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1. Nouns

Nouns

DEFINITION 1.1.

Substantives/Nouns are people, animals, things, concepts and ideas.

Substantivesⁱ are more commonly known as a nouns. Calling something a substantive is just a more grammatical jargony way of referring to a noun. The reason that there are two names for the same thing goes back to latin , where the phrase *Nomen Substantivus* or *the name of substance* was used. I assume lazy humans just split this into two words meaning the same thing over the course of history.

German Nouns / Substantives have two defining characteristics that will help you identify them in a German sentence. They are :

1. The first character of a noun is always uppercase.
2. Every noun is preceded by a grammatically gendered article.
3. German Nouns are declined.

1.1. Gendered Nouns

German is a gendered language therefore every substantive comes with one of three genders. In German the gender is known as *Genus*. German dileniates between three grammatical genders and they are :

1. **Maskulin** : der
2. **Feminin** : die
3. **Neuter** : das

The words attached to each gender der , die , and das are what we use to indicate that a particular noun belongs to a certain gender class. These three words are called *articles*. These are talked about in more detail in the next sub section.

It is very important to note that the gender of a noun is NOT related to its physical or biological gender, so please keep this in mind. As an exaple a young girl

ⁱIn German a substantive is spelled as substantiv so over the course of this document I will probably end up using both, so yeah, if someone besides me (or more probably my future self) is reading this, dont give me shit for having spelling mistakes everywhere. This statement applies for a whole bunch of words.

is : *das Madchen* , which is the article for a neuter noun, even though we would assume that a young girl would be assigned the feminine article. It is important to keep the differnce between grammatical gender and physical gender distict in your mind to avoid making mistakes.

1.2. Articles

As mentioned in Section 1.1, every German noun has a corresponding grammatical article. There are two types of article a noun can have , and they are :

- **Definite Articles** : The english equivalent is the word “*the*”
- **In-definite Articles** : The english equivalent is the word “*a*”

There are vairous things that affect what the exact article is for the word that we are using. The main things to keep into consideration for each German noun are :

- Grammatical Gender
- Count (Singular / Plural)
- Case

Based on these three things the article we are using for each noun becomes very specific and gives a detailed description of the function this noun is serving in the sentence.

Since there is no noun without an article in German, the basis for discussing articles only arises when we understand the German cases. So cases and articles changes are discussed in Section 1.2.3 which is exclusively about articles and Cases.

So we need to learn every noun in German along with its corresponding article. I really don't expect most sane humans will bother sitting around memorizing the article for each word, so the next couple of subsections have some tricks to help in guessing them.

NOTE

The importance of articles in German cannot be emphasized enough. In no correctly formed German sentence will there exist a noun without its definite or indefinite article.

Every single noun, in every single sentence MUST be written with a corresponding grammatical article (in the correct case of course).

1.2.1. Article Tips : Masculine (Der)

The following list provides some common roots / endings of words that will receive the **der (Maskulin)** article.

- -ant e.g. der Konsonant
- -ast e.g. der Gast
- -ich e.g. der Teppich
- -ismus e.g. der Marxismus
- -ling e.g. der Häftling
- -us e.g. der Rhythmus
- -er e.g. der Sommer

A note about the last one with the -er ending. This one not only means that the grammatical gender of the noun is masculine, but most of the time often is also referring to the physical gender. E.g. der Lehrer (the male teacher), der Amerikaner (the male American), der Fahrer (the male driver).

The following things will always be masculine regardless of what the noun ending is :

- **Times of the day** (*Tageszeiten*)
der Morgen , der Vormittag , der Mittag , der Nachmittag , der Abend , der Nacht
(Morning , Late Morning , Noon , Afternoon , Evening , Night)
- **Days of the week** (*Wochentage*)
der Montag , der Dienstag , der Mittwoch , der Donnerstag , der Freitag , der Samstag , der Sonntag
(Monday , Tuesday , Wednesday , Thursday , Friday , Saturday , Sunday)
- **Months** (*Monate*)
der Januar , der Februar , der März , der April , der Mai , der Juni , der Juli , der August , der September , der Oktober , der November , der Dezember
(January , February , March , April , May , June , July , August , October , November , December)
- **Seasons** (*Jahreszeiten*)
der Sommer , der Frühling , der Herbst , der Winter
(Summer , Spring , Fall , Winter)
- **Weather** (*Wetter*)
der Wind , der Regen , der Schnee , ...
(Windy , Rainy , Snowy ...)

An exception is *die Wolke* (the thunder)

- **Cardinal Directions** (*Wochentage*)
A note about the cardinal directions. When we are using them we can basically have two forms : aus der Norden , or

- **Alcoholic drinks** (*Alkoholische Getränke*)
der Wein , der Schnapps , der vodka , ...
(Wine , Schnapps , Vodka , ...)

The exception to the alcoholic drinks rule is Beer which is always *das Bier*

1.2.2. Article Tips : Feminine (Die)

The following list provides some common roots / endings of words that will receive the **die (feminin)** article.

- -ung e.g. die Entscheidung
- -tät e.g. die Universität
- -tion e.g. die
- -sion e.g. die Explosion
- -schaft e.g. die Gesellschaft
- -heit e.g. die Schönheit
- -keit e.g. die Schnelligkeit
- -ie e.g. die Geographie
- -enz e.g. die
- -anz e.g. die Toleranz
- -ei e.g. die Schläger
- -ur e.g. die Natur
- -in e.g. die Boxer
- -itis e.g. die Bronchitis
- -sis e.g. die Gene
- -ik e.g. die Fabrik
- -ade e.g. die Limonade
- -age e.g. die Friseur
- -ine e.g. die Maschine
- -ere e.g. die Schere
- -isse e.g. die Kentner
- -ive e.g. die Alternativen
- -se e.g. die Rolle

Just like the note about the -er in the der section, the last point with the -in ending not only means that the grammatical gender of the noun is feminine, but most of the time often is also referring to the physical gender. E.g. die Lehrerin (the female teacher) , die Fahrerin (the female driver), die Amerikanerin (the female American)

NOTE

The large majority of nouns which end in -e are feminine, e.g. : die Lampe (the lamp), die Rede (the speech), and die Bühne (the stage).

This is true roughly 80% of the time opposed to being a grammatical rule, which is why this information is in a note as opposed to in the list above.

The following things will always be feminine regardless of what the noun ending is :

- **Motobike Brands** (*Motorradmarken*)
die Yamaha , die Harley-Davidson

1.2.3. Article Tips : Neuter (Das)

The following list provides some common roots / endings of words that will receive the **das (neuter)** article.

- -chen e.g. Das Häuschen
- -lein e.g. Das Büchlein
- -um e.g. Das Wachstum

NOTE

Similar to the note in the feminine article tips section, a lot of the German nouns that begin with Ge- are neuter but not all, which is why you are reading this in a note right now and not the main list above.

The following things will always be neutral regardless of what the noun ending is :

- **Names of Colors** (*Farbnamen*)
das Weiß , das Blau , das Rot , das Grau , das Schwarz , ...
(*white , blue , red , gray , black , ...*)
- The exception from the der section on alcoholic drinks : *das Bier*

German just like English build plurals out of nouns by appending certain endings to the noun. It's a bit more involved than English however, since English has only the -s ending, German has a few more. The ending appended is relatively arbitrary so there are few choices but to learn the plural formation along with the original noun, although after a while you should get a feel for what kind of word will get what kind of plural formation.

Below are some general guidelines to building the plural formation for a noun : ¹ , ² , ³

1.3.1. Plurals : Masculine Nouns

The following list shows some common transformations to make masculine nouns plural :

- | | | |
|---------|-------|-----------------------------------------------|
| • -ich | -e | <i>der Teppich , die Teppiche</i> |
| • -ig | -e | <i>der König , die Könige</i> |
| • -ling | -e | <i>der Schmetterling , die Schmetterlinge</i> |
| • -är | -e | <i>der Veterinär , die Veterinäre</i> |
| • -eur | -e | <i>der Friseur , die Friseure</i> |
| • | -e | <i>der Platz , die Plätze</i> |
| | | <i>der Kuss , die Küsse</i> |
| | | <i>der Arzt , die Ärzte</i> |
| • | - | <i>der Schüler , die Schüler</i> |
| • -er | -e | <i>der Vater , die Väter</i> |
| • -el | -e | <i>der Mantel , die Mäntel</i> |
| • -us | -usse | <i>der Bus , die Busse</i> |

Please keep in mind that the list above shows transformations in general and is not meant to serve as a list of rules for converting nouns with the given endings into their respective plural forms. They are only meant to serve as educated guesses.

A lot of masculine nouns ending in -e also follow the rules for n-Declination. So check out (§ 1.5) for more details.

1.3.2. Plurals : Feminine Nouns

The following tables illustrate the plural formations for feminine nouns :

- | | | |
|-----------|-----|--------------------------------|
| • -ei | -en | <i>die Datei , die Dateien</i> |
| • -ung | -en | |
| • -heit | -en | |
| • -keit | -en | |
| • -ion | -en | |
| • -schaft | -en | |
| • -ik | -en | |
| • -eur | -en | |
| • -enz | -en | |

1.3. Plurals

• -tät	-en	
• -itis	-en	
• -sis	-en	
• -ung	-en	
• -ung	-en	
• -ie	-n	<i>die Fantasie, die Fantasien</i>
• -ade	-n	..
• -age	-n	..
• -ere	-n	..
• -ine	-n	..
• -isse	-n	..
• -ive	-n	..
• -se	-n	..
• -in	-nen	..
• -	¨e	..
• -nis	-nisse	..
• -xis	-xien	..
• -itis	-iden	..
• -aus	-¨ause	..
• -	¨	<i>die Mutter, die M¨utter</i>
• -	¨en	<i>die Werkstatt , die Werkst¨atten</i>

1.3.3. Plurals Neuter Nouns

1.4. Cases

There are four “**cases**” in German, which correspond to four different roles a noun can play in a sentence. There is no such thing as a case in English, therefore it is difficult to form an equivalence relation with something that you might already know. The easiest way to go about understanding cases is to consider the following questions when constructing sentences in German :

1. Who is doing the action ?
2. Who or what is being directly affected by the action ?
3. Who or what is being indirectly affected by the action ?
4. Who is indicating ownership of what ?

Based on the answers to the questions above, every German noun falls into a category called a case (*fall* , *die falle*) . We already know that German is a gendered language, and based on the grammatical gender of the noun, the article of the changes between masculine, feminine and neuter.

Now, an added degree of complication is that based on the case, the article of the noun will further change. Essentially cases just serve as extremely specific articles (instead of just the simple 3 masculine , feminine and neuter) when talking about German nouns. Basically, in every sentence when we have a person or a thing (noun) performing some actions (verbs). Depending on how the noun (person/thing) is interacting with the verb(action) the article (how we refer to the person / thing) will slightly change. This slight change is called the application of a case to that noun.

A case is called a *Falle* in German. In German we have four cases :

- **Nominative** : Der Nominativ
Der Werfall
- **Accusative** : Der Akkusativ
Der Wenfall
- **Dative** : Der Dativ
Der Wemfall
- **Genetive** : Der Genetiv
Der Wesfall

The cases are color coded to make it easier to identify which object, is in which case in the examples given in the following sections. The tables in the pronouns section will also use the same colors in order to maintain consistency throughout the document.

A short summary of when to use the cases is in the bullet points below, and a thorough explanation is further below in the sepreate sub-sections.

- Nominativ : Subject
Who is performing the action
- Akkusativ : Direct object
Who / what is the action being performed on ?
- Dativ : Indirect object
Who / what is the action affecting aside from the direct object ?
- Genetiv : Possession

A full table of article changes according to the specific case is shown below. This table can be super useful when making new sentences as a reference guide. It will only make complete sense however after you have been through all of the following sections explaining all four cases in detail.

A good thing to meintion here would be that cases change articles as both definite and indefinite articles for the given noun change.

1.4.1. Nominative

To understand the nominative case, and any subsequent cases we have to understand the two main parts that make up any sentence both in English and in German. These two things are : **the grammatical subject** , and , **the predicate** . Both of these things are defined below :

Grammatical Subject

DEFINITION 1.2.

The grammatical subject is the person or thing about whom the current statement is being made.

In linguistic jargon : The subject is the word or phrase that controls the verb or the clause. ^a

^a[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subject_\(grammar\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subject_(grammar))

Predicate

DEFINITION 1.3.

The predicate is the part of the sentence (or clause), that tells us where the subject is, or what the subject does or is.

Basically the predicate is everything that is not the subject itself. ^a

^a<https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/predicate.htm>

- If the word is isolated , e.g. One word answers like “Name”.
- If the word makes up part of the subject.
- If the word forms part of the object of the predicate, and the sentence is formed with the copulative verb (*Definition ??*).

NOTE

Every single sentence in German will always have a nominative object in it. The nominative is the only case where this is fact is true, due to fact that there is no such thing as a nominative preposition.

1.4.2. Accusative

The second German case is called *the Accusative (Der Akkusativ / Der Wenfall)*. The accusative case (or more specifically the accusative grammatical article) applies on the direct object / person (noun) that the action (verb) is being performed on by the subject (nominative noun). Read the last sentence again, because it is a little dense the first time around, but nonetheless important.

The accusative gendered articles are mainly the same as the nominative case, with the only exception being the masculine accusative. All the articles are shown in a table below :

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU.
ACC.	den	das	die	die
ACC.	einen	ein	eine	-

The distinction between the direct object, and the subject is easily explained through the same example that we dealt with in the nominative section, which is :

Der Hund beißt den Mann.
(*The dog bites the man.*)

As mentioned earlier, the thing doing the action is the dog, so the dog gets the nominative article. The action being done is biting (beißen), but who is the action being done to , or, who/what is being directly affected by the action ? In this specific example : Who is being bitten ? : The Mann (Der Mann). The normal article for the man is the masculine *der* , but in this sentence, we will use the masculine *den* . The reason the above is a good example is that we have two nouns, which are both masculine , both the two take different cases. This

The subject in the sentence will always take the nominative case and therefore the corresponding gendered nominative article. The main subject (as is defined above) is the noun that is performing some action. The action here will be specified by the verb. The list of both definite and indefinite nominative articles in German is shown below :

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU.
NOM.	der	das	die	die
NOM.	ein	ein	eine	-

An example is shown below to further clarify this concept :

Der Hund beißt den Mann.
(*The dog bites the man.*)

The action (verb) being performed is beißen (to bite). The thing doing the action is the dog. Therefore the dog will be in the nominative case and will have the ‘normal’ masculine article of *der*.

Overall, the nominative case is used in the following situations :

allows us to see the nominative and the accusative case functioning simultaneously.

Although the accusative object is defined as the direct object, there are also other ways that an object might be assigned the accusative grammatical article, even though they are not being directly affected by the verb. The most common way that this occurs is through certain prepositions in German. When a word is being affected by these prepositions in a sentence, it will always take the accusative case, therefore now we have the following situations in which we will give an object its accusative grammatical article :

- If the word is a direct object in the english version of the sentence (i.e. it is the noun that the verb is acting on), then 90% of the time this word will take the accusative case in German.
- If the word is being affected by either an accusative preposition (*Table 4.1*) or a *wechsel* preposition (*Table 4.3*), then it will take the accusative case.ⁱⁱ These prepositions are listed here and then again in the Prepositions Section. (Section 4)
 - durch, für , entlang, gegen, ohne, um ...herum, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen, wider

Remember that just because there is not direct object in the sentence, does not mean that there is no accusative object. Since we can have an accusative object in a sentence as is defined by the preposition.

This also implies that we can have two ‘ *Accusative Objects* ’ in one sentence since, we can have a regular direct object and we also have another object that is accusative according to one of the accusative prepositions listed above, or a movement based *wechsel* preposition.

For the sake of illustration, here is another example which has two accusative objects in it :

1.4.3. Dative

The third German case is called *the Dative Case (Der Dativ Fall / Der Wemfall)* If you have understood and internalized the accusative case, then the dative case should not be too much of a stretch to master. The dative case applies when there is an object in the sentence that is being indirectly impacted by the action (verb).

Unlike in the accusative where only the masculine article changes, all the articles change for an object that is under the dative case which it is worth mentioning includes the plural, since up until people learn

ⁱⁱMore information about how to distinguish between when to use *wechsel* prepositions for accusative and when for dative is provided in the prepositions section.

about the Dative case most people take for granted that plural article will always be ‘*die*’, and this is no longer the case. The dative case articles along with the articles for all the other cases that we have learned so far are shown in a table below :

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU.
DAT.	dem	dem	der	den
DAT.	einem	einem	einer	-

Similar to the accusative case, there are also situations where an object will take the dative grammatical article and not be the indirect object in the sentence. This occurs when the noun in question is subject to a dative preposition. Therefore now we have the following situations in which a noun will have the dative grammatical article :

- If the word is an *in-direct object* in the english version of the sentence (i.e. it is the noun that is being affected by the verb, but not the noun that is being directly acted on), then 90% of the time this word will take the Dative case in German.
- If the word is being mentioned along with either a Dative preposition (*Table 4.2*) or a *wechsel* preposition (*Table 4.3*), then it will take the Dative case.ⁱⁱⁱ

Just like the previous sections let us consider an example for clarification :

Ich schenke dir das Heft.
(*I gift you the notebook.*)

The sentence above can be broken down in the following way :

- Subject (Nominative) : I (ich)
- Verb : schenken (to gift)
- Direct Object : das Heft (the notebook)
- Indirect Object : you (dir)^{iv}

Another example, just in case the one above was not clear is as follows :

Wir machen das mit einem Computer
(*We are doing that with a computer.*)

Before analysing the sentence, please note that the *das* used in the example is not actually a grammatical gender for any noun in the sentence, rather it is the German equivalent word for that, as is evident in the translation. *Das* will also always take the accusative case, since it is always the direct object when the word that appears in a sentence.

That being said, this example is a little easier because we know (if we have already been through the prepositions section) that the preposition *mit* is a dative preposition, therefore the thing that is being ac-

ⁱⁱⁱSee previous footnote.

^{iv}more about pronouns (i.e. why *dir* and not *du*) in (Section 3)

325 accompanied with the dative preposition must take its
326 grammatical gender in the dative case.

327 However if we did not know about mit being a dative
328 preposition then the breakup of the sentence would
329 look something like the following :

- Subject (Nominative) : Wir (we)
- Verb : machen (to do)
- Direct Object : das (that)
- Indirect Object : the computer
(einem Com-puter)

330 So the only thing I think that is worth mentioning
331 here is the computer. The computer takes the mas-
332 culine gender in German , so der computer, and it is
333 in the dative case here so dem computer. Also worth
334 noting in the above example is that I have used the
335 indefinite (einem) version of the grammatical gender
336 as opposed to the definite version(dem), just to spice
337 things up a little and to provide examples for as many
338 scenarios as I can.

339 To finish things off, here is an example that has no
340 accusative object, and two dative objects :

1.4.4. Genitive

342 The fourth and last case in German , is called *the*
343 *Genitive Case (Der Genetiv Fall / Der Wes-*
344 *fall)* . The genitive case is mainly used when we are
345 trying to indicate posession of something. As is with
346 the previously mentioned cases (except nominative) ,
347 the Genitive has its own set of prepositoins, the cre-
348 atively name : genitive prepositions. If an object is
349 being affected by these prepositions, then it will take
350 the genitive grammtical article.

351 The table for the definite and indefinite genitive
352 articles is as follows :

353 The english equivalent of displaying possession is
354 when we add the apostrophe s to the end of a word
355 to show belonging. e.g. John's book , Mary's car , etc
356 ...

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU.
GEN.	des	des	der	der
GEN.	eines	eines	einer	einer

357 A noun will recieve Genitive grammatical article in
358 the following situations :

- If the word is after the word ‘ of ’ in English
- If it follows a preposition that is Genitive (anstatt, aufgrund, außerhalb, dank, statt, während, wegen)

359 An example to aid in the clarification of the Gene-
360 tive case is :

Die Zukunft des Buches ist schwer
(*The future of the book is difficult*)

363 Just like the previous section here is a breakdown
364 of all of the objects in the sentence.

365 *(In English genitive's expressed with of or by
366 adding an apostrophe to show possession. Des Buches
367 is translated as of the book or the book's)

368 The genitive is not used as often by Germans as the
369 three other previous cases.

370 Often, a noun object is made with the preposition
371 von + Dative and the genitive preposition are some-
372 times used incorrectly as if they were dative.

373 You have to keep in mind that one word can fit the
374 rules of different cases simultaneously.

375 For example, it can be a subject while being a part
376 of a noun object and follow a preposition that is dative.
377 Which case would it be then? Nominative because it's
378 the subject, Genitive, because it's the noun object or
379 dative because it is after a preposition? The answer is
380 that the priorities are in this order: Following a prepo-
381 sition (governing with Accusative, Dative or Genitive)
382 Being part of a genitive object (Genitive) The rest of
383 the rules

384 Following we have all the cases with thier corre-
385 sponding articles in two tables, one for all the definite
386 articles and one for the indefinite ones :

Definite Articles

TABLE 1.1.

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU.
NOM.	der	das	die	die
ACC.	den	das	die	die
DAT.	dem	dem	der	den
GEN.	des	des	der	der

Indefinite Articles

TABLE 1.2.

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU. ^a
NOM.	ein	ein	eine	-
ACC.	einen	ein	eine	-
DAT.	einem	einem	einer	-
GEN.	eines	eines	einer	-

^aIn German sometimes the word *einige* (some) is used to refer to an indefinite number of objects in plural.

1.5. n-Declination

There are certain nouns in German that are also conjugated / declined just like verbs. The rules by which these nouns are declined are known as n-Declination (n-Deklination). This is because these nouns get an n ending appended to them.

Although the actual 'declination' is pretty easy because the ending that is appended will always be just a -n, we still have to figure out which nouns are going to be declined and which not.

Most masculine nouns and a new neuter nouns are going to follow the n-declension structure. Some masculine nouns are 'weak', which basically means that they will take a n ending in all cases except the nominative case.

It is impractical to go around memorizing nouns according to whether they are weak or strong. We have enough information per noun to deal with articles attached to each noun.

Therefore it is best to just look at a whole bunch of examples for weak nouns and after a period of time you will begin 'recognizing' these nouns, and automatically place them in the weak category.

Weak nouns basically fall into two groups :

1. ending in -e and referring to people / animals

e.g. der Kunde , der Neffe , der Russe

this is not a guaranteed rule. A counter example is der Käse

Another thing to keep in mind with this group is that some of these -e ending nouns will keep the genitive -s ending after the -n ending. These are nouns that are basically not referring to a people or animals but are still ending in an -e , e.g. der Wille (the volition, the will) , der Gedanke (the thought).

2. The second group of 'weak' nouns are ones that have certain Latin / Greek endings. This group is super fuzzy and does not have hard boundaries like the previous group. Essentially the words in German that sound very close to their English equivalents often fall into the category of weak nouns.

e.g. der Kapitalist , der Kommunist , der Diplomat , der Astronaut ...

There are a whole lot more weak nouns , that don't fit into either of the two categories defined above. As mentioned earlier don't try to memorize all of them, because that is just not practical. ^v

^vIf you still insist on memorization, there is a full list

All the nouns that fall under one of the following rules will be n-declined :

- If the noun is masculine and :
 - Is a person , e.g. , der Junge
der Kunde
der Neffe
 - Is a nationality , e.g. , der Grieche
der Chinese
der Russe
 - Is an animal , e.g. , der Rabe
der Affe
der Löwe
- All nouns with Latin and Greek roots with the following endings :
 - -ant , e.g. , der Elefant
 - -and , e.g. , der Doktorand
 - -ent , e.g. , der Student, der Präsident
 - -ist , e.g. , der Journalist , der Idealist
 - -oge , e.g. ,
 - -at , e.g. , der Bürokrat , der Diplomat
- All nouns that are internationally derived , e.g. , der Architekt (Architect) , der Fotograf (the photograph) , der Philosoph (the philosopher)
- If the noun is masculine and is a living (lebendiges)

NOTE

There is one exception to the rules listed above. A non grammatically masculine noun that takes the n-declination ending : das Herz (the heart).

The general table to keep in mind when trying to figure out n-Declination is :

It is important to make a mental distinction between what ending is being given to a noun for the reason of case, and which due to the reason of n-declination. Consider the following example :

1.6. Clauses

1.7. Noun Contractions

1.8. Adjectival Nouns

⁴³⁸at : <http://Germanforenglishspeakers.com/nouns/weak-nouns-the-n-declension/>

Adjectival nouns are adjectives that act like nouns in a sentence.

I'll take the usual.

No, wait, the special.

And some wine to go with it—the best one you've got.

Have you ever ordered at a restaurant with this sort of lingo?

If you have, then you already know a little bit about adjectival nouns.

In English, they're so easy to use that we hardly pay attention to them.

But as with so much else, they're a little tougher in German.

That's it. Easy-peasy.

The examples above show you how we use them: "usual" is an adjective, but slap a "the" in front of it, and you've got the adjectival noun phrase "the usual."

In English, we also sometimes side-step adjectival nouns by using the word "one." In the example of "the best one" above, "best" is still functioning as a pure adjective describing the pronoun "one."

But translate that into German, and "best" would fill the role all by itself. You'll never hear Germans talk about die beste Eins (literally, the best one). A simple das Beste (the best) will do.

Because adjectival nouns are used everywhere in German, this is yet another reason to practice the dreaded Adjektivendungen (adjective endings).

All adjectives in German inflect for gender, case and number. This is how you end up with an English adjective like "red" having five different forms in German (rot, roter, rote, rotes and roten, if you needed a refresher on all five).

Now that we know what adjectival nouns are and how to use them, let's look at some examples.

1. Wie geht's dem Kleinen/der Kleinen? (How's the little one?)

In German, children are sometimes referred to as Kleine (little ones). We do the exact same thing in English when we call them "little ones."

(See? If you have an adjective + "one" combo in English, it's probably gonna need an adjectival noun in German, like I said.)

2. Alles Gute zum Geburtstag! (Happy birthday—literally, everything good for your birthday.)

The German phrase for "happy birthday" uses an adjectival noun? Say what?

Yes, it's true. That's because "Alles Gute zum Geburtstag" doesn't literally translate to "happy birthday." Strictly speaking, it's "everything good for your birthday," a type of generic well-wishing.

And as you might be able to tell by that capital G on Gute, we're dealing with an adjectival noun. The adjective gut is normally lowercase, but throw an alles (everything) in front of it and you've got a noun on your hands, so it's time to capitalize and decline (gut to Gute).

3. Ich gebe immer mein Bestes. (I always do my best.)

Here's a better example of that "abstract concept" thing I brought up earlier when mentioning Clint Eastwood.

If you say, "I always do my best," a question that might follow could be, "Your best what?" What is the adjective "best" describing in this phrase?

Trick question! It's not an adjective. It's an adjectival noun referring to the best things overall, the general concept of the best anything.

One extra thing to notice here is that in German, you don't "do" your best. You "give" your best. That's why the phrase starts with ich gebe (I give) and not ich mache or ich tue (I do).

4. "Der Gefangene von Askaban" ("The Prisoner of Azkaban")

I want to keep using this example because Gefangener (prisoner) is one of the most basic and widely-used adjectival nouns in German for something that's not an adjectival noun in English.

Gefangener (prisoner) comes from the participial adjective gefangen (captured).

Did you catch that? The verb fangen (to catch/capture) becomes an adjective (gefangen) that becomes a noun (der Gefangene).

Parts of speech can morph like that in German, and you've got to handle the grammar accordingly.

5. Haribo macht Kinder froh und Erwachsene ebenso. (Haribo candy makes kids happy, and adults too.)

Look at the German word Erwachsene (adults). It comes from the adjective erwachsen (mature).

Unlike children, who are always just Kinder, any time you talk about adults, you'll need to pay attention to whether you need to say Erwachsene, ein Erwachsener, die Erwachsenen and so on. There's no non-adjectival word for "adult" that you can use to weasel out of this.

Adjective endings, man. You really need to know them.

6. Meine Verwandten sind zu Besuch. (My relatives are visiting.)

I'm going to throw out one final "this noun is always secretly an adjective" example just to show you that they're everywhere.

Verwandte (relatives) comes from the adjective verwandt (related).

That means when you're referring to a bunch of aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws coming around for holiday visits, the collective noun to refer to them will need some adjective endings on it.

Verwandte? Die Verwandten? Ein Verwandter? I can't tell you which one you'll need, because it'll depend on the context of what you're saying.

That's why—I feel like I can't repeat this enough—you need to practice your adjective endings. Just do it.

Because German adjective endings carry considerable information about case, gender, and number, the noun that they modify can sometimes seem redundant.

When Germans refer to Ex-Chancellor Helmut Kohl as *der Dicke*, they don't need a further noun, since the *der*, followed by the -e ending on *dick* tells us that we are dealing with a single masculine subject (in the nominative case). So long as the context is clear, all that's needed to make the noun is to capitalize the first letter.

A number of such nouns constructed in this fashion have become conventional enough to be listed as dictionary entries in their own right. Some adjectives that become such nouns are "bekannt" [= acquainted], "angestellt" [= employed, hired], "verwandt" [= related], "erwachsen" [= grown-up], "heilig" [= holy], and "deutsch" [= German]

Sie ist eine gute Bekannte von mir. She is a good acquaintance of mine. Er ist ein Angestellter dieser Firma. He is an employee of this company. Meine Verwandten sind alle verrückt. My relatives are all crazy. Nur Erwachsene dürfen diesen Film sehen. Only adults [grownups] are allowed to see this film. Der Papst hat sie zur Heiligen erklärt. The Pope declared her a saint. Die Deutschen sind gern pünktlich. Germans like to be punctual.

Frequent usage has produced other conventions: Ich möchte ein Helles. I'd like a light beer [a pils]. Und ich nehme ein Dunkles. And I'll have a dark beer. Heute fahren wir ins Blaue. Today we're driving into the wild, blue yonder. Er traf ins Schwarze. He hit the bull's-eye. Mein Alter geht mir auf den Wecker. My old man [my father] gets on my nerves. Meine Alte versteht gar nichts. My old lady [my mother] doesn't understand anything.

The examples above are all in the nominative case, but the adjectival inflections hold true in the accusative, dative, and genitive, as well. Here are examples of "the old man," "the rich woman," "the Good", "the poor [poor people]": Masculine Feminine Neuter Plural nom. der Alte die Reiche das Gute die Armen * ein Alter eine Reiche * kein Gutes keine Armen Alter Reiche Gutes Arme acc. den Alten die Reiche das Gute die Armen einen Alten eine Reiche * ein Gutes keine Armen Alten Reiche Gutes Arme dat. dem Alten der Reichen dem Guten den Armen Altem Reicher Gutem Armen gen. des Alten der Reichen des Guten der Armen Alten Reicher Guten Armer

Especially when using adjectives that have been derived from present or past participles, it is possible to pack a great deal of information into the adjectival noun: das Gefundene that which has been found die Gestorbene the (female) deceased ein Studierender someone (male) who is studying ein Studierter someone (male) who has studied die Betende the praying woman der Alternde the aging man das Werdende that which is in the process of becoming der Auserwählte the chosen (male) one das Unverhoffte the unexpected die Leidtragende the (female) mourner

A more common appositional structure is formed with the pronouns "etwas" or "nichts" Ich will dir etwas Schönes zeigen. I want to show you something beautiful. Er führt nichts Gutes im Schilde. He's up to no good. Wir reden von etwas Einmaligem. We're

talking about something unique.

The adjectives "viel" and "wenig" sometimes look like pronouns, because they normally take no endings in the singular: Wir haben wenig Interessantes zu berichten. We have little of interest to report. Ihr Boss hat viel Gutes über Sie gesagt. Your boss said a lot of good things about you. Seine Rede enthält wenig Wahres. His speech contains little that is true.



2. Verbs

Verbs

DEFINITION 2.1.

Verbs are words that refer to actions. These actions are happening to the nouns (substantives).

Verbs are basically any word that allows us to describe an action, an ongoing process or a state of being. E.g. : to walk (laufen), to sing (singen). Verbs are made up of two parts : the stem which is the main body of the verb, and the ending.

E.g : Laufen , Singen , Haben , Machen

Every verb must be **Conjugated / Declined**. To conjugate a verb means to change it from its base infinitive form to a form matching the pronoun and tense that we are using in the current sentence.

As a note on jargon , some people say we are conjugating the verb , some say we are declining it. The terminology changes based on where you learned your German from, but it all means the same thing. I thought I would mention both terms in order to prevent any sort of confusion that might occur.

Infinitive

DEFINITION 2.2.

Infinitive is the base form of any verb. This is the unconjugated form.

When we say we are conjugating / declining a verb, we mean that we are changing the stems and endings of the verbs in order to suit the pronoun that we are currently using.

These two sub-categories of verbs depend on whether we change only the ending during conjugation , i.e. is the verb conjugated according to the regular rules , or whether we change both the ending and the stem during the conjugation process , i.e. is the verb conjugated according to the irregular rules. All verbs in German fall into one of the three following categories :

- **Regular / Weak Verbs** : Most people just refer

to weak / regular verbs as just verbs, since this is the most common verb type encountered in the German language. A weak verb is a German verb whose stem does not change its vowel to form the imperfect tense and the past participle. Its past participle (*Def. 2.4*) is formed by adding a -t to the stem of the verb. These are also called regular verbs, or just verbs.

- **Irregular / Strong Verbs** : A strong verb is type of germ verb , whose stem changes its vowel to form the imperfect tense and the past participle. Its past participle is **not** formed by adding a -t to the verb stem. Strong verbs are also known as irregular verbs

- **Mixed Verbs** : A mixed verb is one where the stem changes its vowel to form the imperfect tense and the past participle tense, similar to strong verbs. The past participle is formed however by adding -t to the verb stem just like weak verbs⁴. So it has characteristics of both weak and strong verbs therefore the name.

Examples of mixed verbs are :

- Change e to ie
- Change e to i
- Change el to il
- Change eh to im
- Change a to ä

- Change e to ie
- Change e to i
- Change el to il
- Change eh to im
- Change a to ä

2.1. Imperative

The German imperative is a way of basically ordering someone to do something instead of asking them politely. The imperative can be formed using three different ways, depending on the count and politeness that we wish to employ. The pronoun is never used when we are trying to build an imperative sentence. The conjugation of the verb is also a bit different. The three main forms that will change are as follows :

- du : The -st(or just -t) ending on the conjugation will go away.
e.g iss deine Essen.
- Sie : The conjugation stays the same.
- ihr : The conjugation stays the same.

if the umlaut is in the infinitive, then the du form will remain the same in the imperative , i.e. it will still have the umlaut.

if the umlaut is not there in the infinitive, but it appears due to it being a irregular verb, then it will go away in the imperative form.

if the umlaut is not there in the infinitive, but it appears due to it being a irregular verb, then it will go away in the imperative form.

2.2. Irregular / Strong Verbs

2.3. Tenses

Tense

DEFINITION 2.3.

A **Tense** is the grammarians' preferred word for "time." Depending when the action that you're talking about is taking place, you pick a tense. The ways to look at the concept of time differ.

An explanation of the present tense is mainly the same thing as an explanation of the infinitive, where we first talked about how and we go about using verbs. All of those explanations are given in the present tense.

Basically when we say we are changing the tense in German, we mean that we will be using a different schema to conjugate the verb in the sentence. That is all a tense means, a different conjugation. This is why the tenses section is considered a subset of the verbs section, as well as, why I said any explanation of the infinitive above can also be considered an explanation of the present tense in German.

Participle

DEFINITION 2.4.

Every time we conjugate a verb, we make a new word. These words formed by conjugating verbs are called **participles**.

As we have already seen a tense is basically what results when a conjugate a verb differently (the 'normal' way being the present tense). Therefore based on how the verb is conjugated we end up with different tenses as well as participles. So essentially participle is jargon for the verb conjugation that is being used to implement the current tense.

Since we have multiple tenses, we also end up with

multiple kinds of participles :

- Participle I : Partizip I (Partizip Präsens)
- Participle II : Partizip II (Partizip Perfekt)

We will discuss both these participle types in their individual sub-sections below.

First let's get started with the most basic of all of the tenses, the present tense.

2.3.1. Present (Präsens)

Following is a table to indicate the verb conjugation for making a sentence in the present tense :

ich	-e	ich lerne	,	I learn
du	-st	du lernst	,	You learn
er	-t	er lernt	,	He learns
sie	-t	sie lernt	,	She learns
es	-t	es lernt	,	It learns
man	-t	man lernt	,	One learns
wir	-en	wir lernen	,	We learn
ihr	-t	ihr lernt	,	They learn
sie	-en	sie lernen	,	they learn
Sie	-en	Sie lernen	,	You learn

The present tense is the most versatile tense in German. Unlike English, the present tense has a multitude of uses, and is not not restricted to only one type of sentence. The biggest difference that English speakers would notice is that the German language does not make a distinction between the present and present continuous tenses. They both fall under the present (Präsens) category. All the situations where we would use the Präsens tense are shown below along with examples :

- A fact or a condition in the present.

Ich denke.

(I think.)

(I do think.)

Both of the above will be acceptable interpretations of the given German sentence.

Das ist Felix.

(That is Felix.)

- An ongoing action in the present.

Ich denke.

(I am thinking.)

- An action that takes place in the present once, repeatedly, or never.

Jeden Dienstag geht er zum Fußballtraining.

(Every Tuesday I go to football training.)

Freitags gehe ich oft ins Kino.

(On Fridays, I often go to the movies.)

- A situation in the past being talked about in the present.
- To describe a situation that has not yet, but is going to happen.
Morgen fährt meine Freundin nach Dänemark.
(*Tomorrow my girlfriend will drive to Denmark.*)

A situation that will occur in the future being talked about through the lens of the present. In this case the sentence will always contain the verb *werden*.

- An action that expresses how long something has been going on.
Er spielt seit fünf Jahren Fußball.
(*He has been playing football for five years.*)

NOTE

Using a present tense conjugation of the verb *werden* is a very common way of talking about future events in German, particularly if there's a time expression in the sentence that anchors the action clearly in the future — for example, *nächste Woche* (next week) or *morgen* (tomorrow).

This formation using *werden* is therefore considered both talking in the present tense and talking in the future tense.

2.3.2. Partizip I (Partizip Präsens)

2.3.3. Partizip II (Partizip Perfekt)

2.3.4. Present Perfect (Perfekt)

Present Perfect Tense (Perfekt)

DEFINITION 2.5.

The simple past tense, also known as the past simple, the past tense or the preterite, expresses completed actions in the recent and distant past.

The present perfect tense is the victim of a very unfortunate naming convention. I say this because the present perfect tense or the Perfekt tense is actually used to talk about the past. This can cause some severe headaches if it is not clarified at the onset of learning more about this tense. So please bear this in mind.

Another thing to clarify / keep in mind is that the present perfect is known as the simple past tense, or the preterite tense in English. Please do not confuse the English terminology with the German tenses though, since there is no such thing as a preterite / simple past tense in German. There is only the Perfekt tense.

O.k. got all that squared away and internalized? Good, cause it caused me a lot of personal grief when trying to figure all of this out for the first time.

The **perfect tense**, also called **present perfect (Perfekt)**, is a past tense. We use it to speak about actions completed in the recent past. In spoken German, the present perfect tense is often used instead of the past tense. German distinguishes between the way the Perfekt tense is used when writing and how it is used when speaking. As I mentioned earlier all distinctions between tenses amount to nothing but changing the conjugation of the verbs. So essentially we have the following:

- **Perfekt**: Used when talking about events in the past. Perfekt is also used when we are quoting someone, i.e., when we are writing down what someone has said verbally we will not change it to its Präteritum formation.
- **Präteritum**: Used when writing about events in the past.

The current section will only talk about the Perfekt tense in the spoken context. The following sub-sub-section (§ ??) will handle the Präteritum verb formations.

The situations that we will use the Perfekt tense in are as follows:

- The main past tense used in the spoken form.
Was hast du gestern abend gemacht?
(*What did you do yesterday evening?*)
- Abgeschlossene Vorgänge in der Vergangenheit mit Gegenwartbezug
Seit ihr wegezogen ist sehen wir uns nur noch selten.
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)
- When talking from the perspective of the past, about the present / future.
Morgen in einer Woche habe ich die Arbeiten an diesem Projekt abgeschlossen.
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)

• INSERT CITATIONS FOR THESE EXAMPLES

The way that we will form the present perfect version of a verb, is by using two things the **past participle (Partizip II)**, and an **auxiliary / helping verb**. These helping verbs are always either *haben* or *sein*. The partizip II formations can be a little more involved, which is why I dedicated an entire sub-section to Partizip II. Helping verbs as well as how to choose which, are also discussed later in the same section.

O.k. keeping in mind that whenever we want to form the past participle, the verb will come with an accompanying helping verb (don't worry about which *haben* / *sein* right now), we have to figure out verb positioning again. The verbs will now be arranged into positions as follows:

Past Participle Sentence Structures

- **Helping / Auxiliary Verb**: The helping verb will take the position of the regular verb in the sentence, i.e., the helping verb will go in position 2.
- **Regular Verb**: The past participle of the regular verbs will be sent to the end of a sentence, in its unconjugated form, but with a *ge-* appended to the beginning of the verb. e.g.
- **Seperable Verb**: When forming the past participle of a separable verb, we no longer separate the verb, however the *ge-* addition that around 95% of the verbs get will not be at the starting of the sentence, rather it will be after the separable prefix, but before the main verb. e.g.
- **Modal Verb**: How do we resolve modal verbs then? because now we have the helping verb in position 2? You know I have no fucking clue.

The first thing that we need to know is that, while past participle will go at the absolute end of the sentence. Here we already have a couple of distinctions based on what the infinitive form of the verb was, namely:

Now that the general structure is out of the way let us talk about how we are going to select which one of the two helping verbs: *haben* / *sein* we should use with which verbs.

Choosing Helping Verbs

- **Sein**: *Sein* will be a rarer use case. It will mainly be used when, there is some form of change of state or movement involved.

Meine Freundin ist nach Dänemark gefahren.
(My girlfriend has gone to / went to Denmark.)

Ich bin in Hamburg gewesen.
(I have been to Hamburg. / I was in Hamburg.)

Du bist mit dem Auto gekommen.
(You came by car. / You have come by car.)

Not in the example above, even though we have the verb *sein*, the translation still reads you have come...

- **Haben**: Most verbs will use *haben*, as long as there is no movement or state change going on.

David hat mir geholfen.
(David has helped me / has been helping me / helped me.)

Anna hat die Zeitung gelesen.
(Anna has read the newspaper.)

Ich habe den Film gesehen.
(I have seen the film. / I saw the film.)

O.k. now that we know about the helping verbs, let's give a little more detail to the past participle formations.

ich	ich bin	gegangen	ich habe
du	du bist	,	du hast
er	er ist	,	er hat
sie	sie ist	,	sie hat
es	es ist	,	es hat
man	man ist	,	man hat
wir	wir sind	,	wir haben
ihr	ihr seid	,	ihr habt
sie	sie sind	,	sie haben
Sie	Sie sind	,	Sie haben

Below is a more involved table for Partizip II formation:

The past participle (Partizip II) is formed in the following ways:

Regular Verbs also known as weak verbs (*schwache Verben*) form the past participle with *ge...t* and the verb stem.

Example: *lernen* – *gelernt*

Irregular verbs are verbs that change their verb stem in simple past and/or the participle form (see list of irregular verb). There are two kinds of irregular verbs in German grammar: strong verbs (*starke Verben*) and mixed verbs (*gemischte Verben*).

Strong Verbs form the past participle with *mit ge...en*.

Example: *sehen* – *gesehen* (*sehen-sah-gesehen*)
gehen – *gegangen* (*gehen-ging-gegangen*)

Mixed Verbs form the past participle with *ge...t*.

Example: *haben* – *gehabt* (*haben-hatte-gehabt*)
bringen – *gebracht* (*bringen-brachte-gebracht*)

Exceptions

We add an *-et* to weak/mixed verbs when the word stem ends in *d/t*.

Example: *warten* – *gewartet*

Verbs that end in -ieren form their past participle without ge.

Example: studieren – studiert

Inseparable verbs form the past participle without ge.

Example: verstehen – verstanden

For separable verbs, the ge comes after the prefix.

Example: ankommen – angekommen

Forming the past participle of a weak verb

Here is the formula for forming the past participle of a weak verb:

ge + verb stem (the infinitive minus -en) + (e) t = past participle

For example, for the verb fragen (to ask), here's how the formula would play out:

ge + frag + t = gefragt Forming the past participle of a strong verb

Here is the formula for forming the past participle of a strong verb:

ge + verb stem (the infinitive minus -en) + en = past participle

For the verb kommen(to come), the past participle would be:

ge + komm + en = gekommen

Writing about the past: Using simple past tense

Simple past tense is used all the time in newspapers, books, and so on, but it is less common in speech. One exception is the simple past tense of sein (to be). This is often used in preference to perfect tense in both speech and writing. Table 1 shows you the various forms of the simple past tense of sein.

2.3.5. Simple Past (Präteritum)

This is your bread and butter tense for writing about events in the past. However when we want to **talk** about events in the past then we tend to use the present perfect (perfekt) tense more often than this one.

sein , haben , es gibt, gehen, We use the präteritum for the following two situations :

1. A completed action in the past, with a focus on the result of the action.

- Gestern hat Michael sein Büro aufgeräumt.

When Yesterday , *Current result*: Office is now clean.

2. An action that will be completed by a certain point in the future.

Following is a table for the simple past tense conjugation of sein : ^{vi}

^{vi}<https://www.dummies.com/languages/German/getting-to-know-german-verb-tenses/>

ich	war
du	warst
er	war
sie	war
es	war
man	war
wir	waren
ihr	wart
sie	waren
Sie	waren

NOTE

A thing to remember regarding the usage of the präteritum tense is that although it is used exclusively when writing there are a couple of verbs that are an exception to this rule. Namely : sein , haben , all modal verb.

We use the präteritum formation, while using these verbs to talk about the past.

The stem changes are in **this color** , and the ending / root changes are in **this color** in the following tables, in order to help distinguish between what is being changed and why (since stem changes only occur in irregular verbs and the root changes will occur in all the verbs formations).

To conjugate weak or regular verbs in the simple past, add “te” to the verb ending, and then add the present tense personal conjugation ending.

Note that for verbs that end in “t” or “d” , we add an extra “e” before the “te” , instead of using just the “te” so that pronunciation of the word is a little easier. The table below shows examples of verbs in both cases, the -et , and the -ete case.

Präteritum : Regular Verbs¹

	fragen	warten
ich	frag- te	wart- e-te
du	frag- te -st	wart- e-te -st
er / sie / es	frag- te	wart- e-te
wir	frag- te -n	wart- e-te -n
ihr	frag- te -t	wart- e-te -t
sie / Sie	frag- te -n	wart- e-te -n

Präteritum : Irregular Verbs¹

The irregular präteritum verbs do not follow the same rules as above. We will not add anything to the root ending of the verb. So the overall conjugation

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will remain the same, but we will however be making some changes to the stem. There are no definitive rules regarding the correct *Präteritum* irregular formations, so the only real option is to memorize them. That being said, here are a couple of examples:

	<i>kommen</i>	<i>sehen</i>
ich	kam	sah
du	kam-st	sah-st
er / sie / es	kam	sah
wir	kam-en	sah-en
ihr	kam-t	sah-t
sie / Sie	kam-en	sah-en

Präteritum : Modal Verbs¹

	<i>können</i>
ich	kam
du	kamst
er / sie / es	kamete
wir	kamen
ihr	kamt
sie / Sie	kamen

NOTE

The *Präteritum* conjugation of modal verbs is very similar to the *Konjunktiv II* conjugation, the only difference being the addition of umlauts in *Konjunktiv II*. This however completely changes the meaning of the word, so be very very careful when conjugating modal verbs in *Präteritum*.

Präteritum : Helping / Auxiliary Verbs¹

Sein and *haben* are super duper special in German. They haven't really followed any of the regular conjugation rules so far, so the tradition continues and these two troublemakers will get their own extra special conjugations even in the *Präteritum* case. *Haben* kind of follows some of the rules, but *sein* is just goes full loco. These conjugations are listed in the table below:

	<i>sein</i>	<i>haben</i>
ich	war	ha-tte
du	warst	ha-tte-st
er / sie / es	war	ha-tte
wir	waren	ha-tte-n
ihr	wart	ha-tte-t
sie / Sie	waren	ha-tte-n

Präteritum : Mixed Verbs¹

	<i>denken</i>
ich	dachte
du	dachtest
er / sie / es	dachte
wir	dachten
ihr	dachtet
sie / Sie	dachten

2.3.6. Past Perfect (Plusquamperfekt)

2.3.7. Future (Futur I)

In German, the future tense is not used as consistently as it is in English. In many situations, you can use the present tense instead. When talking about things that are going to take place in the future, you can, of course, use future tense. The way to form future tense in German is pretty similar to English. You take the verb *werden* (to become) and add an infinitive.

Table 2 shows you the forms of *werden* in the present tense.

Table 2 Present Tense Forms of *werden* And this is how you incorporate future tense into sentences:

Ich werde anrufen. (I am going to call.) Wir werden morgen kommen. (We will come tomorrow.) Es wird regnen. (It will rain. / It's going to rain.)

ich	werde
du	wirst
er	wird
sie	wird
es	wird
man	wird
wir	werden
ihr	werdet
sie	werden
Sie	werden

2.3.8. Future Perfect (Futur II)

2.4. Konjunktiv II

The *Konjunktiv II* is known in English as the subjunctive II. Generally *Konjunktiv II* is used when we are trying to do the following things:

- **Politeness** (*Bitten höflich ausdrücken*): When we are trying to be super polite and say „could you please do ...“ instead of „do ...“

Example:

Könnten Sie mir das Problem bitte genau beschreiben?

(Could you please describe the specific problem to me ?)

- **Wishes** (*Irreales ausdrücken*) When we are talking about wishes we have about something. These wishes are always unreal , since they have't been realized yet. These wishes can be about something that you could have done in the past (vergangenheit) or present (gegenwartig).

Example :

Hätten Sie die Ware doch früher abgeschickt.
(*Had you sent the wares earlier.*)

While this is not explicitly saying I wish ... , it is still expressing it as such.

- **Guesses** (*Vermutungen ausdrücken*) : We can use Konjunctive II when we are trying to guess something. This is basically like saying , „I think it could be ... “ When we are using Konjunktiv II in this way , the only verb formation we can use is könnten.

Example :

Es könnte sein, dass der Laptop ein Defekt hat.
(*it could be that the laptop has a defect.*)

- **Suggestions** (*Vorschläge ausdrücken*) : This use case is when we are making suggestions about something.
Ich könnte Ihnen ein Leihgerät anbieten.
(*I can offer you a loan unit.*)

Now that we understand when to use Konjunktiv II, we need to understand how do we actually build sentences in this way ?

A konjunktive II sentence is formed by changing the main verb in the sentence to their Konjunktiv II formation. This basically means that some sort of transformation rules need to be in place in order to create this Konjunktive II „, word “. These transformation rules change based on the time form , which is the same thing as what I mentioned earlier when we were talking about using Konjunktiv II to express wishes. These specific definite ways of forming Konjunktiv II are explained below :

- **Present** (*Gegenwartig*) : In this form the konjunktive II „, word “ is formed by first forming the präteritum version of the verb and then adding umlauts. In most of the cases we will form a gegenwartig konjunktiv II sentence using the konjunktive II formation of sein as a helping verb , and another verb which will be in the infinitive.

So the konj. II of sein is : sein , waren (Präteritum) , wären. A sentence using wären + Infinitive is shown below.

EXAMPLE GERMAN LINE
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)

There are situations where we will not use the *wären + Infinitive* formation for the gegenwart Konjunktiv II. These situations are when we are dealing with one of the following verbs / verb types :

- **Hilfsverben** : sein , haben

EXAMPLE GERMAN LINE
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)

- **Modal verben**

EXAMPLE GERMAN LINE
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)

- **Unregelmäßige verben**

EXAMPLE GERMAN LINE
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)

- When we are talking about a wish that we have related to past events.
E.g. : If I had more time, I would read more.

The same sentence , but this time in only one Hauptsatz , instead of a nebensatz (If you dont understand what those words mean , refer (§ 7)).

I would read more if I could.

2.5. Special Verbs

2.5.1. Werden

2.5.2. Lassen

2.6. Modal Verbs

Modal Verbs

DEFINITION 2.6.

Modal Verbs are verbs that allow us to change / modify the original sentence to add degrees of ability, permission and necessity.

Modal Verbs are always used in conjunction with a another verb. The modal verbs action is to indication to what extent the action specified by the other verb is necessary or allowed in the current sentence.

Modal verbs are also often called *auxiliary / helping verbs* (Die Hilfsverben)

When we are building a sentence with a modal verb, we put the modal verb in its conjugated form in the second place of the sentence, and send the original verb that was supposed to be in the second place all the way to the end of the sentence. Another thing to note is that we should not conjugate the second verb.

The general sentence structure in the present tense is as follows :

Pronoun - Modal Verb (conj.) - frequency/time - other words - second verb (unconj.)

In the case of W-questions , or Ja / Nien Questions the sentence structure remains the same as before with the modal verb in place 1 for Ja / Nien Questions, and in the second position in W-Style questions. The most common modal verbs are :

- dürfen (to be allowed)
- können (to be able)
- mögen (would like to)
- wollen (want to)
- sollen (should)
- müssen (must)

Be careful with saying „ *Ich will* “ as it sounds impolite if you are asking for something. It is more appropriate to say “*Ich möchte*“ or “*Ich hätte gern*“.

A table of all modal verbs with conjugations is shown below :

NOTE

Lassen is also considered a modal verb, since it functions exactly like one, but I have not included it in this table (or section) , since it is a little bit more complicated than your regular modal verb. Therefore it has been given its own complete subsection (§ 2.5.2)

Modal Verbs

TABLE 2.1.

	ich	du	er/sie/es	wir	ihr	sie/Sie
<i>dürfen</i>	darf	darfst	darf	dürfen	dürft	dürfen
<i>können</i>	kann	kannst	kann	können	könnt	können
<i>mögen</i>	mag	magst	mag	mögen	mögt	mögen
<i>wollen</i>	will	willst	will	wollen	wollt	wollen
<i>sollen</i>	soll	sollst	soll	sollen	sollt	sollen
<i>müssen</i>	muss	musst	muss	müssen	müsst	müssen

2.7. Reflexive Verbs

Reflexive verbs are a subset of the verb category, that are used when the subject and the direct object are the same.

Reflexive verbs are very rarely seen in English , but are quite common in German given the prevalence of cases. There are two distinctions that we should make , i.e., between Reflexive verbs and Reflexive pronouns. The only way that we would be able to manifest a reflexive verb is through the use of a reflexive pronoun. A reflexive pronoun can exist without the use of a reflexive verb in a sentence, however a reflexive verb cannot exist without the reflexive pronoun.

I think this difference will get clearer when we talk about reflexive verbs a little more. Essentially reflexive verbs can be defined as :

Reflexive Verbs

DEFINITION 2.7.

There are various types of reflexive verbs in German. They are :

- These are reflexive verbs that do not exist without the reflexive component. If they are used in a sentence the reflexive pronoun **MUST** be attached to them regardless of whether that makes sense in terms of the sentence or not. These *immer* reflexive verbs can have reflexive pronouns attached in both the accusative and dative forms however. Basically , if we have an accusative object in the sentence , then the reflexive pronoun will operate as the dative object , and will take the dative reflexive pronoun forms. If there is no accusative object (*Akkusative ergänzung*) then we will use the accusative reflexive pronoun.

2.8. Verb Contraction



3. Pronouns

3.1. Personal

Like articles and adjectives, pronouns in German vary according to gender and case. But this time it should be slightly more familiar, as English has kept some of these distinctions too. Here are the personal pronouns in English, which hopefully look familiar:

As you can see from the table below, German pronouns are a little more complicated. Three important things to notice:

German pronouns often distinguish between the accusative and the dative case, while English pronouns never do. Old English did have this distinction, but even by the time of Chaucer it was gone (e.g. thee was both accusative and dative). German has a second person plural (ihr) that's different from the singular (du); English uses you for both, except in casual/regional plurals like y'all or you guys. German adds a formal "you" (Sie), which is both singular and plural. These ie forms share the same conjugation as the third person plural, but are capitalized.

The genitive forms (last row) are grayed out because they're almost never used. We've included them mainly because they give you the stems of the possessive articles (mein, dein, sein, etc.) that are used instead (see II.3). Indeed, saying der Hund meiner instead of mein Hund would be just as awkward as saying the dog of me in English.

When to use the Sie form rather than du or ihr is one of the most common questions for German learners, and there's no simple answer. Like most proper forms of address ("sir/ma'am" in English, vous in French) it's no longer used in every situation where the teachers and textbooks suggest that it is. However, it's still important to use Sie with police officers (in Germany this is actually the law) and other authority figures. It's also polite to use it with anyone in a service position, like waiters, clerks or salespeople.

After that, it's largely a matter of familiarity and age – both the absolute age of the person you're talking to (older people are more likely to expect Sie), and their age relative to yours. It can be about the setting, too: sometimes the same two people will address each other with Sie in the office and du in the bar after work. It's also about the tone you're trying to adopt, and sometimes even a touch of politics; for example, it was kind of a Hippie thing to use du with everyone as a statement of egalitarian values. Anyway, you should never use Sie with children, but otherwise it's safer to fall back on Sie whenever you're not sure.

3.2. Possessive

3.3. Reflexive

Reflexive pronouns (myself, yourself, etc) are more common in German than in English, because there are many more verbs that require them. (Reflexive verbs will be covered in Section V.12.) By default, a reflexive pronoun is the direct or indirect object of a verb, so it can only take the accusative or dative case. As you can see, there's a great deal of overlap between the reflexive pronouns and the personal pronouns: Singular Plural Formal 1st 2nd 3rd 1st 2nd 3rd 2nd ACC mich dich sich uns euch sich sich DAT mir dir English myself yourself him-/her-/ itself ourselves yourselves themselves [yourself/ yourselves]

By the way, those plural forms can also be used to mean "each other" or "one another." For example, "wir sehen uns" doesn't mean that we'll see ourselves, it means we'll see each other – or translating more idiomatically, "see you later."

3.4. Indefinite Pronouns

This is a very small group of pronouns containing words that are not referring to something / someone in particular. The most common ones are :

- everything
- anybody
- nobody

3.5. Relative Pronouns

Relative pronouns are used when we are trying to refer to objects that have already been introduced / defined in different clauses in the sentence. This allows us to spice up the language a bit , instead of constantly using the noun over and over again. The function of relative pronouns in English is usually served by "that," "who / whom" or "which." The following are a couple of examples in English , where the reflexive pronouns are emboldened :

„, I will no longer repeat the arguments , **which** have already been established. “

The which is referring to the arguments in the first clause here.

„, I am he , **who** is trying to explain reflexive pronouns. “

The who is referring to the he here.

A thing worth clarification is the relative pronoun term , what I really mean is that we will be using the article of the word as a pronoun instead of the repeating the word itself. I thought this was worth mentioning since these are not pronouns in the regular sense that one would think about them.

Since we are using articles , therefore like all article

related things in german there will be a different declination table for these relative , pronouns ‘. A table with all the relative pronouns is shown below :

Relative Pronouns

TABLE 3.1.

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU.
NOM.	der	das	die	die
ACC.	den	das	die	die
DAT.	dem	dem	der	denen
GEN.	dessen	dessen	deren	deren

Most of the declination remains the same as a regular case based declination of a german article. The main difference in declination to note here is the plural of the dative case , as well as the Genetive case.

The clause which uses a relative pronoun is called a **relative clause**. There are two ways in which a relative clause can appear in a sentence. The first is as a regular *nebensatz* an example of which is shown below :

Das ist der Mann, dem wir das Buch gegeben haben.
(*That is the man , to whom we have given the book.*)

In the sentence above , the first half has *der Mann* as the nominative object. In the second half we are referring to the man again but this time using the relative dative pronoun *dem* instead. Why dative ? because nominative = *wir* , accusative = *das Buch* so dative is the only choice left. Below is another example of a *relativ satz* :

Es gibt wenige Ärzte , denen ich vertraue.
(*There are few doctors that I trust.*)

This was probably mentioned in the verbs section but it is worth repeating that there is a rule in german where there are some verbs that are just dative or accusative. So yeah ...you just have to learn these verbs and wether they should have an accusative or dative pronoun accompaniment. The previous example sentence is an example of that.

Another thing that can influence the outcome of the pronoun in the relative sentence is that we might have a preposition. As was mentioned in the prepositions section , every preposition in german case sensitive (or *wechsel*). Which means that with a dative preposition like *mit* we will always have a dative pronoun , which applies even in the case of the relative sentences with the only differnce being that the pronouns themselves go by the rules in the table above.

Another more exciting way of forming a relative sentence is achieved by splitting the *hauptsatz* into two smaller *mini hauptsatz*^{vii}. and the relative clause itself will sit in between these two *mini hauptsatz*ⁱⁱ. Examples of this are shown below :

Der Mann , dem du gestern die Hand gestern gegeben hat, heißt Richard.
(*The man whose hand you shook yesterday is called Richard.*)

Der Mann , dessen Hunde du hörst , ist mein Nachbar
(*The man whose dogs you hear is my neighbor*)

Aside from using articles as pronouns to form relative clauses , we can also use some *w*-style question words in place of these articles. The situations where we can use these as relative pronouns are listed below :

- **Wo** : place
Ich habe Anne in der Stadt kennengelernt , wo wir gearbeitet haben.
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)
- **Wohin** : direction
Ich habe Anne in der Stadt kennengelernt , wohin ich gezogen bin.
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)
- **Woher** : origin
Ich habe Anne in der Stadt kennengelernt , woher mein Kollege kommt.
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)
- **Was** : If the main clause uses the words : *Das* , *alles* , *nichts* and *etwas* , and want to use the relative pronoun to refer to these words we can use **was** .

Das , was du suchst , gibt es nicht
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)

Meine Beziehung ist etwas , was mir viel bedeutet.
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)

Alles , was er mir erzählt hat , habe ich schon gewusst.
(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)



^{vii}thats a joke using the english plural formation on the german word. *Hauptsatz*ⁱⁱ is not a real german word

4. Prepositions

Preposition

DEFINITION 4.1.

A preposition is any word that indicates a spatial or temporal relationship between two nouns or pronouns in a sentence.

NOTE

In German, there is ALWAYS a noun, or an article, or an adjective after a preposition.

4.1. Accusative prepositions

Prepositions : Accusative

TABLE 4.1.

B	bis	until, up-to
D	durch	through
E	entlang	along
F	für	for
G	gegen	against / opposite
O	ohne	without
U	um ... herum	around
H	hinter	behind
I	in	in, inside
N	neben	next to, beside
Ü	über	over, above
U	unter	among, under, below
V	vor	ahead of, in front of
Z	zwischen	between
W	wider	against

Prepositions indicate the relationship of a noun (or pronoun) to another element in the sentence. Prepositions tend to be some of the most commonly used words in a language. Following are some examples of prepositions :

We are going to the Apartment. (Wir gehen zu die Wohnung) The food is inside the refrigerator. (Das Essen ist innen die Kühlschrank.) It is behind the chair. (Es ist hinter den Stuhl)

Prepositions work in much the same way in German, except for the added complication that the nouns and pronouns that the prepositions are acting on will be declined, i.e., they will take different endings depending on the preposition in question. The prepositions in German fall into one of four cases, and they must be memorized as such. There are few easy ways to be able to logically discern the case of a preposition on occurrence. The four different types of prepositions are :

- **Accusative prepositions (§ 4.1)** : The object that the preposition is acting on will always take the Accusative case.
- **Dative prepositions (§ 4.2)** : The object that the preposition is acting on will always take the dative case.
- **Genitive Prepositions (§ 4.4)** : The object that the preposition is acting on will always take the Genitive case.
- **Wechsel Prepositions (§ 4.3)** : The object that the preposition is acting on can take either the genitive case or the accusative case.

Within each one these categories, we can further subdivide the prepositions into one of the following two categories :

- **Temporal Prepositions** : These are the group of prepositions from all of the cases above which relate to time.
- **Local / Spatial Prepositions** : These are the group of prepositions that relate to physical presence and movement.

4.2. Dative Prepositions

Prepositions : Dative

TABLE 4.2.

V	von	of / from
Z	zu	to / for
S	seit	since
N	nach	towards / to / past (time) / after
A	aus	out of / from / made of
M	mit	with
B	bei	with / by
A	außer	besides
G	gegenüber	against

4.3. Wechsel Prepositions

Wechsel accusative if the preposition indicates movement.

Wechsel dative if the preposition does not indicate movement.

Unlike dative or accusative prepositions that we learned earlier, which can only be used in their respective cases, Wechsel Prepositions are prepositions that can be used in two different cases, namely wechsel prepositions can be used with objects that are in the dative case (indirect objects) and in the accusative case (direct objects). Wechsel prepositions are known as dual prepositions in English since they can be used with two cases. The easiest way to determine if in a given sentence we are using the dative or the accusative version of the wechsel preposition is by looking the question that the sentence is answering. Extremely simply If the sentence is answering a wo (where) question about the object, then we are using the wechsel preposition in the accusative case. If the sentence is answering a wohin (where to) question about the object then we are using the wechsel preposition in the dative case. One thing to clarify when talking about wechsel prepositions is – the fact that when we say we are using the preposition in the accusative or dative case, the preposition itself is not changing. What we actually mean is that the article of the noun that the preposition is talking about will get changed into either it's helps to think about the movement of the object in the sentence. A way to think about it in English is using the two phrases “he jumps into the water” versus “he is swimming in the water.” The first answers a “where to” question: Where is he jumping? Into the water. Or in German, in das Wasser or ins Wasser. He is changing location by moving from the land into the water. The

second phrase represents a “where” situation. Where is he swimming? In the water. In German, in dem Wasser or im Wasser. He is swimming inside the body of water and not moving in and out of that one location.

So basically : Use the accusative if there is a significant change of location / position happening to the object in the sentence, i.e., if the action (verb) is resulting in the object being moved from one place to a different place then we will use the accusative case with the wechsel preposition. If there is no significant change in movement then, the action is occurring in a confined space and little or no movement is taking place. Then we will use the dative article for the object with the wechsel preposition.

Prepositions : Wechsel

TABLE 4.3.

Z	zwischen	between
U	unter	under
N	neben	next to
Ü	über	above
H	hinter	behind
A	an	at
V	vor	in front of
A	auf	on
I	in	in

4.4. Genetive Prepositions

während is also used as as connector and a preposition.

während : three meanings

während : while (connector)

während : during (preposition)

Prepositions : Genetive

TABLE 4.4.

4.5. Temporal Prepositions

Temporal Prepositions as mentioned earlier are all the prepositions from accusative , dative , wechsel and genetive that refrence an object in time. The tempo-

ral prepositions have two categories depending upon whether they answer the question of When (Wann) , or Till when (Bis wann) , from when or how long (Wie lange). Basically between a definite time point and a time frame. The list of all temporal prepositions is as follows :

Prepositions : Temporal Wann

TABLE 4.5.

Preposition	Translation
<i>an</i>	
<i>aus</i>	
<i>bei</i>	
<i>in</i>	
<i>nach</i>	
<i>vor</i>	
<i>zu</i>	
<i>zwischen</i>	between
<i>auf</i>	
<i>um</i>	
<i>gegen</i>	against
<i>außerhalb</i>	outside of
<i>innerhalb</i>	within
<i>während</i>	During

All the situations when these temporal prepositions are supposed to be used are shown below :

Preposition <i>Präposition</i>	Case <i>Kasus</i>	Usage <i>Verwendung</i>
<i>an</i>	Dative	Tagteile Tage Datum Wochenende
<i>aus</i>	Dative	zeitliche Herkunft
<i>bei</i>	Dative	parallel laufende Handlungen
<i>in</i>	Dative	Moment nacht Wochen Monate Jahrezeiten Jahrzente Jahrhunderte / Epochen im Sinne von Innerhalb zukünftiger Zeit- punkt
<i>nach</i>	Dative	zeitliche abfolge
<i>vor</i>	Dative	zeitliche abfolge
<i>zu</i>	Dative	kirchliche feiertage beginn bestimmter zeit- punkt
<i>zwischen</i>	Dative	begrenzter zeitraum
<i>auf</i>	Akkusative	zeitpunkt
<i>um</i>	Akkusative	genaue Uhrzeit
<i>gegen</i>	Akkusative	ungenauere Zei- tangabe
<i>außerhalb</i>	Genetiv	ungenauere Zei- tangabe
<i>innerhalb</i>	Genetiv	ungenauere Zei- tangabe
<i>während</i>	Genetiv	ungenauere Zei- tangabe

Prepositions : Temporal Duration

TABLE 4.6.

Preposition	Translation
<i>ab</i>	
<i>seit</i>	
<i>bis</i>	
<i>von ... bis</i>	
<i>von ...</i>	
<i>bis zu</i>	
<i>für</i>	
<i>über</i>	

4.6. Spatial Prepositions

4.7. Pronouns with Prepositions

1451 daran , darüber , ...

4.8. Verbs with prepositions

4.9. Zu

1452 **Zu** is a preposition that might create a fair amount of
1453 confusion whent rying to learn german. So I thought
1454 I would give it its own sub-section to clarify and all
1455 all questions that at least came up in mind.

1456 , Zu ‘ can be used as :

- 1457 • Locative preposition
- 1458 • Temporal preposition
- 1459 • Causal preposition
- 1460 • An adverb
- 1461 • A conjunction

1462 Given the number of use cases listed above , it is
1463 no surprise that , zu ‘ causes so many problems in
1464 comprehension.

4.10. Contractions

1465 This section should be read after going through the
1466 prepositions section (§ 4) . Contractions in German
1467 are basically the fusion of two words into one. The
1468 most common occurance of this is between articles
1469 and prepositions. To be more specific definite articles
1470 and some preopsitions. Not all preposition and noun
1471 combinations can be fused into a contracted word. Fol-
1472 lowing is a list of all the most common contractions
1473 in use in German today :

an	+	das	=	ans
an	+	dem	=	am
auf	+	das	=	aufs
bei	+	dem	=	beim
durch	+	das	=	durchs
für	+	das	=	fürs
in	+	das	=	ins
in	+	dem	=	im
um	+	das	=	ums
von	+	dem	=	vom
zu	+	der	=	zur
zu	+	dem	=	zum

1474 Aside from organizing prepositions into the above
1475 cases , prepositions in german also undergo a pro-
1476 cess called contraction concatenation. This basically
1477 means that the preposition will fuse with the article

of the word that it is acting on in order to form a
new word. Some of the most common contractions are
shown below :

- bei + dem = beim
- von + dem = vom
- zu + dem = zum
- zu + der = zur

A more exhaustive list of contractions in german is
in the table below :

Of course not all prepositions and articles are con-
tracted in german. So , if we have any other arti-
cle preposition combination except for the ones listed
above, just write the full preposition and article out.
For example :

zu + die \neq zuie , it will remain as zu die
bei + der \neq bier , it will remain as bei der



5. Adjectives

Adjective

DEFINITION 5.1.

An adjective is any word that serves to describe a given noun.

Adjectives are words like young, old, tall, thin, All of these words serve to add a description to the noun (or pronoun), in some way. They most commonly appear right before a noun in a sentence, but can also be separate by a verb like *sein* (to be), *ansehen* (to look), *fühlen* (to feel) ...

The difference between German and English adjectives is that like everything else in German, the adjectives change according to the article of the noun that they are being used to describe, i.e., the adjectives are also declined. So essentially based on gender, count and case the formation of the adjectives will change. Whether an adjective is declined or not depends on the positioning of the adjective in the sentence relative to the noun and the verb.

- If the adjective is **before** the noun but **after** the verb, then it will be declined according to the gender of the noun.

E.g. :

*Ich kann das **alte** Haus sehen. Ich kann ein **altes** Haus sehen.*

(I can see the old house. I can see an old house.)

- If the adjective comes directly **after** the verb then it will not be declined and it will stay in its base form (*grund form*)

*Das Buch ist **neu***

(The book is new)

Keep in mind that both the article itself as well as the adjective will change, according to the function of the noun in the sentence.

Adjective Endings : Definite Articles

When we are using nouns with the definite articles : **der**, **die**, **das**, the endings for the adjectives will be as follows :

Adjective Endings : Definite

TABLE 5.1.

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU.
NOM.	-e	-e	-e	-en
ACC.	-en	-e	-e	-en
DAT.	-en	-en	-en	-en
GEN.	-en	-en	-en	-en

A thing to keep in mind is that some adjectives will change spelling (for phonetical reasons) based on which declination the adjective is under. An example is with the adjective *hoch* (high).

Das Gebäude ist hoch.

(The building is high.)

Das ist ein hohes Gebäude.

(That is a high building.)

The general rule for spelling changes are as follows :

- Adjectives ending in -el lose -e when declined.

Adjective Declination : Indefinite Articles

The adjective endings used along with **ein**, **irgend-**, **kein** are as follows :

Adjective Endings : Indefinite

TABLE 5.2.

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU.
NOM.	-er	-es	-e	-en
ACC.	-en	-es	-e	-en
DAT.	-en	-en	-en	-en
GEN.	-en	-en	-en	-en

Adjective Declination : Nouns with no articles

There are also times when adjectives are used independent of articles, at that point the declination of the adjective will be applied according to the following table :

Adjective Endings : No Article

TABLE 5.3.

	MAS.	NEU.	FEM.	PLU.
NOM.	-er	-es	-e	-e
ACC.	-en	-es	-e	-e
DAT.	-em	-em	-er	-en
GEN.	-en	-en	-er	-er

Besides just applying to adjectives that modify a noun which is not preceded by a definite or indefinite article, the no article (or strong declension) adjective endings will also apply to the following words, as long as the noun that the following words are referring to are not preceded by an article :

- ein bisschen (a little, a bit of)
- ein wenig (a little)
Morgen hätte ich ein wenig freie Zeit für dich.
(I could spare you some time tomorrow.)
- ein paar (a few , a pair , a couple)
Sie hat mir ein paar gute tips gegeben.
(She gave me a couple of good tips.)
- weniger (fewer , less)
Er isst weniger frisches Obst als ich.
(He eats less fresh fruit than me.)
- einige (plural forms only)
- etwas (some,any(singular))
- mehr (more)
Heutzutage wollen mehr junge Frauen Ingenieurin werden.
(Nowadays, more young women want to be engineers.)
- lauter (nothing but, sheer , pure)
- solch (such)
Solche leckere Schokolade habe ich schon lange nicht mehr gegessen.
(I haven't had such good chocolate for a long time.)
- was für (what , what kind of)
- viel (much , many , a lot of)
Wir haben viel kostbare Zeit verschwendet.
(We have wasted a lot of valuable time.)
- welch ...! (what ...! , what a ...!)
Welch herrliches Wetter.
(What wonderful weather.)
- manch (many a)
- wenig (little few not much)
- zwei , drei , etc ...
- Question Words (Fragewörtern) : welcher ,

welches , welche

• Demonstrative Articles (Demonstrativartikeln)

These : dieser , dieses , diese

That those : jener , jenes , jene

Such : solcher

Every: jeder

Adjectives are very versatile in their use cases, which is to say that with just a little bit of tweaking we can use adjectives as nouns and even as adverbs. These adjective conversions are talked about in more detail in sections (§ 5.6) and (§ 5.5)

Besides just article endings, there is another way that adjectives can be used. Adjectives can be used to compare multiple different nouns. These are called **comparatives**(*komparativ*) and **superlatives** (*Superlativ*). Each one of these has different uses. Together these three are called **steigerungsformen**. Both of which are talked about in the following sections.

5.1. Comparatives

Comparative

DEFINITION 5.2.

A **Comparative** (Komparativ) is a word that is used to compare a subjunctive (noun) with another subjunctive (noun). Comparatives are formed out of either adjectives or adverbs. E.g. : higher , shorter , etc ...

Essentially a comparative is used when we are comparing two nouns together without going to the extremity. If we wish to talk about which one of the two nouns personifies the quality in question to the highest extent then we would use a superlative.

To form a comparative we add the ending : **-er** to the adjective. Here are a couple of examples :

adjective	comparative
schnell	schnell-er
lang	lang-er
alt	ält-er
klein	klein-er

Umlauts in the adjective formation

The third example above illustrates that sometimes , not only do we add an ‘-er’ ending to the adjective in question, sometimes we will also add an umlaut in

the comparative formation in the respective position, as is the case in : alt , älter ^{viii}

Comparatives for adjectives with -er endings

The second thing to note is the comparative formation for when we already have an adjective with an ‘-er’ ending. In this case instead of writing -erer as the ending, we write ‘-rer’ deleting the ‘e’ in the ‘-er’ ending that comes from the adjective.

One thing that trips people up (it certainly tripped me up) is that when we are using comparatives there are two types of situations based on the positioning of the adjective that we are trying to use as a comparative

Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

TABLE 5.4.

beim Verb				
Grund.	... ist	dick		
Kom.	... ist	dick	-er	
Sup.	... ist	am dick	-st	-en

beim Nomen				
Grund.	ein	dick	-er	
Kom.	ein	dick	-er	-er
Sup.	der	dick	-st	-e

1. The adjective is before the noun , i.e. , the adjective is modifying the noun. In this case we will give the adjective ending.
2. The adjective is after the noun, i.e. , it is not modifying the noun.

Mostly the sentence structure for a comparative sentence looks something like this :

- edel - edler - am edelsten
- sensibel - sensibler - am sensibelen
- dunkel - dunkler - am dunkelsten
- flexibel - flexibler - am flexibelsten

Look at the following examples :

Peter ist groß, aber Hubert ist größer
(*Peter is tall , but Hubert is taller*)

^{viii}as a side note the german youth use alter similar to way that english speaker would use ‘dude’, keep this in mind, because when someone says that to you, they are probably not calling you old.

In the above sentence the adjective is groß , but we are comparing two things by size, therefore one must be bigger. So just like english we add an -en to the ending of the adjective to indicate a comparative. Another example with schön :

Gestern war das Wetter schön, und heute wird es noch schöner.

(*Yesterday the weather was beautiful, and today it will be even more beautiful.*)

Adjective ending in : -el

If the adjective ends in -el , then the e in the second to last position is deleted when writing the adjective in the comparative form. However this deletion of the e is not true in the superlative form.

Adjective ending in : -er

If the adjective ends in -er and we have a vowel (a,e,i,o,u) as the last character before the -er ending, then similar to the -el ending the e in the second to last position in the word is deleted when forming the comparative. If the character before the -er ending is a consonant then the comparative form does not change. Again this is not true for the superlative form.

- teuer - teurer - am teuersten
- sauer - saurer - am sauersten
- sauber - sauberer - am saubersten

Single Syllable Adjectives

When we have single syllable adjectives and they have a vowel then we use the umlaut version of that vowel in the comparative and the superlative formation.

- groß - größer - am größten
- klug - klüger - am klügsten
- alt - älter - am ältesten

5.2. Superlatives

Superlatives

DEFINITION 5.3.

A **Superlative** is a word that is used when we are comparing a subjunctive to a group of subjunctives. The superlative is used to delineate the upper or lower limits of the quality that we are comparing. E.g. : highest, shortest, etc ...

Similarly, superlatives are used in dealing with extremes of a certain comparison. Consider the following example :

Ute ist klein, Petra ist kleiner und Martina ist die kleinste.

(Ute is small, Petra is smaller and Martina is the smallest)

5.3. Indefinite Adjectives

A a very small group of adjectives that are used to talk about people or things in a general way⁴ . They are words like several , all , every.

5.4. Demonstrative Adjectives

Demonstrative adjectives are words like *this* , *that* , *these* and *those*. All of these words are used with a noun to poinmt out a particular person , thing or groups of things.

5.5. Adjectives as Adverbs

5.6. Adjectives as Nouns

Often times adjectives can be converted into nouns. There are no hard and fast rules to doing this conversion, should you want to, however there are some general guidelines that you can follow :

5.7. Adjective Contractoins



6. Adverbs

Adverbs

DEFINITION 6.1.

An **adverb** is any word that is used with verbs, adjectives or other adverbs in order to give more information about when, where, how or in what circumstances the situation is taking place.⁴

When we use a word to further accentuate the action that is being performed by a verb, or when we use a word to accentuate an adjective that is being used to describe a noun, this word is called an adverb (I like to think because it is adding to the verb.)

When an adverb modifies a verb, it usually tells us :

- **When** : He ran yesterday.
- **Where** : He ran here.
- **How** : He ran barefoot.
- **To what extent** : He ran fastest.

Adverbs are very versatile and are broadly divided into the following categories in German :

6.1. Temporal Adverbs

Temporal Adverbs or adverbs of time function to tell us **when** the event or the current action is happening. These can include the day that the action took place or will take place, as well as an abstract time like “soon”. The most commonly used temporal adverbs shown below. Following are all the temporal adverbs as they relate to days :

vorgestern	day before yesterday
gestern	yesterday
heute	today
morgen	tomorrow
übermorgen	day after tomorrow

Following are all the temporal adverbs as they relate to abstract amounts of time

damals	then
früher	earlier
jetzt	now
sofort	immediately
gleich	immediately
bald	soon
später	later
dann	then / after

The adverb *gerade* is used to make a sentence in the present continuous. For example we have the sentences shown below. The second version ensures clarity in that the listener will know that the action is still continuing as opposed to the dual meaning of the first sentence.

6.2. Frequency Adverbs

Frequency Adverbs function to tell us **how often** the event or the current action is happening. Frequency adverbs can be formed out of any time period by just adding a -s, or a -lich to the end of the word. This allows us to use adverbs like daily, monthly, evenings and so forth. Some examples are shown below :

immer	always
fast immer	almost always
meistens	most of the time
häufig	frequently
oft	often
ab und zu	once in a while
manchmal	sometimes
selten	rarely
fast nie	almost never
nie	never

morgens	mornings
nachmittags	afternoons
montags	on Mondays
täglich	daily
wochentlich	weekly
monatlich	monthly
jährlich	yearly / annually
halbtags	half days
feiertags	all holidays

6.3. Spatial / Locative Adverbs

Spatial Adverbs as is indicated in the name, serve to describe locations and spaces. Therefore they are used to indicate the position of a person or object relative to your current position. They can change based on whether you or the object are moving, and can also change based on whether you and the object are moving away from or towards each other. The most common spatial adverbs for both static and movement based scenarios are shown below :

vorn / vorne	in front
hinten	behind
links	left
rechts	right
oben	over
unten	under
innen	inside
außen	outside
hier	here
da	here/there
dort	over there/there
überall	everywhere
nirgends	nowhere
fort	away

aufwärts	upwards
abwärts	downwards
vorwärts	forwards
rückwärts	backwards
heimwärts	homeward
westwärts	westward
bergauf	uphill
bergab	downhill

6.3.1. Hin- and Her-

The prefixes *Hin-* and *Her-* cause a bit of confusion because there are no equivalencies in English. German delineates between movement away and towards the speaker in a way that English does not. It is to describe this delineation that we use the aforementioned prefixes.

Hin- generally indicates movement in a direction away from the speaker toward a particular destination. Examples of sentences using the *hin-* prefix are shown below :

Wir gehen zum Hafen hin. : We are going to the harbor.

Schau mal hin! : Look (over there)!

Her- generally indicates movement from a point of origin in a direction toward the speaker.

Komm mal her! : Come over here (from there)!

Wo bekommen wir das Geld her? : Where will we get the money (from)?

Hin- and *her-* are used in their most literal sense with verbs of movement (e.g., gehen to go, kommen to come) or activity that involves direction (e.g., sehen to look, geben to give, reichen to hand over). Often they appear as separable prefixes (e.g., herkommen, herholen, hinlegen, hinschreiben). More specific directional adverbs are created through a number of compounds that combine *hin* and *her* with prepositions that

denote direction (e.g., herauf, herab, heraus, herein, hinauf, hinüber, hindurch, hinzu) or with other adverbs (e.g., hierher, woher, dahin, überallhin).

Er geht die Treppe hinauf.hinaufHe is going up the stairs.

Er kommt die Treppe herunter.herunterHe is coming down the stairs.

Der Apfel fiel vom Baum herab.herabThe apple fell (down) from the tree.

Der Apfel fiel ins Gras hinunter.hinunterThe apple fell (down) into the grass.

The most commonly used adverbs with *hin* and *her* are shown below :

heraus	go out (towards the speaker)
herein	go in (towards the speaker)
hinein	go in (away from speaker)
hinaus	go out (away from the speaker)

NOTE

Even though I haven't written the verb *gehen* in the table above, the adverbs above are almost always used with some movement related verb which is why the translation column has the words *go*.

6.4. Causal / Conjunctional Adverbs

Causal adverbs help in explaining a previous action. They are indicating the cause for the previous action occurring. Therefore they act almost exactly like conjunctions between two sentences and are also known as conjunctional adverbs. The most common ones are :

also / so	so / therefore
anstandshalber	for decency's sake
dadurch	through that/ because of that
darum	therefore / because of that
demnach	thus / according to that
demzufolge	whereby / accordingly
deshalb	therefore
folglich	consequently
sicherheitshalber	preventatively
somit	thus / therefore
trotzdem	despite that
daher	therefore

6.5. Interrogative adverbs

Used when trying to ask questions. These are basically the W-question words. Therefore the main explanation for this topic is provided under the questions section.

Wer	Who
Was	What
Wann	When
Wo	Where
Warum	Why
Wofür	
Woher	
Wieso	
Wessen	
Welcher	
Wen	
Wem	
Wo	
Woran	
Worauf	
Woraus	
Wobei	
Wogegen	
Worin	
Womit	
Worüber	
Worum	
Wozu	

6.6. Adverbs of Manner

Modal adverbs or adverbs of manner answer questions of how much of a certain thing we are dealing with. So these can be broken up according to how much of what we are dealing with. Then we get the following three categories :

1. Manner :
2. Quantity :
3. Restrictive :

beinahe – nearly, almost
 besonders – especially
 bloß – merely, simply, just
 daneben – besides, in addition
 ebenfalls – likewise, also
 ebenso – equally, similarly
 eigentlich – actually, in fact
 fast – almost
 gemeinsam – in common, jointly
 gern, gerne – gladly
 hoffentlich – hopefully
 insgesamt – in total, altogether
 kaum – hardly
 leider – unfortunately
 mindestens – at least, at minimum
 nämlich – namely
 natürlich – naturally
 nebenbei – by the way, incidentally
 schließlich – finally
 sehr – very
 sogar – even
 sonst – otherwise
 teilweise – partially
 übrigens – by the way
 ungefähr – approximately
 ursprünglich – originally
 vielleicht – perhaps, maybe
 wahrscheinlich – probably, likely
 wirklich – really, truly
 ziemlich – rather, quite
 zufällig – accidentally, by chance
 zurück – back
 zusammen – together

6.7. Pronoun Adverbs

Pronominal adverbs are words like : daran , damit, darüber, hierbei, hiermit, wovon. Even though they are referred to as Pronoun Adverbs, they are actually a combination of a preposition and a pronoun.

Each Pronominaladverbien can be broken up into two parts : The stem and The root.

The stem of pronominal adverbs is always one of the following three : **da-** , **hier-** , **wo-**.

The endings are determined by what we are actually referring to. The adverbs ending will change according to whether we are referring to a person or to a thing.

A complete list of all the pronominal adverbs are shown below, although this is just meant as a reference. I would not advise memorizing all of these, and rather knowing which preposition is accompanied with which verb we are using, and using those to form the appropriate pronoun. Anyway here they are :

Da- : dabei dadurch dafür dagegen dahinter damit danach daneben daran darauf daraus darin darum darunter darüber davon davor dazu dazwischen

Hier- : hierfür hiermit hiervon

Wo- wobei wodurch wofür wogegen wohinter womit wonach wonen neben woran worauf woraus worin worum worunter worüber wovon wovor wozu wozwischen



7. Sentence Structures

7.1. Clauses

Clause

DEFINITION 7.1.

A clause is any group of words which contain a verb.⁴

Sentences as we understand them in english are groups of words delineated by periods / fullstops. Each sentence in english can be made up of multiple clauses, which are subsets of sentences seperated by some form of punctuation or a connecting word (connectors). In german , there are the following types of clauses :

A *coordinate clause* is ...

A *subordinate clause* is ...

A *hauptsatz* in german is any sentence that has follows a regular sentence strucutre. By regular sentence structure I mean , noun / pronoun at position 1 , the verb at position 2 and so on As the term implies the haupt satz can also be considered the 'main clause' of the sentence, although I would be careful with remembering the hauptsatz as the *main* sentence , since a sentence in german can contain multiple haupt clauses, which can cause problems if you are a native english speaker (how can one sentence have multiple main clauses ?).

The *nebensatz* is a sentence structure that is defined according to the positioning of the verb as well. *Nebensatze* have two qualities :

1. There is always a connector at the beggining of a *nebensatz*.
2. The verb is sent to the end in a *nebensatz*.
3. A *nebensatz* is always accompanied with a *haupt-satz*.

A *nebensatz* is ...

The *nebensatz* can come before or after a *hauptsatz* , which is why I have been refraining from calling a *nebensatz* a neighboring sentence even though that is what the literal translation would imply. We can begin sentences in german with some connectors unlike in english. The list as well as examples of the main connectors are given in section (§ ??) .

A *relative clause* is ...

A *Finale nebensatz* is ...

7.2. Conjunctions

7.3. Cojunctions / Connectors

Conjunction

DEFINITION 7.2.

Words that links together two clauses in a sentence are called conjunctions.⁴

German has two types of conjunctions :

- Subordinating Conjunctions :
- Coordinating Conjunctions : aber , denn , oder , sondern

aber vs. sondern

Both aber and sondern mean 'but' , however the difference between these two conjunctions is that sondern is always accompanied with a negation in the hauptsatz. An example is provided below :
Ich habe sehr viel Erklärt , aber niemand hat mir verstanden.

(*EXAMPLE TRANSLATION*)

Das ist keine Erklärung , sondern ein Beispiel.

(*That is not an explanation , but an example.*)

aber can also mean ' however ' , in which case it will combe between the subject and the clause.

deshalb
darum
deswegen
so ... dass
sodass
wegen
trotz
trotzdem
ob
obwohl
weil
wenn
als
denn

7.4. Negation

7.5. Passive

Passive sentences are so called because they are used mainly when we are putting more emphasis on the action (verb / tätigkeit) than the person / thing that is doing it. The main use cases for passive sentences are in the following situations :

Passive Use Cases

This is a very fundamental type of german sentence structure. It is formed in the following ways :

Präs	:	Ich	werde	informiert	
Prät	:	Ich	wurde	informiert	
Perf	:	Ich	bin	informiert	worden
Plqu	:	Ich	war	informiert	worden
Mod	:	Ich	kann	informiert	werden
Fut	:	Ich	werde	informiert	werden

All the fo

7.6. Infinitve + Zu

The **infinitive + zu** formation is a sentence structure used in german. As the name indicates , it basically is the use of a verb in its infinitive form along with a zu. As a quick reminder an infinitve is a any verb in it's unconjugated form, and zu is a preposition which means ' to '. The only things that needs explaining are : when we will use a infinitive+zu structure vs when not , and what the sentence structure will look like.

First thing to note is that the Infinitive+zu formation will always appear in the nebensatz. Second thing to note is that there are three types of situations with regard to this formation. Namely :

1. The sentence **must be** formed with infinitive zu.
2. The sentence **can be** formed with or without infinitive zu.
3. The sentence **must not be** formed with infinitive zu.

Infinitive + Zu : Will not be used cases

The situations where we will not use infinitve+zu are the following :

Modal Verbs

since we are already using the main (non modal) verb as an infinitive.

Verbs with movement

gehen , kommen , fahren , laufen

Verbs with speaking

sagen , fragen , antworten

, berichten , erzählen , informieren

With verbs like sehen , hören , spüren , and fühlen

finden/haben + location

The verbs finden and haben in connection with locations

lassen , schicken

Verben mit wahrnehmung

sehen , hören , riechen , spüren , bemerken , lesen

Verbs with knowledge

wissen , zweifeln , vermuten , kennen

Infinitive + Zu : Can be used cases

The situations where the sentence can be formed with or without infinitive zu are as follows :

lernen / helfen

Das Kind lernt laufen.

*Ich lerne , fehlerfrei **zu schreiben**.*

Ich helfe dir tragen.

Er hilft Susi , das Auto zu reparieren.

Infinitive + Zu : Must be used cases

The list of situations in which we will use it are as follows :

Nomen + Haben	Angst / Lust / Zeit / den Plan haben
iunpersonlichen aus- drucken	es ist wichtig , we ist schwerig
Partizip + sein	verboten / erlaubt / beabsichtigt sein
Verben : Erlaubnis	erlauben , verbeiten
Verben : Anfang	anfangen , beginnen , aufhören
Verben : Absicht	versuchen , vorhaben , sich vornehmen
Verben : Gefühl	bedauern , befürchten , hoffen , sich freuen
anderen	sein , haben , erinnern , vergessen bitten , einladen , gefallen

...zu , when answering the wozu question with the subject remaining the same. There are a couple of differences as can be seen from the examples below :

*Ich nehme ein feuchtes Taschen **zum** reinigen.*
(EXAMPLE TRANSLATION)

Compare this to the same sentence made using um ...zu in order to help yourself understand the difference.

***Um** die Tastatur **zu** reinigen , nehme **ich** ein feuchtes Taschentuch.*
(EXAMPLE TRANSLATION)

1966
1967
1968
1969
1970
1971
1972
1973
1974
1975
1976

7.7. Damit / Um .. Zu .. / Zum

Damit , **Um ... Zu** and **zum** are a couple of formations that we can use in order to help answer the question of wozu in german sentences. This means that if the first clause in a sentence is asking a question akin to : „ Why are we / am I doing this ? “ , then the second clause in the sentence must answer this question , through the means of the three aforementioned words. Now we have to figure out when to use which word.

• **Um ... Zu ...** : When the subject in the nebensatz stays the same as the subject in the hauptsatz. This also means that since the subject is the same then we no longer need to (and by german grammatical rules must not) mention the subject again when we are trying to use Um ...zu. Another thing to note when using this formation is that the verb will appear in its infinitive form at the end of the sentence. A couple of examples showing how to use this structure are given below :

*Klingeln **Sie**, **um** auf sich aufmerksam **zu** machen.*
(EXAMPLE TRANSLATION)

• **Damit** : We can use damit , when the subject in the nebensatz stays the same as the hauptsatz , or even when the subject changes. Essentially you can always use damit. The difference between damit and um ...zu is that when we use damit we need to reaffirm the subject in the nebensatz. Some examples are shown below , the first is one where the subject stays the same , the second where it changes :

*Klingeln **Sie**, **damit** **Sie** auf sich aufmerksam machen.*
(EXAMPLE TRANSLATION)

*Klingeln **Sie** , **damit** andere **Personen** Sie hören.*
(EXAMPLE TRANSLATION)

• **Zum** : Zum can be used as an alternative to um

sowohl	...	als auch	das eine und das andere
nicht nur	...	sondern auch	das eine oder das andere
entweder	...	oder	das eine nicht und das an- dere nicht
weder	...	noch	
zwar	...	aber	das eine mit Einschränkun- gen
einerseits	...	andererseits	ein Sache hat zwei seiten
je	...	desto	

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8. References

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