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# What are the most common German words? Start with these 100

View a list of the most common German words in context with translations in English. Also, learn how to put new German vocabulary into practice.

[Verena S.](#) | Updated February 29, 2024 | 18 min read

## Table of Contents

100 most used German words

Nouns

Indefinite and Definite Articles

Personal Pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns

Possessive Pronouns

Other Pronouns

Adjectives

Most Common Question Words

Verbs

General adverbs

Adverbs of place

Adverbs of time and frequency

Prepositions

Conjunctions

Why learn the most used German words first?

Next Steps – Make new vocabulary stick

Break down the list of most common German words into smaller lists

Use memory tricks to learn the most common German words

Quiz yourself on the 100 most used



This article will show you the 100 most common German words with definitions and give examples of how they're used. Then, we'll discuss several ways you can practice using these essential words so that you remember them forever.

These 100 words (which we've listed below) are the most commonly used in the German language. If you learn German online, this article will help you understand much of what you read and hear, and give you a solid platform to work from.

Keep reading to learn more or discover [online German classes](#) on Preply.

## 100 most used German words

We've broken down the list into different word groups (nouns, verbs, adjectives). Keep reading to discover 100 of the most used — and useful — German words.

### Nouns

**Remember:** in German, nouns always start with an uppercase letter:

German word (with its gender-specific article)	English Translation
<i>die Zeit</i> (fem.)	time
<i>das Beispiel</i> (neut.)	example

German words with flashcards

Look for these most used words in German media

Add the most common German words to your conversations

Use them in your German writing exercises

So, what next?

*das Jahr (neut.)*

year

*der Morgen (masc.)*

morning

*die Stadt (fem.)*

the city



## Indefinite and Definite Articles

German word

English Translation

*ein* (masc. & neut.) / *eine* (fem.)

a, an

*der* (masc.), *das* (neut.), *die* (fem/plural.)

the

## Personal Pronouns

German word

English Translation

*ich*

I

*du*

you [singular informal]

*er*

he

*es*

it

*sie*

she, her; they, them

*wir*

we

*ihr*

you [plural informal]

*Sie*

you [singular & plural formal; always capitalized]

## Reflexive Pronouns

German word	English Translation
<i>mich</i>	myself
<i>dich</i>	yourself
<i>sich</i>	oneself, himself, herself, itself, yourself [plural informal], themselves

## Possessive Pronouns

German word	English Translation
<i>mein</i>	my
<i>dein</i>	your [singular informal]
<i>sein</i>	his
<i>ihr / Ihr</i>	hers, their; your [singular & plural formal] [when capitalized]
<i>unser</i>	our
<i>euer</i>	your [plural informal]

## Other Pronouns

German word	English Translation
<i>dieser, diese, dieses</i>	this, these, that, those
<i>mehr</i>	more
<i>man</i>	you, one, we, somebody

<i>kein</i>	<i>nichts</i>
<i>kein, keine</i>	<i>you, one, we, somebody</i>
	none; not one; none [masculine & neuter / feminine]
	Examples:
	<i>Er trägt <b>keinen</b> Mantel.</i> (He's not wearing a coat.)
	<i>Ich habe <b>keine</b> Ahnung.</i> (I have no idea.)
<i>nichts</i>	nothing; not anything
	Examples:
	<i>für <b>nichts</b></i> (for nothing)
	<i><b>nichts</b> als</i> (nothing but)

## Adjectives

German word	English Translation
<i>lang</i>	long
	<i>When used as the adverb "lange", this means "for a long time"</i>
<i>neu</i>	new
<i>alt</i>	old
<i>viel</i>	a lot, much, many
<i>groß</i>	big, large, tall
<i>klein</i>	small
<i>ganz</i>	whole, complete, entire
	<i>Also used as an adverb meaning "quite" or "really"</i>
<i>andere / anderer / anderes</i>	other

## Most Common Question Words

German word	English Translation
wie	how
wo	where
was	what

For additional information on this topic, check out [our article on common question words](#) and forming questions.

## Verbs

German word	English Translation
geben	to give
sagen	to say
kommen	to come
wollen	to want
lassen	to allow, to let
wissen	to know [a fact]
gehen	to go
haben	to have
sehen	to see
machen	to make
sein	to be
werden	to become

The present tense of **werden** is also used to form the future tense of other verbs

The present tense of verbs can also used to form the future tense of other verbs.

Check out our guide on [German verb conjugation rules](#) to understand how to use these verbs in sentences.

## General adverbs

German word	English Translation
<i>ja</i>	yes, really, certainly
<i>nein</i>	no
<i>nicht</i>	not
<i>auch</i>	also, too
<i>so</i>	so, this way, thus
<i>etwa</i>	about, approximately
<i>vielleicht</i>	perhaps, maybe, by chance
<i>kaum</i>	hardly
<i>doch</i>	anyway, all the same; after all  <i>When used as a conjunction, <b>doch</b> means "but," "but still," or "yet"</i>
<i>nur</i>	only

## Adverbs of place

German word	English Translation
<i>hier</i>	here
<i>oben</i>	up there, above

<i>unten</i>	Down there
<i>da</i>	there
<i>Also means "because" when used as a conjunction</i>	

## Adverbs of time and frequency

German word	English Translation
<i>dann</i>	<i>then</i>
<i>wieder</i>	<i>again</i>
<i>noch</i>	<i>still, yet</i>
<i>schon</i>	<i>already</i>
	<i>Not to be confused with "schön" (beautiful)</i>
<i>jetzt</i>	<i>now; nowadays</i>
<i>immer</i>	<i>always</i>
	Examples of different usage:
	<i>was immer</i> (whatever)
	<i>wann immer</i> (whenever)
	<i>wo immer</i> (wherever)
	<i>wie immer</i> (however)
	<i>wer immer</i> (whoever)

## Prepositions

German word	English Translation
<i>mit</i>	with
<i>zu</i>	to, towards, at, in, into, on for
<i>in / im</i>	<i>in, at, within [im = "in the"]</i>
<i>unter</i>	<i>under</i>
<i>auf</i>	<i>on, in, at</i>
<i>für</i>	<i>for</i>
<i>von</i>	<i>from, of</i>
<i>an</i>	<i>at, on</i>
<i>bei</i>	<i>by, with, at</i>
<i>aus</i>	<i>out, out of, from</i>
<i>nach</i>	<i>after, toward</i>
<i>durch</i>	<i>through</i>
<i>über</i>	<i>above, over, about</i>
<i>vor</i>	<i>in front of; ahead of; outside; against; before, ago</i>
<i>um</i>	<i>around, at</i>
<i>zwischen</i>	<i>between</i>

## Conjunctions

German word	English Translation
<i>und</i>	<i>and</i>
<i>als</i>	<i>when, as</i>
<i>dass</i>	<i>Means "than" when used as an adverb</i>
	<i>that</i>

gruss	trial
aber	but
oder	or
wenn	when, if
denn	because [more polite]
weil	because
bis	until
Examples:	
<i>Bis später</i> (Until later)	
<i>Bis bald</i> (See you soon; literally “until soon”)	
<i>Bis zum nächsten Mal</i> (Until the next time)	
sobald	as soon as
während	while
mal	times / [number] by [number]
Used for multiplying numbers:	
<i>zwei mal vier ist acht</i> (two times four is eight)	

## Why learn the most used German words first?

Vocabulary is a crucial part of learning a new language, you have to understand what words mean to form sentences and hold conversations. The point in learning the 100 most common German words first is that they are the ones you are most likely to hear or read.

It might seem like this list is missing some essentials. You might have been expecting to see basic vocabulary such as household words, days of the week, colors, or months of the year. Those words are fundamental for German learners, of course. However, the most common German words are the glue that holds German conversations together. They tell you **when** things happen, **where** they happen, and **who** is acting.

These are words that can change the meaning of a sentence, like *doch* (however), *nicht* (not), and *aber* (but). If you concentrate on learning these most used German words early in

your studies, you'll soon understand a higher percentage of what you read and hear in German.

## Next Steps – Make new vocabulary stick

It takes consistent practice to learn the most common German words thoroughly. You'll need to practice them a lot and in a variety of ways. Here's some techniques we recommend:

### Break down the list of most common German words into smaller lists

Before you start trying to memorize these words, use a "divide and conquer" strategy to make a list more manageable. For example, you might arrange the words by categories, as we've done here. Or, if it makes more sense to you, learn the words in alphabetical order.

You could also memorize all the one-syllable words first, then move on to the two-syllable words. Ultimately, your technique should make sense to **you**.

### Use memory tricks to learn the most common German words

Practice saying these words aloud. As you say each word, think about its meaning. Does the German word you're trying to learn sound like a word you already know? English is a Germanic language, so you'll find some familiar-sounding terms among these 100 most used German words.

For instance, *hier* is pronounced almost the same as its English counterpart **here**. *Mein* (my) is similar to a related English word, "mine."

You could also use **mnemonic images** to associate the word you're trying to remember. For example, the word *über* has many meanings, including about, via, and over. You could create a mental picture to help you remember all of them. For instance, you might visualize a brightly painted ride-share vehicle and say, "I'm taking an *über* to go **around** town, **via** the expressway, and **over** a bridge."

### Quiz yourself on the 100 most used German words with flashcards

Whether you use a flashcard app, buy pre-made flashcards, or make your own, this tried-and-trusted method can make these important words stick in your memory. All you have to do is write the German word on one side of the card, with the English translation on the other.

You could start by looking at the German side of each card first and trying to remember the

definition. As the German words and their meanings get more familiar, you can make the process more challenging. Start with the translation and try to remember the German word on the other side of the flashcard.

### Look for these most used words in German media

Once a day, choose a small handful of the most used German words and challenge yourself to find them in online media. Pick out a short video, a piece of audio (such as one of the [top 11 German podcasts](#)), or an online article. Keep listening or reading until you find all of the words on your daily list.

When you see or hear them, take a moment to think about how they're being used in context. Listen to their pronunciation and try to imitate it.

### Add the most common German words to your conversations

Whether you're chatting with a German conversation partner or working with a personal tutor, try to incorporate the most used German words into your conversations. Again, it's best to concentrate on only a few words at a time, until you feel you know them well.

How do you know when you've genuinely learned them? When you can automatically understand what they mean — and know when to use them correctly without even thinking about it — then you have mastered these words.

### Use them in your German writing exercises

Even beginner-level German students can write a few simple sentences. (You can use [the must-knows of German sentence structure](#) as guidelines for building your own sentences.) Try writing at least a sentence or two per day with your target German words.

Native [German tutors on Preply](#) can give you feedback on your German writing. Your tutor can help you learn to use the most common German words correctly, so you learn to speak and understand German more like a native.

### So, what next?

Use this guide as a platform to [learn German online](#). These essential words will help you get a basic understanding, and if you use the study tips we've given, you'll be able to use them in everyday situations in no time.

No matter how you choose to learn these words, your reward will be a greater understanding of the German language and in less time than you may have thought possible.

of the German language, and in less time than you may have thought possible.

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**Verena S.** 1 article

Verena is a Localization Specialist for the DACH region at Preply. Originally from Austria, she caught the living abroad bug while studying Translation and Conference Interpreting and lived in the US and Scotland before moving to sunny Barcelona. After several years of learning Spanish, using the Preply platform has helped her to get to the next level and she can't wait to pick a new language to learn. Besides languages and localization, Verena loves travelling, outdoor activities, crime novels and (bad) puns.

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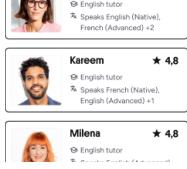
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