- Die Wassermelone ist *innen* rot und *außen* grün. (The watermelon is red on the inside, and green on the outside.)
- *Drinnen* ist es trocken, aber *draußen* regnet es. (Inside, it is dry, but outside it is raining.)

ADJECTIVES 3

Common adjective endings

-ig, -lich, -isch

Here are three common endings, which sound very similar:

- *-ig* (roughly like *-y* in English): eindeutig, abhängig, …
- *-lich* (roughly *-ly* in English): nützlich, möglich, persönlich, …
- *-isch* (roughly *-ic(al)* in English): praktisch, logisch, …

The first two sound the same in regular speech (in some dialects, all three sound the same). You already encountered this with the numbers (zwanz*ig*).

When you add an ending to the *-ig* adjectives, it will no longer sound like *ch*:

- eindeuti*g*: die eindeuti*ge* … (now sounds like *g*)
- mögli*ch*: der mögli*che* … (still sounds like *ch*)

-bar

-bar often corresponds to "-(a)ble" in English:

- sicht*bar* (visi*ble*)
- verfüg*bar* (avail*able*)

Yes, there are lots of bars with joke adjective names in Germany :)

-los, -voll

These correspond to English "-less" and "-ful".

- hoffnungs*voll* (hope*ful*)
- hoffnungs*los* (hope*less*)

-tion

In English, the "-tion" ending is pronounced "-shen". In German, it always becomes "-tsion". It will always be the emphasized syllable, and the word will always be feminine.

- Kommunika*tion*, Lek*tion*, Na*tion*

Similarly, *der Patient* will sound like "der Patsient".

When nouns ending in *-tion* are used in an adjective, the ending *-al* (or *-ell*) will be used. The resulting adjective will be pronounced on the last syllable:

- internation*al*, ration*al*, kommun*al*, sensation*ell*, …

PLACES 2

Bundesland

Germany is a Federal Republic (Bundesrepublik). It consists of 16 federal states, which have some degree of autonomy. These are called *Bundesländer*.

Pension

Die Pension has different meanings, depending on context. Here it means "guest house". It can also mean "retirement pay".

MEDICAL

What is a *Pflaster?*

Das Pflaster is a small adhesive bandage.

Depending on where you live, you may call it "Band-Aid", "plaster" or "Elastoplast" in English.

The German word *Pflaster* does **not** refer to a plaster cast. The German for plaster cast is *der Gips(verband)*.

PRESENT 2

Wissen vs. *kennen*

Wissen and *kennen* both translate to "to know" in English. *Können* (to be able to) can also mean "to know" in certain contexts.

- Ich *weiß* (es) nicht. (I don't know.)
- Ich *kenne* ihn nicht. (I don't know him.)
- Ich *kann* ein bisschen Polnisch. (I know a bit of Polish.)

So how to know which one to use?

Kennen

Kennen is used when talking about people, places and the like. It means that you are aware of its existence. *Kennen* needs an object.

- Ich *kenne* diesen Mann nicht! (I don't know this man!)

Wissen

Wissen is used for knowledge about something. It usually does not have an object. Commonly, it is used with a subordinate clause ("Nebensatz"):

- Ich *weiß*, wer du bist! (I know who you are.)
- Ich *weiß* nicht, wann sie kommt. (I don't know when she arrives.)
- Er weiß, dass ich ihn liebe. (He knows that I love him.)

In rare cases, *wissen can* be used with an object, which might lead to very subtle situations like this:

- Ich *kenne* dieses Wort nicht (I don't know this word.)
- Ich *weiß* dieses Wort nicht. (I don't know this word.)

In the first example, you have never seen this word before. In the second example, you have seen it, but you don't know what it means.

Können

Können generally means "be able to", and is generally used like "can/be able to" in English. The only confusing thing is that it can take a language instead of an infinitive, which English cannot:

- Ich *kann* tanzen (I can dance.)
- Ich *kann* Deutsch (I can *speak* German.)

Conjugation of *wissen*

We already used a range of **verbs that change the vowel in the second and third person singular**:

person	*fahren*	*lesen*	*essen*
ich	fahr*e*	lese	esse
du	f**ä**hr*st*	**liest**	**isst**
er/sie/es	f**ä**hr*t*	**liest**	**isst**
wir	fahr*en*	lesen	essen
ihr	fahr*t*	lest	esst
sie/Sie	fahr*en*	lesen	essen

You also encountered modal verbs which generally have a different vowel in singular and plural, respectively. They also have a simpler (and the same) ending in the first and second person singular.

Wissen (to know) is a full verb. However, it is one of the very few full verbs that conjugates like a modal verb:

pronoun	wollen	mögen	wissen
ich	w**i**ll	m**a**g	w**ei**ß
du	w**i**ll**st**	m**a**g**st**	w**ei**ß**t**
er/sie/es	w**i**ll	m**a**g	w**ei**ß
wir	w**o**ll**en**	m**ö**g**en**	w**i**ss**en**
ihr	w**o**ll**t**	m**ö**g**t**	w**i**ss**t**
sie	w**o**ll**en**	m**ö**g**en**	w**i**ss**en**

Non-stressed prefixes

You already noticed that in German, some verb prefixes can split off:

- *an*kommen — Ich komme an.
- *ein*kaufen — Er kauft ein.

The general rule is: **if the prefix is stressed, it splits off**.

How to know which ones are stressed?

It might be easiest to remember those that are never stressed. The most important ones are:

- *be-, ent-, er-, ver-, zer-*

If you encounter a different prefix, guessing that it splits off will most likely be correct.

Gefallen

So far, you have learned two ways to say "I like".

Mögen is used with nouns:

- Ich *mag* Schokolade! (I like chocolate!)

Gern(e) is an adverb that modifies a verb:

- Ich esse *gerne* Schokolade. (I like to eat chocolate.)
- Ich lerne *gerne* Deutsch. (I like to learn German.)
- Ich kaufe *gerne* ein. (I like to go shopping.)

In this lesson, you learn a third way: *gefallen*.

- Er *gefällt* mir. (I like him.)

What's going on?! Literally, it means "He is-pleasing to me." That's why "him" become the subject, and "I" becomes the Dative object in the example above.

Gefallen is normally used if you like the look, sound or feel of something:

- Die Songs *gefallen* mir. (I like the songs.)
- Das Haus *gefällt* uns. (We like the house.)

Like *mögen*, you would only use it with nouns (not with verbs).

Legen vs. *liegen*

Earlier, you learned the verb *legen*:

- Ich *lege* den Ball auf den Tisch. (I put the ball on (to) the table.)

Liegen is related, but defines a position:

- Der Ball *liegt* auf dem Tisch (The ball is on the table.)

Legen roughly corresponds to "lay", *liegen* to "lie".

DATES 2

Monatlich

Just as in English you have "year/yearly", German has the same word pairs. In German, some of these have an umlaut change:

noun	adjective
das Jahr	j**ä**hrlich
der Monat	monatlich
der Tag	t**ä**glich
die Stunde	st**ü**ndlich
die Minute	min**ü**tlich
die Sekunde	sek**ü**ndlich

Why does *monatlich* not change? All others are emphasized on the syllable that changes. *Monatlich* is emphasized on the first syllable.

Seasons

The seasons in German are as follows:

English	German
spring	der Frühling
summer	der Sommer
autumn	der Herbst
winter	der Winter

Herbst sounds similar to "harvest", and *Frühling* has *früh* (early) in it.

When you refer to seasons or months, you use *im*. Here's the mnemonic again that helps you remind which is which:

- **a**m Mont**a**g
- **u**m drei **U**hr
- **i**m Jun**i**

PEOPLE 2

Verein

Der Verein (the *r* is silent) is something between a club and a society. It is very common in Germany: There are almost 600,000 *eingetragene Vereine* (publicly registered associations) in Germany. They bear the abbreviation *e.V.*.

A *Verein* might help the homeless, offer tennis lessons, dance together, among many other activities.

Man

In English, you can say "you can say" or "one can say". In German, *man* is commonly used for this purpose. It does not imply that only male people are included, think of it like the English "man" as in "mankind".

Grammatically, it works exactly like *er*:

- *Er* schläft nicht auf der Küche. (He does not sleep in the kitchen)
- *Man* schläft nicht in der Küche! (One does not sleep in the kitchen!)

FUTURE

Werden + Infinitiv = Futur

German **normally uses the present tense to indicate the future**.

- Ich *gehe* morgen ins Kino. (I *will go* to the movies tomorrow.)

On some occasions (for example when **making promises or predictions**), German *does* use a **future tense**. It is very similar to the one in English.

The future tense consists of a **conjugated form of *werden* in the present tense and an infinitive** (the base form of the verb).

German	English
ich **werde** spielen	I will play
du **wirst** spielen	you will play
er/sie/es **wird** spielen	he/she/it will play

wir **werden** spielen	we will play
ihr **werdet** spielen	you will play
sie/Sie **werden** spielen	they/you will play

Depending on the context, *ich werde spielen* translates to "I will play" or "I am going to play". In German, there is no distinction between "will" and "going to".

Be aware that the German verb *wollen* (to want) is a **false friend of the English** *will*:

- Ich *will* spielen! (I *want to* play!)

Werden **has three different functions**

Using *werden* can be confusing for learners. However, there are **clear distinctions between its three main uses**:

Werden + adjective/noun = "to become"

If *werden* is used **in combination with an adjective or noun**, the meaning will be **"to become" or "to get"**:

- Sie *wird* Mutter. (She's becoming a mother.)
- Ich *werde* müde. (I'm getting tired.)

The German word *bekommen* is a confusing false friend to "become":

- Sie *bekommt* eine Tochter. (She's getting a daughter.)

Werden + Infinitiv = Futur

This case is explained above.

Werden + past participle = passive

If used **in combination with a participle**, *werden* creates one type of **passive**:

- Der Taxifahrer fährt den Fahrgast. (The taxi driver drives the passenger.)
- Der Fahrgast *wird gefahren*. (The passenger is being driven.)

FEELINGS

Long and short vowels

Which sounds are there?

In German, every vowel can be long or short. The short one often sounds more open than the long one.

The IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) is given for the geeks among you :) But you can also copy/paste one of these symbols into Wikipedia to get an in-depth explanation of it (with sound!).

vowel	short	IPA	long	IPA
a	Mann	/a/	Bahn	/aː/
ä	Bälle	/ɛ/	Käse	/ɛː/
e	rennen	/ɛ/	Beere	/eː/
i	Mitte	/ɪ/	ziehen	/iː/
o	oft	/ɔ/	ohne	/oː/
ö	Hölle	/œ/	schön	/øː/
u	Mutter	/ʊ/	Buch	/uː/
ü	Müll	/ʏ/	Bücher	/yː/

You can also google "german sounds" for a longer introduction to German sounds.

When is a vowel short or long?

German has a range of spelling convention which will clearly show whether a vowel is short or long:

A vowel before a double consonant will be short:

- Mann, denn, Mutter, Bälle, backen, Pizza, Katze

Note that instead of "zz" (which only occurs in the Italian "Pizza"), German uses *tz*. Instead of "kk", we use *ck*.

There are also some signals that clearly show the vowel is long.

Sometimes, the vowel will be doubled:

- p*aa*r, B*ee*re, B*oo*t, … (this only happens with *a/e/o*)

There might be a silent *h* behind the vowel:

- f*ah*ren, z*äh*len, s*eh*en, *ih*r, *oh*ne, h*öh*er, *Uh*r, St*üh*le, …

Note that if you read the list above, you should not hear a single *h* sound. It is *geh/en*, not *ge/hen*.

For *i*, it is more common to have an *-e* after it (sometimes even *-eh*):

- d*ie*, B*ie*ne, sp*ie*len, s*ie*ben, Bez*ieh*ung, …

Again, the *h* will be silent: *Be/zieh/ung*, not *Be/zie/hung*.

But sometimes, there will not be a signal.

The following examples have an unmarked long vowel:

- B*u*ch, d*a*, *A*bend, w*o*, Not, Zitr*o*ne, …

And here are some short ones:

- *a*n, *O*nkel, *u*n-, M*ama*, H*ä*lfte, Z*i*trone, …

For these, you just have to trust your language feeling, it will normally not be a big problem :)

TIME

Times of day

German uses a system similar to English:

English	German	
morning	der Morgen	*am* Morgen
-	der Vormittag	*am* Vormittag
noon	der Mittag	*am* Mittag
afternoon	der Nachmittag	*am* Nachmittag
evening	der Abend	*am* Abend
night	**die** Nacht	**in der** Nacht

midnight	**die** Mitternacht	**um** Mitternacht

It's generally pretty straightforward. Remember this mnemonic:

- **a**m Mont**a**g
- **u**m drei **U**hr
- **i**m Jun**i**

Am Montag, *am Mittag*. Just "at night there are different rules": *in der Nacht* and *um Mitternacht* are irregular.

All of these have and adverbial form: *morgens, vormittags, abends, nachts*, …*

Morgen am Morgen?

Similar to Spanish, the **words for "tomorrow" and "morning" are the same** in German. Unlike Spanish, German escapes this problem by choosing a different word when they clash.

Instead of *morgen am Morgen* or *morgen morgens* we say **morgen früh**.

Telling the time

Official time

In German, there are "official" and informal ways to say the time. Here's the official one (often used on radio and television):

- dreizehn Uhr neun (literally, "thirteen o'clock nine")

Official time uses a 24 hour system, from zero to 24.

Don't confuse "hour" and *Uhr* (they are false friends):

English	German
the hour	die Stunde
o'clock	Uhr

Die Uhr can also mean "clock" or "watch". *Die Stunde* can also mean "lesson" (which confusingly might not last one hour).

Informal time

In everyday life, people will often use informal time.

There are several systems, with two forms dominant. In many parts of Germany, this system is used:

Time	English	German
14:05	five past two	fünf nach zwei
14:10	ten past two	zehn nach zwei
14:15	a quarter past two	viertel nach zwei
14:20	twenty past two	zwanzig nach zwei
14:25	twenty-five past two	**fünf vor halb drei**
14:30	half past two	**halb drei**
14:35	thirty-five past two	**fünf nach halb drei**
14:40	twenty to three	zwanzig vor drei
14:45	a quarter to three	viertel vor drei
14:50	ten to three	zehn vor drei
14:55	five to three	fünf vor drei

Yes, the part in the middle is very confusing :) German considers the next hour to be half full. In addition, German relates "X:25" and "X:35" to the half hour.

FREQUENCY

Ob

Indirect questions are subordinate clauses in German:

- Was *machst* du? (direct question, verb in position 2)
- Ich weiß, was du *machst*! ("I know what you do!", verb at the end)

For questions with a question word, the question word starts the sentece, and the verb ends it.

For yes/no-questions, German uses *ob* as a placeholder (just like "whether" is used in English):

- Gehst du ins Kino?
- Er fragt, *ob* du ins Kino *gehst*.

Je … desto …

Je ... desto ... works roughly like "the … the …" in English:

- *The longer* I learn German, *the happier* I become.
- *Je länger* ich Deutsch lerne, *desto glücklicher* werde ich.

However, the sentence structure is unusual, when compared to English. For the above sentence, it is:

- je + (comparison) (subject) (rest) (verb), desto (comparison) (verb) (subject) (rest)

The *je* part is a subordinate clause, so the verb will be at the end. Because the *je*+comparison is in the first position, the subject has to come immediately after, followed by the rest of the sentence.

The *desto* part is a main clause. The verb is in position 2, and *desto*+comparison are in the first position. This is not unusual in German, as you can put all kinds of elements in the first position:

Position 1	2	3	4	5
Ich	*esse*	morgen	mit einem Freund	zu Mittag.
Morgen	*esse*	ich	mit einem Freund	zu Mittag.
Mit einem Freund	*esse*	ich	morgen	zu Mittag.
Zu Mittag	esse	ich	morgen	mit einem Freund.

Notice how the verb is always in the second position. The subject is either at the beginning (the default), or directly behind the verb.

Mal

(-)mal can often be translated with "time(s)" in English:

German	English
zehn mal	ten times
manchmal	sometimes
das erste Mal	the first time

In addition, it has a function as a "modal particle". These are words that give a sentence an additional flavor, and can't be easily translated. Modal particles are almost never emphasized.

- Komm *mal* nach Hause! (*I'm impatient*, come home!)
- Kann ich *mal* vorbei? (Can I get through? *I won't bother you for long.*)

We don't teach modal particles in this course (because you can't translate them). But you will encounter *mal schauen* in this lesson, which roughly means "let's see".

MODAL VERBS

Verb forms

You already learned some modal verbs:

pronoun	wollen	mögen	können
ich	w**i**ll	m**a**g	k**a**nn
du	w**i**ll**st**	m**a**g**st**	k**a**nn**st**
er/sie/es	w**i**ll	m**a**g	k**a**nn
wir	w**oll**en	m**ög**en	k**önn**en
ihr	w**oll**t	m**ög**t	k**önn**t
sie	w**oll**en	m**ög**en	k**önn**en

Modal verbs are the **same in the first and third person singular**.

They also often change their vowel. The **vowel in the singular will be different** from the vowel of the infinitive.

Forms of *müssen*, *sollen*, *wollen*, *dürfen*, *möchten*

In this lesson, you will learn the **remaining five modal verbs**.

Consider these three:

pronoun	müssen	dürfen	wollen
ich	m**u**ss	d**a**rf	w**i**ll
du	m**u**ss**t**	d**a**rf**st**	w**i**ll**st**
er/sie/es	m**u**ss	d**a**rf	w**i**ll
wir	m**üss**en	d**ürf**en	w**oll**en
ihr	m**üss**t	d**ürf**t	w**oll**t

sie	m**ü**ss**en**	d**ü**rf**en**	w**oll**en

As in *können* und *wollen*, the vowel in the singular is different. The first and third person are the same in the plural **and** in the singular (unlike normal verbs).

Here are the last two:

pronoun	sollen	möchten
ich	soll	möcht**e**
du	soll**st**	möcht**est**
er/sie/es	soll	möcht**e**
wir	soll**en**	möcht**en**
ihr	soll**t**	möcht**et**
sie	sollen	möchte

sollen **does not change its vowel**. Otherwise it works roughly like "shall".

möchten **is unusual**. It is actually the subjunctive form of "mögen", which is why it has the same ending system as subjunctive and past tense verbs. You will learn about those later in the course.

If you remember that *mögen* translates to "like" in English, it makes perfect sense that its subjunctive *möchten* **means "would like to"**.

- Ich *mag* Pizza. (I *like* Pizza.)
- Ich *möchte* Pizza. (I *would like* (to eat) Pizza.)

How to use modal verbs

As in English, **modal verbs are combined with the infinitive of a verb**:

- Ich schwimme. Ich *kann schwimmen*. (I swim. I can swim.)

Because of the peculiarity of German sentence structure, the **infinitive verb will appear at the end** in a normal sentence:

- Ich **muss** jeden Tag **arbeiten**. (I have to work every day.)

Müssen vs. *dürfen*

A common problem for English speakers learning German is to **use *müssen* right**. Here's the problem:

- Ich *muss* schlafen. (I *must* sleep.)
- Ich *muss nicht* schlafen. (I *don't need to* sleep.)

Actually, the problem is in English. Let's look at the same example again, but use "have to" instead:

- Ich *muss* schlafen. (I *have to* sleep.)
- Ich *muss nicht* schlafen. (I *don't have to* to sleep.)

As you can see, if you **think "have to" instead of "must"**, you'll be fine.

But how to say "must not"?

- Ich *darf nicht* schlafen. (I must not sleep.)
- Ich *darf* schlafen. (I'm allowed to sleep.)

As you can see, *dürfen* **works pretty much like "may"** in English.

- *Darf ich*? (*May I*?)
- Nein, du *darfst nicht*. (No, you *may not*.)
- Oh, schade.

ADVERBS 3

Damit vs. *damit*

There are two words spelled *damit* in German.

One is a **combination of a pronoun and a preposition** (*da+mit*). It means **"with that"**.

- Das ist ein Stift. *Damit* schreibe ich. (That's a pen. *With that*, I write.)
- Ich habe ein Deutschzertifikat. *Damit* kann ich in Deutschland studieren. (I have a German certificate. *With that*, I can study in Germany.)

This word is generally emphasized on the first syllable. As any standard sentence element, If it is used in the first position, the subject will have to go after the verb (with has to be in position 2).

The other is a **subordinating conjunction**. It translates to **"so that"**:

- Ich kaufe einen Stift, *damit* ich schreiben **kann**. (I buy a pen *so that* I can write.)
- Ich lerne Deutsch, *damit* ich in Deutschland studieren **kann**. (I learn German *so that* I can study in Germany.)

Because it creates a subordinate clause, **the verb of that clause has to go to the end**. This version of *damit* is pronounced at the second syllable.

To remember which is which, remember that the one that's emphasized at the end also sends the verb to the end.

Damit, um … zu …, zum …

There are at least three ways to express a goal.

Zum

The easiest just takes a simple verb:

- Ich fahre *zum Skifahren* nach Japan. (I go to Japan *for* skiing.)
- *Zum Lachen* geht er in den Keller. (He goes to the basement *to* laugh.)

The verb becomes a noun here, hence the upper-case initial, and the *zum* (zu+dem) preposition. If a verb turns into a noun, it always gets neuter gender (das Essen, das Lachen).

Um … zu …

If you have a more complicated verb complex (for example, with adverbs or objects), you cannot use *zum*. Use *um … zu …* instead:

- Ich gehe ins Restaurant, *um* mit Freunden Pizza *zu* essen. (I go to the restaurant *in order to* eat pizza with friends.)

To do this, you start with an infinitive construction:

- *mit Freunden im Supermarkt ein**kaufen*** (to go shopping in the supermarket with friends)

If you were to use this in a sentence, it would look like this:

- Ich **kaufe** *mit Freunden im Supermarkt ein*.

The *um* goes to the beginning of the infinitive construction. The *zu* goes were the verb part (in the above example, *kaufen* splits off.

- Ich fahre in die Stadt, *um* mit Freunden im Supermarkt ein*zu*kaufen.

Damit

If your main sentence has a different subject than your goal, you can't use an infinitive. Use *damit*, which comes with a subordinate clause.

- *Ich* gebe ihm mein Handy, *damit er* seine Mutter anrufen kann. (I give him my phone *so that* he can call his mom)

Read the section "*damit* vs. *damit*" for more information on how to use it.

Womit? Damit!

Many prepositions can be combined with *wo-* and *da-*. *da* roughly translates to "that" here, *wo* normally to "what" (not "where" which is its normal meaning).

wo-	da-
woran	da**r**an
worauf	da**r**auf
woraus	da**r**aus
wobei	dabei
wodurch	dadurch
wofür	dafür
wogegen	dagegen
wohinter	dahinter
worin	da**r**in
womit	damit
wonach	danach
worum	da**r**um
worüber	da**r**über
worunter	da**r**unter
wovon	davon
wovor	davor
wozu	dazu
wozwischen	dazwischen

If the **preposition starts with a vowel**, there will be a **binding _r_**. So _worum_ is pronounced _wo-rum_ (not _wor-um_).

NATURE 2

Der See **vs.** _die See_

Der See means "the lake". **_Die See_** means "the sea, the ocean". It is less commonly used. German uses more often _das Meer_ or _der Ozean_ for the latter.

Check out _Bodensee_ and _Nordsee_ on Google Maps and see if you can figure out which one is feminine and which one is masculine :)

Der Strand

Der Strand means "the beach". This meaning still survives in the English adjective "stranded" (literally, ended up on a lonely beach).

Holz, _Wald_, _Forst_

In English, "wood" can refer to a material, and to a forest.

In German, _Holz_ only refers to the material. _Der Wald_ is "the forest". We also have a word _Der Forst_, but it only refers to a maintained forest (something like a garden for trees), where the trees are grown for commercial purposes.

GENITIVE CASE

The genitive case is used to **indicate possession**.

- Das Fahrrad _des Mannes_ ist schwarz. (The man's bike is black.)
- Das Fahrrad _des Kindes_ ist blau. (The kid's bike is blue.)
- Das Fahrrad _der Frau_ ist grün. (The woman's bike is green.)
- Das Fahrrad _der Männer/der Kinder/der Frauen_ ist rot. (The people's bike is red.)

	masc.	neut.	fem.	plural
nom.	der	das	die	die
acc.	den	das	die	die

dat.	dem	dem	der	den
gen.	des	des	der	der

Das Fahrrad *eines Mannes* ist schwarz.

Das Fahrrad *eines Kindes* ist blau.

Das Fahrrad *einer Frau* ist grün.

	masculine	neuter	feminine
nominative	ein	ein	eine
accusative	einen	ein	eine
dative	einem	einem	einer
genitive	eines	eines	einer

Nouns

Nouns consisting of one syllable tend to add *-es* in the masculine and neuter. The ending is often reduced to just *-s*, especially in colloquial speech.

- der Hund, de**s** Hund**es**

Nouns consisting of **more than one syllable, tend to add just *-s***.

- der Computer, de**s** Computer**s**

Weak nouns add *-n* or *-en* in the genitive as well (all cases but the nominative), e.g. *des Jungen* and *des Studenten*. Check the lesson "Dative Case" for a discussion of these nouns.

Genitive phrases have a fixed word order

You can say *das Fahrrad des Kindes*, but **you cannot say *des Kindes Fahrrad***. The latter word order used to be acceptable hundreds of years ago, and you may still occasionally find it in poetry, but it's no longer used in contemporary Standard German.

Proper names

In contrast to common nouns, **proper names precede the noun**.

- Peter**s** Fahrrad ist neu.

Do not add an apostrophe unless the name already ends in *-s* or *-z*. In the latter case, the apostrophe comes at the very end of the name.

- *Hans'* Fahrrad ist alt.

Adjectives

Adjectives in the genitive case end in *-en*. The only **exception are feminine and plural, without article** (feminine without article is quite rare).

	preceded by an article	not preceded by an article
masculine	das Fahrrad des/eines groß*en* Mannes	wegen groß*en* Bedarfs
feminine	das Fahrrad der/einer klein*en* Frau	trotz groß*er* Freude
neuter	das Fahrrad des/eines klein*en* Kindes	trotz ruhig*en* Wesens
plural (any gender)	das Fahrrad der klein*en* Kinder	wegen neu*er* Informationen

Prepositions that take the genitive case

The most common **prepositions that take the genitive** case are:

German	English
anstatt	instead of
statt	instead of
aufgrund	because of
trotz	despite
während	during
wegen	because of

In colloquial speech, some prepositions that traditionally take the genitive tend to take the dative nowadays.

- Trotz *des* Regen*s* geht spielt er Fußball. (Genitive)
- Trotz *dem* Regen spielt er Fußball. (Dative)

Verbs that take the genitive case

There's a small set of verbs that take the genitive. Most of them are not used a lot in everyday speech and they may sound a bit stilted.

The dative as an alternative

As an **alternative for the genitive**, you can often use *von* **followed by the dative case**. Here are some examples:

genitive	dative
der Ball *der* Frau	der Ball *von der* Frau
der Ball *des* Mädchen*s*	der Ball *von dem* Mädchen
der Ball *des* Mann*es*	der Ball *von dem* Mann
der Ball *der* Kinder	der Ball *von den* Kinder*n*
Peter*s* Ball	der Ball *von* Peter

Often, the genitive case will be preferred in written language, with colloquial language going more for the dative case.

PERFECT 1

When is the *Perfekt* used?

The *Perfekt* is used to describe past events. In spoken German, the *Perfekt* is preferred over the *Präteritum*. Using the *Präteritum* in normal conversation may sound unnatural or pretentious.

- Gestern *habe* ich Pizza *gegessen*. (Yesterday, I *ate* pizza.)

In contrast to the English *present perfect*, the German *Perfekt* is not used to describe events that started in the past and are still ongoing. In such cases, German speakers use the *present tense*:

- Ich lebe seit drei Jahren hier. (I have been living here for three years.)

Verbs mostly used in *Präteritum*

The following verbs are normally not used in the *Perfekt*. Use *Präteritum* instead.

English	Verb	Präteritum
to be	sein	ich war
to have	haben	ich hatte
to know	wissen	ich wusste

may	dürfen	ich durfte
can	können	ich konnte
must	müssen	ich musste
shall	sollen	ich sollte
want to	wollen	ich wollte

How is *Perfekt* formed?

The *Perfekt* is formed by combining a conjugated form of *haben* (to have) or *sein* (to be) in the present tense with the past participle of the main verb.

- Gestern *hat* er nur zwei Stunden *geschlafen*. (Yesterday, he only *slept* for two hours.)

When to use *sein*

The vast majority of verbs take *haben* (just like in English).

Verbs that indicate a motion normally take *sein* as a helper verb. Here are some common examples:

Infinitiv	Perfekt
gehen	ich bin gegangen
laufen	ich bin gelaufen
rennen	ich bin gerannt
schwimmen	ich bin geschwommen
fliegen	ich bin geflogen

However, verbs that indicate some other change also take *sein*:

Infinitiv	Perfekt
aufwachen (wake up)	ich bin aufgewacht
einschlafen (fall asleep)	ich bin eingeschlafen
sterben (die)	er ist gestorben

There are a few other verbs, for example

- bleiben (to stay) - ich *bin* geblieben
- passieren (to happen) - es *ist* passiert

None of these verbs have an object (they are "intransitive"). If they have a variant with an object ("transitive"), they take *haben*:

- Ich *bin* im Auto gefahren. (fahren: movement)
- Ich *habe das Auto gefahren*. (you operate the car. The movement is secondary)
- Ich *bin Auto gefahren*. (*Auto* is NOT an object here. It's a complement, like *Deutsch lernen*, similar to *ein/kaufen*

How to form the participle

Regular verbs

Most verbs are regular (these are called "weak"). For these, creating the perfect participle is easy. Just add *ge-* to the front, and replace the infinitive ending with *-(e)t*:

- machen - **ge**mach**t**
- arbei**t**en – **ge**arbei**t**et

Irregular verbs

German has a number of irregular verbs. Most of these are "strong" verbs. For these, you add *ge-*, but you add *-en*. There might be a vowel change involved. Rarely, the change in the word stem is more drastic.

Infinitiv	Partizip II
schlafen	*ge*schlaf*en*
trinken	*ge*trunk*en*
schwimmen	*ge*schw**o**mm*en*
essen	*ge***g**ess*en*
gehen	*ge*g**ang**en*

While most verbs are weak, **many of the most common verbs are strong**.

There is a small group of irregular verbs that follow a different system (called "**mixed verbs**"). Here are most of them:

Infinitiv	Partizip II
wissen	*ge*w**u**ss*t*
rennen	*ge*r**a**nn*t*

brennen	*ge*br**ann***t*
kennen	*ge*k**ann***t*
denken	*ge*d**ach***t*
bringen	*ge*br**ach***t*

Why is there no *ge-*? Why is it inside the participle?

Once you have the correct form of the basic verb, here are two more rules you need to know:

German verbs have two kinds of prefixes. Some can split off. These are always emphasized:

- (**ein***kaufen*) Ich *kaufe* im Supermarkt **ein**.

Verbs like this will have the *-ge-* between the prefix and the verb stem:

- Ich habe im Supermarkt ein**ge**kauft.
- Ich bin im Bus ein**ge**schlafen.

Here are some common prefixes that are always emphasized:

- ab-, an-, auf-, aus-, bei-, ein-, mit-, nach-, vor-, zu-

Other prefixes are not emphasized. They never split off. For these (and any other **verbs that are not emphasized on the first syllable), do not add a *ge-* prefix**. This includes all verbs that end in *-ieren* (as these are emphasized at the *-ie-*).

- (**ver**kaufen) Ich verkaufe mein Auto
- Ich habe mein Auto **verkauft**.
- Ich habe gestern **verschlafen**.
- Er hat Musik **studiert**.

These prefixes are never emphasized:

- be-, ent-, er-, ge-, ver-, zer-

A few prefixes might be emphasized or not.

ADJECTIVES: NOMINATIVE 1

Adjective endings

When an adjective comes before a noun, its ending will change according to this noun.

- Die Katze ist *alt*.
- Das ist eine *alte* Katze.

Article + Adjective

You can think of the adjective endings as "markers" that kind of mark what part of speech the adjective belongs to.

Nominative

Remember that the nominative case is used for the subject of a sentence. These are the **nominative adjectives**:

gender	article	adjective	noun
masc.	de**r**	rot**e**	Hut
	ein	rot**er**	Hut
neut.	da**s**	rot**e**	Hemd
	ein	rot**es**	Hemd
fem.	di**e**	rot**e**	Rose
	ein**e**	rot**e**	Rose
Plural	die	rot**en**	Schuhe
	keine	rot**en**	Schuhe
	-	rot**e**	Schuhe

While that might look a bit chaotic, there is not so much going on:

1) **Masculine**: **Either the article, or the adjective** must have the *-r* ending. The same goes for **neuter and -*s***

- De**r** klein**e** Hund spielt.
- Ein klein**er** Hund spielt.

2) **Feminine and Plural end in -*e***. If you **add an article**, you also have to **add an -*n***.

- Di**e** alt**e** Katze schläft.

- Alt**e** Katzen schlafen.
- Di**e** alt**en** Katzen schlafen.
- Das sind **keine** alt**en** Katzen.

ADJECTIVES: ACCUSATIVE

Accusative adjective endings

Do you remember that quite often, the *accusative looks like the nominative*? Specifically, *only the articles for masculine nouns change*.

The same goes for the adjectives. They are the same as for nominative; the only exception is for masculine nouns. The changes are marked in bold in the table below.

3) **masculine accusative**: adjective ends in *-en*

- Die alte Katze schläft. De**r** alt**e** Mann sieht die alte Katze (no change)
- Die alte Katze sieht de**n** alt**en** Mann.

gender	article	adjective	noun
masc.	de**n**	rot**en**	Hut
	ei**nen**	rot**en**	Hut
neut.	das	rote	Hemd
	ein	rotes	Hemd
fem.	die	rote	Rose
	eine	rote	Rose
Plural	die	roten	Schuhe
	keine	roten	Schuhe
	-	rote	Schuhe

ADJECTIVES: DATIVE

Dative, as always, is even simpler.

4) **Dative**: **all adjectives get an *-en* ending**

gender	article	adjective	noun

masc.	de**m**	rot**en**	Hut
	eine**m**	rot**en**	Hut
neut.	de**m**	rot**en**	Hemd
	eine**m**	rot**en**	Hemd
fem.	de**r**	rot**en**	Rose
	eine**r**	rot**en**	Rose
Plural	de**n**	rot**en**	Schuhe**n**
	keine**n**	rot**en**	Schuhe**n**
	-	rot**en**	Schuhe**n**

Remember that in dative,

- masculine/neuter articles end in *-m*
- feminine articles end in *-r*
- plural articles end in *-n*
- and plural nouns (almost) always end in *-n*.

Here are some examples:

- Der Mann **mit de*m* rote*n* Hem*d*** (the man in the red shirt)
- Sie mag Männer **mit rote*n* Haare*n*** (She likes men with red hair)

When do dative adjectives not end in *-n*?

There is a rather rare case when dative adjectives **do not end in *-en***.

Rarely, single nouns will be used without any article. This mostly happens in idiomatic expressions.

- mit heiß**er** Feder (with hot feather)
- mit groß**em** Eifer (with great verve)

What happens here is that the ending that would normally be used in the article now ends up on the adjective.

DIRECTION

Weg vs. *weg*

Der Weg" (with a long e*) roughly means "the path".

- *Der Weg* ist lang. (The path is long.)

Weg (with a short, open *e*) roughly means "away".

Here are some examples:

- Geh *weg*! (Go away!)
- Ich bin *weg*! (I'm gone!)

ADVERBS 3

Trotzdem vs. *obwohl*

Obwohl translates to "although", while *trotzdem* translates to "however/nevertheless".

- Ich bin müde, **obwohl** ich Kaffee getrunken *habe*. (I'm tired, although I drank coffee.)
- Ich habe Kaffee getrunken. **Trotzdem** bin *ich* müde. (I drank coffee. Nevertheless, I'm tired.)

Trotzdem **is an adverb**. It is part of a sentence and will replace the subject if it appears in the first position.

Obwohl **is a subordinating conjunction**. It will send the verb to the last position. See the lesson "Conjunctions" for more details.

Darum, *deshalb*, *deswegen*

These three adverbs are synonymous. They can be used interchangeably.

The conjunctions *weil* and *denn* are used in the form "*Statement*, weil/denn *Reason*".

- Ich bin müde, **weil** ich nicht geschlafen *habe*. (subordinating conjunction)
- Ich bin müde, **denn** ich *habe* nicht geschlafen. (coordinating conjunction)

Darum and its sisters are used in the form "*Reason*, darum *Statement*" (or "*Statement*, darum *Result*").

- Ich habe nicht geschlafen. **Darum** bin *ich* müde.

PRETERITE

When is the *Präteritum* used?

The *Präteritum* (also called *Imperfekt*) is used to describe past events. Its use is mostly **limited to formal writing and formal speech**. In **informal writing and speech**, the *Perfekt* (e.g. *Ich habe geschlafen*) **tends to be preferred**. Using the *Präteritum* in normal conversation may sound unnatural or pretentious.

Verbs mostly used in *Präteritum*

The following verbs are normally not used in the *Perfekt*. Use *Präteritum* instead.

English	Verb	Präteritum
to be	sein	ich war
to have	haben	ich hatte
to know	wissen	ich wusste
may	dürfen	ich durfte
can	können	ich konnte
must	müssen	ich musste
shall	sollen	ich sollte
want to	wollen	ich wollte

Möchten

The verb *möchten* (would like to/to want to), which is technically the subjunctive of *mögen*, does not have a preterite form. Instead, the preterite of *wollen* (to want [to]) is used.

How is the *Präteritum* formed?

Regular weak verbs

The *Präteritum* of **regular weak verbs** is formed by adding *-(e)te, -(e)test, -(e)ten,* or *-(e)tet* to the stem.

sagen (to say)

Present	Präteritum
ich sage (I say)	ich sag**te** (I said)
du sagst (you say)	du sag**test** (you said)
er/sie/es sagt (he/she/it says)	er/sie/es sag**te** (he/she/it said)
wir sagen (we say)	wir sag**ten** (we said)
ihr sagt (you say)	ihr sag**tet** (you said)
sie/Sie sagen (they/you say)	sie/Sie sag**ten** (they/you said)

Irregular weak verbs

Some weak verbs, although generally regular, have a slightly irregular verb stem in the *Präteritum*. These are mostly modal verbs. Be sure **not to use the umlaut in the *Präteritum*** for these, as that will change it to the *Konjunktiv II* (subjunctive) mood.

The endings will be the same as for other weak verbs.

- ha**b**en - ich ha**t**te, du hattest, …
- k**ö**nnen - ich k**o**nnte, du konntest, …
- m**ü**ssen - ich m**u**sste, du musstest, …
- d**ü**rfen - ich d**u**rfte, du durftest, …

Strong verbs

To form the *Präteritum* of **strong verbs**, you need to **find the modified verb stem** first. Google "German irregular verbs" to get a list.

To this modified stem, you add the following endings:

Person	Ending
ich	-
du	-st
er/sie/es	-
wir	-en
ihr	-t
sie/Sie	-en

Notice that these are the **same endings as for the modal verbs in the present tense**. **First and third person are the same** in singular and plural.

finden (to find)

Present	Präteritum
ich finde (I find)	ich fand (I found)
du findest (you find)	du fand**est** (you found)
er/sie/es findet (he/she/it finds)	er/sie/es fand (he/she/it found)
wir finden (we find)	wir fand**en** (we found)
ihr findet (you find)	ihr fand**et** (you found)
sie/Sie finden (they/you find)	sie/Sie fand**en** (they/you found)

sein (to be)

Present	Präteritum
ich bin (I am)	ich war (I was)
du bist (you are)	du war**st** (you were)
er/sie/es ist (he/she/it is)	er/sie/es war (he/she/it was)
wir sind (we are)	wir war**en** (we were)
ihr seid (you are)	ihr war**t** (you were)
sie/Sie sind (they/you are)	sie/Sie war**en** (they/you were)

WEATHER

Gewitter

Das Gewitter refers to bad weather with lightning and thunder, not necessarily to strong winds. Hence, we do not accept the translation "storm" in this course.

OBJECTS

Hose, Schere, Brille

Pants used to be two hoses, until somebody had the idea of stitching them together. Glasses are now joined into one object. If you deconstruct scissors into multiple objects, you have two awkward knives and a screw.

German uses the singular for all of these. *Die Hose* is "a pair of pants". *Die Hosen* (plural) is at least to pairs of pants.

Stelle

Die Stelle has the meaning of "position" in at least two ways. It can be a location, or it can be a job position.

Geschenk, Gift

The common German word German for "gift" is *das Geschenk*. **Das Gift means "poison"**. The reason is that a long time ago, "gift" in the meaning of "something that is given" was used as an euphemism for poison.

- "Why did he die?"
- "Kunigunde gave him something."

The original meaning survives in the word *die Mitgift* (dowry).

COMMUNICATION 1

Phones and cellphones

Believe it or not, people still use landline phones, especially in business contexts. A (tele)phone can be a cellphone or a landline phone. The word *(tele)phone* is to the word *cellphone* what the word *pet* is to the word *dog*, i.e. generic vs. specific.

- the tele(phone) = das Telefon
- the cellphone (the mobile phone) = das Handy / das Mobiltelefon

Regardless of whether you always refer to your cellphone as a *phone*, in this course, you will not be able to use *(tele)phone/Telefon* and *cellphone/Handy* interchangeably.

Rufen, anrufen

Rufen translates to "call":

- Ich rufe meinen Hund. (I call my dog.)

The word used for calling via phone is ***an**rufen*:

- Ich *rufe* meinen Bruder *an*. (I call my brother.)

Because people used to call the police long before phones existed, German uses *rufen* for this:

- Ich *ruf(e)* die Polizei!!

Informationen

Unlike English, the German word *die Information* has a singular and a plural form.

Fernseher, Fernsehen

*Der Fernsehe**r*** refers to a TV set. *Das Fernsehe**n*** refers to TV in general.

- Ich habe gestern einen Fernsehe**r** gekauft. (I bought a TV yesterday.)
- Ich bin im Fernsehe**n**! (I'm on TV!)

"Ich bin im Fernseher!" would mean "I'm inside the TV set!".

Fernsehen, frühstücken

- Ich sehe fern. Ich habe fern**ge**sehen.
- Ich frühstücke. Ich habe **ge**frühstückt.

Why does one split, but not the other?

Sehen is interpreted as a verb by itself. Thus, *fern* is interpreted as the prefix. Because it is emphasized, it will split off. Because it splits off, the *-ge-* of the participle will end up inside the word.

Stücken is not a verb. *Frühstücken* is a verb that was created from the noun *das Frühstück*. Hence, the first syllable, although emphasized, will not split off.

INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA

Die Seite

Die Seite can mean "the side" or "the page", depending on context.

- Ich stehe auf der anderen Seite. (I am standing on the other side.)
- Ich lese die Seite. (I read the page.)

In the context of the internet, it refers to a web page, as well as to a web site.

WLAN

WLAN is pronounced [ˈveːlaːn] in German. Unfortunately, the computer voice of the German course refuses to acknowledge this, and insists on pronouncing it wrong.

Drucken vs. *drücken*

Drucken means "to print". The machine commonly used for that is *der Drucker*.

- Ich muss noch zehn Seiten *drucken*! (I have to *print* ten more pages!)

Drücken means "to press". *Der Drücker* may refer to an electric button, or to a hug.

- *Der Drücker* am Aufzug ist kaputt. (*The button* of the lift is broken.)
- *Drücker*! (Hugs!)

PAST PERFECT

When is the past perfect used?

The past perfect is used to describe past events, more specifically events that happened *way* back in the past or any time before another event in the past.

past perfect	preterite
Ich hatte ihn schon gesehen,	als er mich sah
I had already seen him	when he saw me

How is the past perfect formed?

The past perfect is formed almost the same way as the Perfekt. The only difference is that the helper verb will be in the past tense:

- Ich *habe* gegessen. (I have eaten.)
- Ich *hatte* gegessen. (I had eaten.)
- Ich *bin* geschwommen. (I have swum.)
- Ich *war* geschwommen. (I had swum.)

How to end up with the right participle?

Refer to the "Perfect" lesson in order to review how to form the perfect participle that goes with it.

EDUCATION

Student or *Schüler*?

A *Student* is a university student and a *Schüler* is a pupil/student at a primary, secondary or high school. Students attending other types of schools such as language or dancing schools may also be called *Schüler*.

A *Hochschule* is not a *high school*

Careful: a *Hochschule* is not a high school. Depending on the context, *Hochschule* is either an umbrella term that comprises *Unversitäten* and *Fachhochschulen*, or it's a synonym for *Fachhochschule*.

A *Universität* is a full research university and a *Fachhochschule* (often just called *Hochschule*) is a university with a practical focus that offers Bachelor and Master degrees. PhD programmes may be offered in cooperation with other universities.

A *Gymnasium* is not a *gym*

In German, the word *das Gymnasium* refers to a university prep-school.

The German for a sports gym is *die Turnhalle* (used by schools and sports clubs) or *das Fitnessstudio* (commercial).

FUTURE PERFECT

The future perfect talks about actions that will have been completed in the future. It's used pretty much like the English future perfect, but it's formed slightly differently.

The future perfect consists of the future tense of the auxiliary verb *haben* or *sein,* and the past participle of the main verb.

Haben vs. *sein*

The vast majority of verbs take *haben*. Verbs that take *sein* have to be intransitive, i.e. they can't take an object, and they have to indicate a change of position or condition. *sein* (to be), *bleiben* (to stay), and *passieren* (to happen) take *sein* even though they don't indicate a change of position or condition.

Please refer to the "Perfect" lesson to review how to form the participle, and for more details on when to use *haben* or *sein*.

Future Perfect with *haben*

essen (to eat):

The auxiliary verb that goes with *essen* is *haben*. All you need to do is form the future tense of *haben (ich werde haben)* and add the past participle of the main verb *essen (gegessen)* to the left of *haben.*

German	English
ich werde gegessen haben	I will have eaten
du wirst gegessen haben	you will have eaten
er/sie/es wird gegessen haben	he/she/it will have eaten
wir werden gegessen haben	we will have eaten
ihr werdet gegessen haben	you will have eaten
sie werden gegessen haben	they will have eaten
Sie werden gegessen haben	you will have eaten

Future Perfect with *sein*

gehen (to leave/to go):

The auxiliary verb that goes with *gehen* is *sein*. All you need to do is form the future tense of *sein (ich werde sein)* and add the past participle of the main verb *gehen (gegangen)* to the left of *sein.*

German	English
ich werde gegangen sein	I will have left
du wirst gegangen sein	you will have left
er/sie/es wird gegangen sein	he/she/it will have left
wir werden gegangen sein	we will have left
ihr werdet gegangen sein	you will have left
sie werden gegangen sein	they will have left
Sie werden gegangen sein	you will have left

COMMON PHRASES 2

Naja, *na und*, *na sowas*

Na appears in some short interjections or phrases:

	Example	English
naja	"Was ist das Problem?" — "Naja, dein Hund stinkt."	Well…
na und	"Dein Hund stinkt." — "Na und?"	so what?
na klar	"Stinkt dein Hund?" — "Na klar!"	of course!
na sowas	"Dein Hund tanzt" — "Na sowas!"	Oh wow!

SCIENCE

Motor, *Motoren*

Normally, nouns don't change the stress pattern when they change into the plural:

- Ele*fan*t, Ele*fan*ten
- Ge*le*genheit, Ge*le*genheiten

Nouns ending in *-or* are an exception. In the plural, the emphasis lands on the *-or-* syllable.

- D*ok*tor, Dok*to*ren
- *Mo*tor, Mo*to*ren

REFLEXIVE VERBS

Reflexive verbs are pretty common in many European languages, but in comparison are rather rare in English:

- He hurt him*self*.
- She found her*self*.

In German, they are more frequent. Sometimes, they make perfect sense:

- Ich wasche *mich*. ("I wash myself", as opposed to my dog)

But often, the reason for using this form is lost in history, and the verb just has to be learned as is:

- Ich befinde *mich* im Garten. ("I'm in the garden", literally "I find myself in the garden")
- Sie setzt *sich* hin. ("She sits down", lit. "She seats hearself")
- Ich erinnere *mich* nicht. ("I don't remember" (myself))

Verb objects

Remember that verbs often have a "direct object". This will be in the accusative case:

- Der Mann isst *einen Apfel*.

Some verbs have an additional "indirect object", which will be in the dative case:

- Der Mann gibt *dem Kind einen Apfel*. (The man gives an apple to the child.)

The reflexive pronoun will take the place of one of these objects.

Replacing the "lost" object

Because the **reflexive part takes up the object**, **some reflexive verbs need a preposition** to go with them. This preposition has to be learned together with the verb.

- sich interessieren *für* (to have an interest in)

- sich freuen *auf* (to look forward to)
- sich freuen *über* (to be happy about)
- sich kümmern *um* (to care for)
- sich treffen *mit* (to meet with)

Accusative reflexive verbs

In most reflexive verbs, the direct object gets replaced by the reflexive pronoun. Thus, use the accusative versions.

- Ich rasiere *mich*. ("I shave", literally "I shave myself")

Dative reflexive verbs

If the **verb already has a direct (accusative) object**, the **reflexive pronoun will be in the dative case**:

First, consider this example (*mich* is in the accusative):

- Ich wasche *mich*. (I wash, literally "I wash myself")

In the next example, "die Haare" is the Accusative object. Hence, the reflexive pronoun is in the dative ("mir"):

- Ich wasche *mir* die Haare. ("I wash my hair", literally "I wash the hairs to myself")

Here are some verbs with dative reflexive pronouns:

- Ich wünsche *mir* einen Hund. (I wish for a dog.)
- Ich sehe *mir* den Film an. (I watch the movie.)
- Ich habe *mir* das Bein gebrochen. (I broke my leg.)

Reflexive pronouns

Here is a review of the **normal pronouns**:

nom.	acc.	dat.
ich	mich	mir
du	dich	dir
er/sie/es	ihn/sie/es	ihm/ihr/ihm
wir	uns	uns

| ihr | euch | euch |
| sie/Sie | sie/Sie | ihnen/Ihnen |

Notice that for *wir* and *ihr*, **accusative and dative do not differ**.

Here are the **accusative and dative reflexive pronouns**:

nom.	acc. refl.	dat. refl.
ich	mich	mir
du	dich	dir
er/sie/es	**sich**	**sich**
wir	uns	uns
ihr	euch	euch
sie/Sie	**sich**	**sich**

The **reflexive pronoun for the third person (singular and plural) is** *sich*. Otherwise, they don't differ from their non-reflexive counterparts.

This means that if you see a sentence such as:

- Er wäscht *ihm* die Füße.

It must be a different person: He washes the feet of somebody else. If it were his own feet, the sentence would be:

- Er wäscht *sich* die Füße.

COMMUNICATION 2

Post

Die Post has several meanings in German.

It can refer to the mail in your mailbox:

- Ist *die Post* schon da? (Has the mail arrived yet?)

It can also refer to the post office:

- Gehst du heute *zur Post*? (Are you going to the post office today?)

Or, it can refer to the mail company (which used to be state run in Germany):

- *Die Post* hat die Gebühren erhöht. (The mail company raised their fees.)

BUSINESS 1

Fabrik

Don't confuse *die Fabrik* (the manufacturing plant) with the English word "fabric". The former is the place where something is fabricated, the latter is the fabricated product of the world's first manufacturing plants (hence the name).

In addition, *die Fabrik* is stressed on the last syllable.

LANGUAGE

Geschichte

In German, the words for "story" and "history" are the same (just as in Spanish).

However, they are used differently. When used with an article, it generally refers to a story:

- Hast du *die Geschichte* gelesen? (Did you read the story?)

Most of the time, when referring to history, there won't be an article:

- Ich habe *Geschichte* studiert. (I studied history at university.)

In addition, only "story" will have a plural version:

- Er erzählt lustige *Geschichten*. (He tells funny stories.)

ABSTRACT OBJECTS 1

Drucken vs. *drücken*

Drucken means "to print". The machine commonly used for that is *der Drucker*.

- Ich muss noch zehn Seiten *drucken*! (I have to print ten more pages!)
- *Der Drucker* ist kaputt! (The printer is broken!)

Drücken means "to press". *Der Drücker* may refer to an electric button, or to a hug.

- *Der Drücker* am Aufzug ist kaputt. (The button of the lift is broken.)
- *Drücker*! (Hugs!)

Slightly confusingly, *der Druck* can refer to "pressure", but also to a "print".

- Mach keinen *Druck*! (Don't create stress!)
- *Der Druck* ist schön. (The print is nice.)

ANIMALS 2

Affen

In German, *der Affe* may refer to all primates, or to all primates excluding lemurs.

In everyday English, "apes" tend to be distinguished from other primates, most of which are referred to as "monkeys". German does not make this distinction. If you want to refer to apes only, you can use the word *Menschenaffen*.

Kamele

Das Kamel is stressed on the last syllable: [kaˈmeːl]. Unfortunately, Duolingo's computer voice has other ideas about this. When you're in Cologne, don't confuse these adorable, but weighty animals with *Kamelle* ([kaˈmɛlə], caramels traditionally thrown around during *Karneval*).

PRESENT 3

Telefonieren, anrufen

Telefonieren does not have an object (it is "intransitive"). Hence, you need a preposition for the other person:

- Ich *telefoniere mit* meiner Mutter. (I'm on the phone with my mother.)

On the other hand, *anrufen* has an accusative object:

- Ich *rufe* meine Mutter *an*. (I *call* my mother.)

Remember that for the police, you would use *rufen* (without the *an-*):

- *Ruf* die Polizei! (*Call* the police!)

Wechseln, tauschen

Tauschen generally means to swap, or to change something:

- Komm, wir *tauschen* unsere Hüte! (Come, we swap our hats!)

Austauschen or *(aus)wechseln* mean to exchange/substitute:

- Er *tauscht* die Batterien *aus*. (He *exchanges* the batteries.)
- Er *wechselt* die Batterien *(aus)*.

Wechseln by itself can also mean "to switch/change":

- Er *wechselt* den Fußballverein. (He *switches* the soccer club.)
- Er *wechselt* die Socken. (He *changes* his socks.)

This is also the word used for changing money:

- Ich muss noch Geld *wechseln*. (I have to *change* money first.)

BODY 2

Hirn, Gehirn

The words *das Gehirn* und *das Hirn* are used more or less interchangeably in German.

SPIRITUAL

Wunderbar

Due to its use as a loanword in English, *wunderbar* is often overused by English-speaking learners of German. Contrary to popular opinion, most Germans don't run around in leather trousers, smiling broadly and shouting *Wunderbar!* at each other :)

Think of it as the equivalent to "splendid!". If you want to sound less antiquated, better use *Super!* or *Toll!* or something like that.

CONDITIONAL

The conditional mood is mostly used for wishes or unreal situations.

- I wish I *had* a parrot!
- If I *were* you, I *would* sleep more.

Use *würde* for most verbs

Where English uses *would*, German uses forms of *würde*:

German	English
ich **würde** spielen	I would play
du **würdest** spielen	you would play
er/sie/es **würde** spielen	he/she/it would play
wir **würden** spielen	we would play
ihr **würdet** spielen	you would play
sie/Sie **würden** spielen	they/you would play

Some verbs have their own forms

Sometimes, English uses special forms for the Conditional. These generally look like Simple Past forms:

- Yesterday, I *had* a dream.
- I wish I *had* a dream.

In German, these two forms are also similar. However, German normally **adds an umlaut change (and occasional -*e*)**:

person	Präteritum	Conditional
ich	war	w**ä**r*e*
du	warst	w**ä**r*(e)*st
er/sie/es	war	w**ä**r*e*
wir	waren	w**ä**ren
ihr	wart	w**ä**r*(e)*t
sie/Sie	waren	w**ä**ren

Apart from the *sein*, *haben* and the modal verbs, only a few verbs are still conjugated directly. For most verbs, this is now unusual, and considered old-fashioned. Use *würde* + infinitive instead.

To show you the pattern, here are the forms for *haben* (to have), *dürfen* (may) and *geben* (to give):

person	haben	dürfen	geben
(Präteritum: ich)	(hatte)	(durfte)	(gab)
ich	hätte	dürfte	gäbe
du	hättest	dürftest	gäbst
er/sie/es	hätte	dürfte	gäbe
wir	hätten	dürften	gäben
ihr	hättet	dürftet	gäbt
sie/Sie	hätten	dürften	gäben

For the other modal verbs, the forms for *ich* are:

- müssen - müsste
- wollen - wollte (no umlaut change!)
- sollen - sollte (also no umlaut change)

Here are some other verbs that use their own form for the Conditional:

- gehen (to go) - ginge
- wissen (to know) - wüsste
- wünschen (to wish) - wünschte

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- tun (to do) - täte
- brauchen (to need) - bräuchte

Again, for most other verbs, use *würde* + infinitive.

MATH

Equals

There are several ways to talk about equations:

- Vier plus drei *macht* sieben.
- Zwei plus zwei *ist* vier.
- Eins plus fünf *(ist) gleich* sechs.
- Sieben plus acht *ergibt* fünfzehn.

These are all equivalent (ha!).

BANKING

Das Konto, die Konten

Most nouns in German for the plural by appending an ending. There might be an umlaut change.

- der Hund, die Hund*e*
- das H*au*s, die H*äus*er

A few loanwords will instead replace the singular ending with a different one:

- das Kont*o*, die Kont*en*

You will learn more of these in the skill "Business 2".

ABSTRACT OBJECTS 2

Party, *Partei*

Die Party, an English loanword, refers to a celebration. A political party will be *die Partei*.

CONDITIONAL PERFECT

Conditional Perfect works just as normal Perfect, but **uses the conditional form of *haben*** instead. So,

- Ich *habe* ihn gesehen.

becomes

- Ich *hätte* ihn gesehen.

For verbs that use *sein* instead, use the **conditional form of *sein***:

- Ich *bin* Auto gefahren.

becomes

- Ich *wäre* Auto gefahren.

Be aware that in some verbs, such as *behalten, verlassen, erfahren*, the Participle looks like the Infinitive. Don't let that confuse you, always use the Participle!

BUSINESS 2

Firma

Most verbs in German get their plural by attaching an ending. There might be an umlaut change:

- der Hund, die Hund*e*
- das Haus, die H*äu*s*er*

A few verbs (from Ancient Greek and Latin) will instead replace a singular ending with a different plural ending:

- das Muse*um*, die Muse*en* (same for *Zentrum*, etc.)
- die Firm*a*, die Firm*en*
- das Kont*o*, die Kont*en*
- das Vir*us*, die Vir*en*
- das Vis*um*, die Vis*a*

FUTURE 4

The power of *machen*

Machen (to do) is a very versatile word. Often, when you don't know the word for an action, you can somehow use *machen* do describe it. Often, there is even an existing word combination:

Here are some examples. The "higher-level" word is in brackets.

- *auf*machen (öffnen) — to open
- *zu*machen (schließen) — to close
- *besser* machen (verbessern) — to improve
- *weg*machen (entfernen) — to remove

As a fallback, it can help you to just continue speaking, even when you run the risk making up your own words:

- Ich muss den Brief noch *machen*. (very bad German, but people will get what you mean)

As a **general rule**: It's better to speak bad German, than to stop speaking, just because you don't know how to say it well. Keep going, and learn from your mistakes.

Fake it, till you make it :)

ARTS

Plastik

Plastik is one of the few words that changes meaning, depending on which gender it is.

- das Plastik (artificial material, normally from petroleum)
- die Plastik (a word for "sculpture")

PASSIVE VOICE

Passive with *werden*

In German, *werden + perfect participle* forms a passive:

- Ich schreibe einen Brief. (I write a letter.)
- Ein Brief *wird* geschrieben. (A letter is being written.)

Note that the accusative object of an active sentence (*einen Brief*) becomes the (nominative) subject of the passive version (*ein Brief*).

The passive is often used when the original subject is unknown or irrelevant:

- Mein Handy *wurde* gestohlen! ("My phone was stolen!" — You don't know who did it.)
- Mein Handy *wurde* repariert. ("My phone was fixed." — You don't care by whom.)

Werden has three different functions

Using *werden* can be confusing for learners. However, there are **clear distinctions between its three main uses**:

Werden + adjective/noun = "to become"

If *werden* is used **in combination with an adjective or noun**, the meaning will be **"to become" or "to get"**:

- Sie *wird* Mutter. (She's becoming a mother.)
- Ich *werde* müde. (I'm getting tired.)

The German word *bekommen* is a confusing false friend to "become":

- Sie *bekommt* eine Tochter. (She's getting a daughter.)

Werden + Infinitiv = Futur

Refer to the lesson "Future 2" for details.

Werden + past participle = passive

If used **in combination with a participle**, *werden* creates one type of **passive**:

- Der Taxifahrer fährt den Fahrgast. (The taxi driver drives the passenger.)
- Der Fahrgast wird *gefahren*. (The passenger is being driven.)

CONDITIONAL 2

Please refer to lesson "Verbs: Conditional 1" to review to German's "Konjunktiv II" mood. This is normally formed by a form of *würden* + infinitive:

- Wenn ich reich wäre, *würde* ich den ganzen Tag Deutsch *lernen*. (If I were rich, I *would learn* German all day.)

Konjunktiv I

German has another, lesser used form, the "Konjunktiv I". It is mostly used for marking indirect speech in newspapers:

- Sänger: "Der Song ist gut!" (direct speech)
- Der Sänger sagte, *der Song **sei** gut*. (indirect speech)

Therefore, only the third person (singular and plural) is commonly used.

Here are the forms of *present tense* and *past tense* (Präteritum), together with the two forms of Konjunktiv, to demonstrate the pattern. Forms in brackets are rarely used:

person	present	Konj I
ich	habe	(habe)
du	hast	(habest)
er/sie/es	hat	habe
wir	haben	(haben)
ihr	habt	(habet)
sie/Sie	haben	(haben)

person	Präteritum	Konj II
ich	hatte	hätte
du	hattest	hättest
er/sie/es	hatte	hätte
wir	hatten	hätten
ihr	hattet	hättet
sie/Sie	hatten	hätten

As you can see, *Konjunktiv I* is sometimes the same as the present tense form. In these cases, German uses the Konjunktiv II form:

- Männer: "Wir haben Hunde!" (direct speech)
- Die Männer sagten, **sie *hätten* Hunde**. (indirect speech; uses *hätten* instead of *haben*)

Here are some commonly used forms:

- *sein* (to be) — er *sei*
- *haben* (have) — er *habe*
- *müssen* (must) — er *müsse*
- *können* (can) — er *könne*
- *wollen* (want) — er *wolle*

FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION

Der/Die Außerirdische: adjectival nouns

Some **adjectives can turn into nouns** in German. If they do so, **they still change endings** like any normal adjective:

- *deutsch* (German) — der *Deutsche*
- *gefangen* (captive) — der *Gefangene*
- *alt* (old) — der *Alte*
- *außerirdisch* (extraterrestrial) — der *Außerirdische*
- *verwandt* (related) — der *Verwandte*
- der deutsch**e** Mann — der Deutsch**e**
- ein deutsch**er** Mann — ein Deutsch**er**
- Ich kenne einen deutsch**en** Mann — Ich kenne einen Deutsch**en**.
- eine deutsch**e** Frau — eine Deutsch**e**
- der Hund der deutsch**en** Frau — der Hund der Deutsch**en**

… and so on.

Google "german adjectival nouns" for more information.

If you want, now would be a good time to review the adjective endings in earlier lessons :)

N-declension

Don't confuse adjectival nouns with nouns that follow the "n-declension". (See lesson "Dative" for details)

For example, all other nouns for nationalities that end in *-e* follow the n-declension:

- der Brite, der Chinese, der Ire, …

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Relative clauses

In English, relative clauses look like this:

- The girl *who came to visit him* was his aunt.
- The man, *whose daughter worked as a manager*, came home.

In German, relative clauses are subordinate clauses. The verb moves from position 2 to the end.

- Der Mann kauft Hundefutter. Ihm gehört der Hund. (The man buys dog food. The dog belongs to him.)
- Der Mann, *dem der Hund gehört*, kauft Hundefutter. (The man *to whom the dog belongs* buys dog food.)

Relative clauses are *always* set off by commas from the rest of the sentence.

(There's no distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.)

Relative pronouns

The **relative pronouns look like the definite articles**, with the **exception of the dative plural and the genitive** forms.

The relative pronouns closely correspond to the personal pronouns they replace:

- Das ist der Mann. *Er* hat einen Hund.
- Das ist der Mann, *der* einen Hund hat.
- Das sind die Bälle. Mit *ihnen* spielt er. (These are the balls. He plays with them.)
- Das sind die Bälle, mit *denen* er spielt.

pers. pronoun	rel. pronoun	grammar
e**r**	d**er**	masc. (nom.)
e**s**	da**s**	neut. (nom.+acc.)
s**ie**	d**ie**	fem./pl. (nom.+acc.)
ih**n**	d**en**	masc. (acc.)
ih**m**	d**em**	masc.+neut. (dat.)
ih**r**	d**er**	fem. (dat.)
ih**nen**	d**enen**	pl. (dat.)

Relative pronouns can never be dropped.

Genitive relative clauses

The **genitive version derives from the possessive pronoun**:

- Die Frau ist krank. **Ihr** Sohn hat einen Hund.
- Die Frau, **deren Sohn** einen Hund hat, ist krank.
- Der Mann mag Pizza. **Sein**e Tochter kann singen. (The man likes pizza. His daughter can sing.)
- Der Mann, **dessen** Tochter singen kann, mag Pizza.

Here, too, the possessive pronouns correspond somewhat to the relative pronouns:

poss. pronoun	rel. pronoun	grammar
sein(*)	de**ss**en	masc./neut.
ih**r**(*)	de**r**en	fem./pl.

The relative clause determines which pronoun to use

Be aware that the **relevant case is in the relative clause**, not the main clause:

- *Der Hund* schläft. (Hund = nominative)
- Ich mag *den Hund*. (Hund = accusative)
- Der Hund, **den** ich mag, schläft. (use accusative relative pronoun)

The form you need to use is governed by the grammatical gender and number of the word that is being referred to (outside the relative clause), and the case is governed by the context of the relative clause.

Keep in mind that certain prepositions and verbs always trigger a certain case, e.g. the preposition *mit* always takes the dative case and so does the verb *helfen*.

- Das Kind schläft. Die Frau hat *ihm* geholfen. (The kid sleeps. The woman helped him.)
- Das Kind, *dem* die Frau geholfen hat, schläft.

CULTURE

What is a *Wurst?*

A *Wurst* is a sausage. It does not specifically refer to any kind of sausage. It could be a salami, chorizo, mortadella, frankfurter, etc.

Bratwurst specifically refers to a fried or grilled sausage.