

# German Possessive Pronouns

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A CHART LIKE THIS?  
IF SO, YOU'RE LEARNING IT WRONG.

		ich	du	er	sie	es	wir	ihr	sie
<b>Nom.</b>	m	meiner	deiner	seiner	ihrer	seiner	unserer	eurer	ihrer
	n	meins	deins	seins	ihr(e)s	seins	unseres	eures	ihr(e)s
	f/pl	meine	deine	seine	ihre	seine	unsere	eure	ihre
<b>Dat.</b>	m/n	meinem	deinem	seinem	ihrem	seinem	unserem	eurem	ihrem
	f	meiner	deiner	seiner	ihrer	seiner	unserer	eurer	ihrer
	pl	meinen	deinen	seinen	ihren	seinen	unseren	euren	ihren
<b>Acc.</b>	m	meinen	deinen	seinen	ihren	seinen	unseren	euren	ihren
	n	meins	deins	seins	ihr(e)s	seins	unseres	eures	ihr(e)s
	f/pl	meine	deine	seine	ihre	seine	unsere	eure	ihre

[GO STRAIGHT TO THE CHART SECTION](#)

OR

KEEP READING:

## GET UNSTUCK WITH GERMAN

Finally understand hard-to-grasp German grammar concepts.

GET STARTED FREE



Written by [Laura Bennett](#)

- Updated: May 1, 2023

- 9 minute read

✓ FACT CHECKED

CITE US

© WHY GERMAN WITH LAURA

It's all well-and-good to talk about *the* cat, a cat, even *this* cat or *every* cat, etc. Maybe you've even learned how to say that's *my* cat (<- nice job, btw!).

But how do you say 'that cat is *mine*' when you're in a situation that urgently calls for distinguishing between cats and/or between their pets ... er, owners?

This is very important.

No, really. Maybe you don't need to talk about cats. But I bet that you still use the possessive pronouns *mine*, *yours*, *his*, *hers*, *ours*, and *theirs* often enough!

General rule of thumb: if you have words in English you use frequently, you probably want to learn them in German 😊.

So, let's put another feather in your cap — it's time to learn possessive pronouns!

## Key Learnings:

- The German possessive pronouns for all 'persons'
- How [noun gender](#) & [case](#) impact possessive pronoun usage
- The better term to use than 'possessive pronoun' and why it matters
- How to correctly 'plug' possessive pronouns into the case system
- Why the work you've possibly done already to learn [declensions](#) will continue paying off!

# The Basics of Possessive Pronouns

Maybe you've already learned the [personal pronouns](#) in the [nominative](#), [accusative](#), and [dative](#). If so, that's SPLENDID. (If not, it's OK. You can still start here. Maybe read those guides next!)

As you may know, pronouns (in general) are simple, sweet, widely-used words that *replace* nouns / noun phrases, no matter how short or long!

Example:

*that crazy cat with 3 legs and a stumpy tail* (noun phrase) → it (pronoun)

A *possessive* pronoun (*mine, yours, his, hers, ours, or theirs*) replaces a noun phrase that *also* has a possessive determiner (e.g. *my*) at the start of it:

Example:

*that crazy cat with 3 legs and a stumpy tail is ~~my crazy cat with 3 legs and a stumpy tail~~ MINE!*

As you can see, possessive pronouns are shortcuts that save us from needing to repeat ourselves all the time. And that's handy!

There are a lot of pronouns in English, but even more in German — BUT there are just 6 *possessive* pronouns in both languages! That is totally manageable.

## How do possessive pronouns work in English?

The 6 possessive pronouns in English are *mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs*.

Possessive pronouns are used to indicate *who owns / possesses* whatever noun (or noun phrase) is being replaced:

That crazy cat is *my crazy cat* → That crazy cat is *mine*.

*NOTE: Possessive pronouns are used to indicate possession of non-people! The pencil / car / soda / cat / jacket ... is mine. But not The grandma / the baby / the husband ... is mine.*

*If you want to express possession (<– loosely defined) of people, you need to use a possessive determiner: my, your, his, her, our, and their. (Notice how the possessive pronouns and the [possessive determiners](#) are nearly identical!)*

Usually, a possessive pronoun is the very last (or, less often, the very first) word in a sentence:

*The red one is yours. // Yours is the red one.*

**Now, here is the awesome part: ALL of these points on English possessive pronouns *also* apply to German possessive pronouns — SWEET!**

## How do possessive pronouns work in German?

Just as in English, German possessive pronouns are ...

1. used to indicate possession of non-people
2. the very last or very first (<– more common than in English) word in a sentence
3. very nearly identical to German possessive *determiners*

**So, here is your ONE set of 6 total possessive pronouns to learn:**

mein- (mine)

dein- (yours [informal])

sein- (his / its)

ihr- (hers / theirs / Yours [formal, singular & plural])

unser- (ours)

euer- / eur- (y'all's [you, informal, plural])

The trickiest aspects of this list are ...

1. Knowing which form of 'you' to use — informal? formal? singular? plural?
2. [Knowing which meaning of 'ihr' is being used — does it mean hers? theirs? Yours?](#)

After you have that sorted out, *then* what you need to know is this:

**German possessive pronouns must take [declensions](#) in order for you to use them!**

Note: this is why the German possessive pronouns above are all listed with dashes at the end — those dashes get replaced with different single-letter *declensions* (e.g. -m, -r, -s, -e, -n) that reflect the gender & case of the noun you're replacing with the possessive pronoun.

If you're not already familiar with declensions as part of the German case system, don't worry! I'm going to walk you through what you need to in the very next section!

## When & How to Use Personal Pronouns

---

*When* to use a German possessive pronoun is very easy: you use them exactly in those same instances that you'd use a possessive pronoun in English. So, that's pretty straightforward.

It's the *how* to use a German possessive pronoun that is harder. In English we have just 6 possessive pronouns and done!

But in German, we have 6 'root' (or 'base') possessive pronouns that then take little changes (i.e. *declensions*) on their tailends.

There are 5 possible declensions (-m, -n, -r, -e, -s), so there are 5 ways to say each possessive pronoun, e.g. *meinem, meinen, meiner, meine, mein(e)s*.

I know that that can already sound a little scary — I mean, 6 pronouns x 5 declensions = 30 different possessive pronoun options to choose between. Yikes.

Thankfully, there's a chart for that! It will do all the heavy-lifting for you!

# Conventional Possessive Pronouns Chart

Usually, possessive pronouns might be learned with an intense chart like this:

		ich	du	er	sie	es	wir	ihr	sie
Nom.	m	meiner	deiner	seiner	ihrer	seiner	unserer	eurer	ihrer
	n	meins	deins	seins	ihr(e)s	seins	unseres	eures	ihr(e)s
	f/pl	meine	deine	seine	ihre	seine	unsere	eure	ihre
Dat.	m/n	meinem	deinem	seinem	ihrer	seinem	unserem	eurem	ihrer
	f	meiner	deiner	seiner	ihrer	seiner	unserer	eurer	ihrer
	pl	meinen	deinen	seinen	ihrer	seinen	unseren	euren	ihrer
Acc.	m	meinen	deinen	seinen	ihrer	seinen	unseren	euren	ihrer
	n	meins	deins	seins	ihr(e)s	seins	unseres	eures	ihr(e)s
	f/pl	meine	deine	seine	ihre	seine	unsere	eure	ihre

You have the 3 cases (nominativ, dativ, akkusativ) on the left-hand side. Each case is then split into genders: masculine (m), neuter (n), and feminine (f), and plural (pl). [Note: sometimes m / n are combined; sometimes f / pl are combined].

The *nominative personal pronouns* ich, du, er, sie, es, wir, ihr, sie (English equivalents: I, you, he, she, it, we, y'all, they) are listed across the top.

So, if you know the gender of your noun AND the case it's in AND which person is being referred (i.e. are you trying to say *mine*, *yours*, *his*, or ??), then you can find the corresponding part on the chart that gives you *exactly* the possessive pronoun you're looking for — the *declensions* are already added on for you.

If that's your cup of tea, that's fine.

But I think there's a *much* better way.

## Possessive Pronouns, Smarter Not Harder!

You can use a chart like the one above that has everything spelled out for you. But it might become a crutch that holds you back from fluently speaking German.

Instead, I suggest that you learn *the formula* for how to work with German possessive pronouns.

If you learn principles & patterns, then you can ‘plug different values into the formula’ to *also* always get the exact answer that you need — but in a much more self-sufficient, practical, efficient way that *supports* fluent speaking.

*In fact, this concept of working with formulas & patterns, etc. applies to many other aspects of German grammar as well. The all-in-one chart I’m going to share with you is a declensions chart that replaces a whopping 10 conventional charts!!!*

Picking out the correct possessive pronoun (with the correct declension on it) is a 2-step process that involves knowing 3 things.

## How to pick the correct possessive pronoun

The three things you need to know are these:

1. *To whom does the noun belong?*
2. [What is the gender of the noun?](#)
3. [What is the case of the noun?](#)

When you have the answers to these questions, **then it’s just a 2-step process to having the correct *declension* to put on the possessive pronoun:**

**Step 1:** Pick out the corresponding ‘root’ / ‘base’ possessive pronoun that lines up with whoever owns the noun in question — is the pencil *mine*? *yours*? *theirs*? etc.

**Step 2:** Find the corresponding place in the All-In-One Declensions Chart (coming up!) that matches the *gender* & *case* of the noun (e.g. of the pencil).

# How to use the All-In-One Declensions Chart






Rather than spelling out each possessive pronoun with each possible declension attached to it, this is a chart of JUST the single-letter declensions (-m, -r, -n, -e, -s) that *get added* to the 'root' / 'base' possessive pronouns.

Again, the benefit of learning declensions this way — where you need to know the formulas & patterns for using it — is that then you are not dependent on being spoon-fed German.

This chart puts the power in *your* hands and the sky's the limit! Whatever you need to decline in German, this chart helps you do it.

You'll have less to memorize, and you also see the beautiful rhyme & reason behind many German grammar structures.

If your goal is to speak fluent German, then this is the chart for you.

<b>All-In-One German Declensions Chart</b> (Strong declensions only)				
 strong declension				
	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.	Plural
				
<b>Nom.</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>Acc.</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>Dat.</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Gen.</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>r</b>



You can see the gender options listed across the top (masc., fem., neut., and plural) and the case options listed down the left side (nom, acc., dat., gen).

Now, all that is left is to *combine* your 'root' / 'base' possessive pronoun with the declension.

If you try to do that with *mein-* (mine), you would get *meinr*, *meine*, *meins*, *meinn*, *meinm* dependent on where on the chart you are.

Did you notice that there's a problem?

## Something is missing!

---

It'd be pretty hard to pronounce *meinr*, *meinn*, or *meinm*, don't you think?

What we need to do in these instances is add a little glue in the form of an 'e': *meiner*, *meinen*, *meinem*. 😊

These added 'e's don't mean anything — they are just filler — but they almost always need to be added between a root/base possessive pronoun & the desired declension.

In fact, the only time they *don't* need to be added is when the -e declension is listed in the chart (e.g. feminine & plural, nominative & plural). In other words,

**Always add an 'e' if there's not one there already: *meinEr*, but not *meinEe*.**

Note: the 'e' filler/glue for the neuter nominative & accusative is also *optional*: e.g. both *meines* AND *meins* are acceptable.

## Examples

OK, let's make this all super-concrete.

I'm going to give you the 3 things you need to know: *to whom* the noun belongs, and the *gender* and *case* of the noun.

Let's see if you can 1) find the correct spot on the chart and 2) correctly combine the possessive pronoun root with the declension it needs.






## Example #1 — Is this pencil *his*?

Pronoun: *sein-* (his)

Noun: *der Bleistift* (pencil, masculine)

Case: nominative (subject)

Since *Bleistift* is masculine and you know it's the subject (so, in the nominative case), can you find the right spot on the chart? Nice!!!

<b>All-In-One German Declensions Chart</b> (Strong declensions only)				
 strong declension				
	<b>Masc.</b> 	<b>Fem.</b> 	<b>Neut.</b> 	<b>Plural</b> 
<b>Nom.</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>Acc.</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>Dat.</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Gen.</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>r</b>

What is the declension listed there? Yes. An 'r'.

If you add the 'r' to 'sein', you get *seinr* — does that work or are we forgetting something?

Good job. We need that filler 'e'! *seiner* is then the result.

**ANSWER:** *Ist dieser Bleistift seiner?*

## Example #2 — I finished my cake. Do you still have *yours* left?


Pronoun: *dein*– (your)

Noun: *der Kuchen* (cake, masculine)





Case: accusative (direct object)

OK, find the spot on the chart where masculine & accusative intersect:

**All-In-One German Declensions Chart**  
(Strong declensions only)

 strong declension

**German** with **Laura**

	<b>Masc.</b> 	<b>Fem.</b> 	<b>Neut.</b> 	<b>Plural</b> 
<b>Nom.</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>Acc.</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>e</b>
<b>Dat.</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>m</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Gen.</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>s</b>	<b>r</b>

What is the declension listed there? Yes. An 'n'.

If you add the 'n' to 'dein' (and remembering the filler 'e!'), you get *deinen*.

**ANSWER:** *Ich habe meinen Kuchen aufgegessen. Hast du noch deinen?*

## Main Takeaways

1. There are only 6 possessive pronouns in German.

2. Possessive pronouns are used (when the context is clear) to replace nouns / noun phrases that have a possessive determiner at the start of them: My pencil is red → Mine is red.
3. Possessive pronouns are usually the very first or very last words in a sentence.
4. Some possessive pronouns have multiple uses — e.g. 'ihr/Ihr' can mean hers, theirs OR Yours [you, formal]'.
5. Possessive pronouns are nearly identical to possessive determiners (they both have the same 'roots'), but sometimes take different declensions.
6. To pick the right possessive pronoun AND put the right declensions on, you have to know 3 things: to whom does the item belong? What is the gender of the item? What is the case of the item?
7. Possessive pronouns ALWAYS take the strong declensions (for whatever gender they have & case they are in).
8. Rather than memorizing multiple charts where each possessive pronoun is totally spelled out, it's better to memorize ONE chart of declensions only and learn how to 'plug in' the root possessive pronouns to get the result you need.

---

## ON THIS PAGE

[The Basics Of Possessive Pronouns](#)

[How Do Possessive Pronouns Work In English?](#)

[How Do Possessive Pronouns Work In German?](#)

[When & How To Use Personal Pronouns](#)

[Conventional Possessive Pronouns Chart](#)

[Possessive Pronouns, Smarter Not Harder!](#)

[How To Pick The Correct Possessive Pronoun](#)

[How To Use The All-In-One Declensions Chart](#)

[Something Is Missing!](#)

[Examples](#)

[Main Takeaways](#)

---

## PRONOUNS

---

[German Accusative Pronouns](#)

[German Dative Pronouns](#)

[German Personal Pronouns](#)

[German Reflexive Pronouns](#)

[German Relative Pronouns](#)

## Ready to Get Unstuck Learning German?

If you've been trying to learn German but still don't quite 'get it', get ready for a major breakthrough.

[GET STARTED FREE](#)



© 2023 German with Laura LLC

301 N Duluth Ave

Sioux Falls, SD 57104

All Rights Reserved



---

[Nouns](#)

[Adjectives](#)

[Prepositions](#)

[Pronouns](#)

[Local Guides](#)

---

[Der Die Das](#)

[Noun Gender](#)

[Noun Plurals](#)

[Cases](#)

[Adjective Endings](#)

---

[About](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Returns and Refunds](#)

[Contact](#)

---