

Basics 1: Tips and notes

Capitalizing nouns

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

Three grammatical genders, three types of nouns

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

The grammatical gender may not match the biological gender:

"Mädchen" (girl) is a neuter noun.

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

Generally speaking, the definite article "die" (the) and the indefinite article "eine" (a/an) are used for feminine nouns, "der" and "ein" for masculine nouns, and "das" and "ein" for neuter nouns. For example, it is "die Frau," "der Mann," and "das Kind." However, later you will see that this changes depending on something called the "case of the noun."

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

Conjugations of the verb *sein* (to be)

A few verbs like "sein" (to be) are completely irregular, and their conjugations simply need to be memorized:

German	English
ich bin	I am

du bist	you (singular informal) are
er/sie/es ist	he/she/it is
wir sind	we are
ihr seid	you (plural informal) are
sie sind	they are
Sie sind	you (formal) are

Conjugating regular verbs

Verb conjugation in German is more challenging than in English. To conjugate a regular verb in the present tense, identify the invariant stem of the verb and add the ending corresponding to any of the grammatical persons, which you can simply memorize:

trinken (to drink)

English person	ending	German example
I	-e	ich trin e
you (singular informal)	-st	du trink st
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we	-en	wir trink en
you (plural informal)	-t	ihr trink t
you (formal)	-en	Sie trink en
they	-en	sie trink en

Notice that the 1st and the 3rd person plural have the same ending as "you (formal)."

Umlauts

Umlauts are letters (more specifically vowels) that have two dots above them and appear in some German words like "Mädchen." Literally, "Umlaut" means "around the sound," because its function is to change how the vowel sounds.

An umlaut can sometimes indicate the plural of a word. For example, the plural of "Mutter" (mother) is "Mütter." It might even change the meaning of a word entirely. That's why it's very important not to ignore those little dots.

No continuous aspect

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It gets more complicated when it comes to abstract nouns, but we'll see about that later.

The: Tips and notes

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Notice that the 1st and the 3rd person plural have the same ending as "you

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Basics 2: Tips and notes

German plurals - the nominative Case

In English, making plurals out of singular nouns is typically as straightforward as adding an "s" or an "es" at the end of the word. In German, the transformation is more complex, and also the articles for each gender change. The following five suggestions can help:

- . -e ending: most German one-syllable nouns will need -e in their plural form. For example, in the nominative case, "das Brot" (the bread) becomes "die Brote," and "das Spiel" (the game) becomes "die Spiele."
- . -er ending: most masculine or neuter nouns will need the -er ending, and there may be umlaut changes. For example, in the nominative case "das Kind" (the child) becomes "die Kinder," and "der Mann" (the man) becomes "die Männer."
- . -n/-en ending: most feminine nouns will take either -n or -en in all four grammatical cases, with no umlaut changes. For example, "die Frau" (the woman) becomes "die Frauen" and "die Kartoffel" becomes "die Kartoffeln."
- . -s ending: most foreign-origin nouns will take the -s ending for the plural, usually with no umlaut changes. For example: "der Chef" (the boss) becomes "die Chefs."
- . There is no change for most neuter or masculine nouns that contain any of these in the singular: -chen, -lein, -el, or -er. There may be umlaut changes. For example: "das Mädchen" (the girl) becomes "die Mädchen," and "die Mutter" (the mother) becomes "die Mütter."

Regardless of grammatical gender, all plural nouns take the definite article "die" (in the nominative case). This does not make them feminine. The grammatical gender of a word never changes. Like many other words, "die" is simply used for multiple purposes.

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

ein Mann = a man

Männer = men

German feminine plurals - nouns ending in -in

Feminine nouns that end in "-in" will need "-nen" in the plural. For example, "die

Köchin" (the female cook) becomes "die Köchinnen" in its plural form.

ihr vs er

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

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

Even if this doesn't seem to help, knowing your conjugation tables will greatly reduce the amount of ambiguity.

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You are can refer to one or more people

In your own dialect, you might prefer to use something like *y'all* or *you guys* when addressing more than one person, but remember that, in Standard English, *you are* can refer to one person or multiple people. When translating *you are* into German, you need to decide whether to use *du bist* (informal, addressing one person) or *ihr*

seid (informal, addressing more than one person).

(There's also the formal you (*Sie sind*), which will be introduced later in the course.)

Common Phrases: Tips and notes

SIMPLE GERMAN PRESENT TENSE

In English, the present tense can be simple or progressive (as in "I eat" or "I am eating"). Both forms translate to just one German present tense form, because there is no continuous tense in standard German. So, "she learns" and "she is learning" are both "*sie lernt*."

WIE GEHT'S?

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

WILLKOMMEN CAN BE A FALSE FRIEND

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

DUO

Duo is the name of Duolingo's mascot (the green owl).

Accusative Case: Tips and notes

German Cases

In English, the words "he" and "I" can be used as subjects (the ones doing the action in a sentence), and they change to "him" and "me" when they are objects (the ones the action is applied to). For example, we say "He likes me" and "I like him." This is exactly the notion of a "grammatical case:" the same word changes its form depending on its relationship to the verb. In English, only pronouns have

cases, but in German most words other than verbs have cases: nouns, pronouns, determiners, adjectives, etc.

Understanding the four German cases is one of the biggest hurdles in learning the language. The good news is that most words change very predictably so you only have to memorize a small set of rules. We'll see more about cases later, but for now you just need to understand the difference between the two simplest cases: nominative and accusative.

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

The accusative object is the thing or person that is directly receiving the action. For example, in "Der Lehrer sieht den Ball" (the teacher sees the ball), "Lehrer" is the nominative subject and "Ball" is the accusative object. Notice that the articles for accusative objects are not the same as the articles in the nominative case: "the" is "der" in the nominative case and "den" in the accusative. The following table shows how the articles change based on these two cases:

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
Nominative	der	die	das	die
Accusative	den	die	das	die

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Nominative	ein	eine	ein
Accusative	einen	eine	ein

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

Conjugations of the verb *sein* (to be)

The verb "sein" (to be) is irregular, and its conjugations simply need to be memorized:

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ich bin	I am
du bist	you (singular informal) are
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wir sind	we are
ihr seid	you (plural informal) are
sie sind	they are
Sie sind	you (formal) are

Conjugations of the verb *essen* (to eat)

The verb "essen" (to eat) is slightly irregular in that the stem vowel changes from *e* to *i* in the second (du isst) and third person singular (er/sie/es isst) forms.

English person	ending	German example
I	-e	ich esse
you (singular informal)	-st	du isst
he/she/it	-t	er/sie/es isst
we	-en	wir essen

you (plural informal)	-t	ihr esst
you (formal)	-en	Sie essen
they	-en	sie essen

How can you hear the difference between *isst* and *ist*?

You can't. "isst" and "ist" sound exactly the same. In colloquial (rapid) speech, some speakers drop the "t" in "ist".

So "Es ist ein Apfel" and "Es isst ein Apfel" sound the same?

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

The verb *haben* (to have)

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

English person	ending	German example
I	-e	ich habe
you (singular informal)	-st	du hast
he/she/it	-t	er/sie/es hat
we	-en	wir haben
you (plural informal)	-t	ihr habt

you (formal)	-en	Sie haben en
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Food: Tips and notes

The verb *haben* (to have)

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Having said that, the verb *haben* is sometimes used to describe physical conditions, emotional conditions, and states of being.

For instance, the German for *I am hungry* is *Ich habe Hunger*. You can think of it as having the condition of being hungry.

Ich habe Hunger = *I am hungry*

Ich habe Durst = *I am thirsty*

Sie hat Recht = *She is right*

Er hat Angst = *He is afraid*

Mittagessen - lunch or dinner?

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

Compound words

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

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

die Autobahn (das Auto + die Bahn)

der Orangensaft (die Orange + der Saft)

das Hundefutter (der Hund + das Futter)

Sometimes, there's a connecting sound (*Fugenlaut*) between two elements. For instance, *die Orange* + *der Saft* becomes *der Orangensaft*, *der Hund* + *das Futter* becomes *das Hundefutter*, *die Liebe* + *das Lied* becomes *das Liebeslied*, and *der Tag* + *das Gericht* becomes *das Tagesgericht*.

Cute like sugar!

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

Der Zucker ist süß. (The sugar is sweet.)

Die Katze ist süß. (The cat is cute.)

Animals: Tips and notes

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

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

Fortunately, both verbs are conjugated very similarly:

essen	fressen (for animals)
<i>ich esse</i>	<i>ich fresse</i>
<i>du isst</i>	<i>du frisst</i>
<i>er/sie/es isst</i>	<i>er/sie/es frisst</i>
<i>wir essen</i>	<i>wir fressen</i>
<i>ihr esst</i>	<i>ihr fresset</i>
<i>sie/Sie essen</i>	<i>sie/Sie fressen</i>

Plurals: Tips and notes

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- -er ending: most other masculine or neuter nouns will need the -er ending, and there may be umlaut changes. For example, in the nominative case "das Kind" (the child) becomes "die Kinder," and "der Mann" (the man) becomes "die Männer."
- -n/-en ending: most feminine nouns will take either -n or -en in all four grammatical cases, with no umlaut changes. For example, "die Frau" (the woman) becomes "die Frauen" and "die Kartoffel" becomes "die Kartoffeln." All nouns ending in -e will have an added -n, so "die Ente" becomes "die Enten".
- -s ending: most foreign-origin nouns will take the -s ending for the plural,

usually with no umlaut changes. For example: "der Chef" (the boss) becomes "die Chefs."

There is no change for most neuter or masculine nouns that contain any of these in the singular: -chen, -lein, -el, or -er. There may be umlaut changes. For example: "das Mädchen" (the girl) becomes "die Mädchen," and "der Bruder" (the brother) becomes "die Brüder."

German feminine plurals - nouns ending in -in

Feminine nouns that end in "-in" will need "-nen" in the plural. For example, "die Köchin" (the female cook) becomes "die Köchinnen" in its plural form.

ihr vs er

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

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Adjectives, Predicative 1: Tips and notes

Predicate adjectives

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

*Der Mann ist **groß**.*

*Die Männer sind **groß**.*

*Die Frau ist **groß**.*

*Die Frauen sind **groß**.*

*Das Haus ist **groß**.*

*Die Häuser sind **groß**.*

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

Negatives and positive statements: Tips and notes

German Negatives

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

Nicht

Use "nicht" in the following five situations:

- Negating a noun that has a definite article like "der Raum" (the room) in "Der

Architekt mag den Raum nicht" (the architect does not like the room).

- . Negating a noun that has a possessive pronoun like "sein Glas" (his glass) in "Der Autor sucht sein Glas nicht." (the writer is not looking for his glass).
- . Negating the verb: "Sie trinken nicht" (They/You do not drink).
- . Negating an adverb or adverbial phrase. For instance, "Mein Mann isst nicht immer" (my husband does not eat at all times).
- . Negating an adjective that is used with "sein" (to be): "Du bist nicht hungrig" (you are not hungry).

Position of Nicht

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

The German "nicht" will precede adjectives and adverbs as in "Das Frühstück ist nicht schlecht" (the breakfast is not bad) and "Das Hemd ist nicht ganz blau" (the shirt is not entirely blue).

For verbs, "nicht" can either precede or follow the verb, depending the type of verb. Typically, "nicht" comes after conjugated verbs as in "Die Maus isst nicht" (the mouse does not eat). In conversational German, the perfect ("Ich habe gegessen" = "I have eaten") is often used to express simple past occurrences ("I ate"). If such statements are negated, "nicht" will come before the participle at the end of the sentence: "Ich habe nicht gegessen" (I did not eat/I have not eaten).

Finally, "nicht" also tends to come at the end of sentences (after direct objects like "mir" = "me," or after yes/no questions if there is just one conjugated verb). For example, "Die Lehrerin hilft mir nicht" (The teacher does not help me) and "Hat er den Ball nicht?" (Does he not have the ball?)

Kein

Simply put, "kein" is composed of "k + ein" and placed where the indefinite article would be in a sentence. For instance, look at the positive and negative statement about each noun: "ein Mann" (a man) versus "kein Mann" (not a/not one man), and "eine Frau" versus "keine Frau."

"Kein" is also used for negating nouns that have no article: "Man hat Brot" (one has

bread) versus "Man hat kein Brot" (one has no bread).

Nicht versus Nichts

"Nicht" is an adverb and is useful for negations. On the other hand, "nichts" (nothing/anything) is a pronoun and its meaning is different from that of "nicht." Using "nicht" simply negates a fact, and is less overarching than "nichts." For example, "Der Schüler lernt nicht" (the student does not learn) is less extreme than "Der Schüler lernt nichts" (the student does not learn anything).

The word "nichts" can also be a noun if capitalized ("das Nichts" = nothingness).

This skill contains both negative and positive statements.

Questions and statements: Tips and notes

Yes/No Questions

Questions can be asked by switching the subject and verb. For instance, "Du verstehst das." (You understand this) becomes "Verstehst du das?" (Do you understand this?). These kinds of questions will generally just elicit yes/no answers. In English, the main verb "to be" follows the same principle. "I am hungry." becomes "Am I hungry?". In German, all verbs follow this principle. There's no do-support.

This skill contains both questions and statements.

Verbs, Present 1: Tips and notes

CONJUGATING REGULAR VERBS

Verb conjugation in German is more challenging than in English. To conjugate a regular verb in the present tense, identify the invariant stem of the verb and add the ending corresponding to any of the grammatical persons, which you can simply memorize:

machen (to do/make):

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I	-e	ich mache e
you (singular informal)	-st	du mach st
he/she/it	-t	er/sie/es mach t
we	-en	wir mach en
you (plural informal)	-t	ihr mach t
you (formal)	-en	Sie mach en
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Notice that the 1st and the 3rd person plural have the same ending as "you (formal)."

NO CONTINUOUS ASPECT

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

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

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

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HOW DO YOU LIKE THINGS IN GERMAN?

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

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

Ich mag Bier (I like beer)

Sie mag Katzen (She likes cats)

Wir mögen dich (We like you)

Ihr mögt Bücher (You like books)

mögen is conjugated irregularly:

I like	ich mag
you (singular informal) like	du magst
he/she/it likes	er/sie/es mag
we like	wir mögen
you (plural informal) like	ihr mögt
you (formal) like	Sie mögen
they like	sie mögen

***gern(e)* is used for verbs/activities:**

Ich trinke gern(e) Bier (I like to drink beer/I like drinking beer)

Er spielt gern(e) Fußball (He likes to play soccer/He likes playing soccer)

Wir lesen gern(e) Bücher (We like to read books/We like reading books)

Sie schreibt gern(e) Briefe (She likes to write letters/She likes writing letters)

***mögen* cannot be followed by another verb.**

(The subjunctive form (*möchten*) can be followed by a verb, but *Ich möchte Fußball*

spielen translates as *I would like to play soccer*, not *I like playing soccer*.)

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

Clothing: Tips and notes

***Kleider* - dresses or clothes?**

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

***Hose* or *Hosen*?**

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

Nature 1: Tips and notes

Lakes and seas - false friends ahoy

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

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

Be careful not to confuse *der See* (the lake) and *die See* (the sea). Keep in mind that the dative and genitive of *die See* (feminine - the sea) is *der See*. This example shows how important it is to know your noun genders and declension tables.

<i>singular</i>	<i>der See</i> (masculine - the lake)	<i>die See</i> (feminine - the sea)
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nominative	der See	die See
accusative	den See	die See
dative	dem See	der See
genitive	des Sees	der See

The plural forms are identical.

<i>plural</i>	die Seen (masculine - the lakes)	die Seen (feminine - the seas)
nominative	die Seen	die Seen
accusative	die Seen	die Seen
dative	den Seen	den Seen
genitive	der Seen	der Seen

Possessive Pronouns: Tips and notes

Personal Pronouns in the Nominative Case

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

Demonstrative Pronouns in the Nominative Case

The demonstrative pronouns in English are: this, that, these, and those. In German, the demonstrative pronouns in the nominative case are the same as the definite articles. That means, "der," "die" and "das" can also mean "that (one)" or "this (one)" depending on the gender of the respective noun, and "die" can mean "these" or "those." For example, if you talk about a certain dog, you could say "Der ist schwarz" (that one is black).

Nominative Pronouns: Tips and notes

EIN PAAR VS EIN PAAR

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

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

Negatives: Tips and notes

German Negatives

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

Nicht

Use "nicht" in the following five situations:

- . Negating a noun that has a definite article like "der Raum" (the room) in "Der Architekt mag den Raum nicht" (the architect does not like the room).
- . Negating a noun that has a possessive pronoun like "sein Glas" (his glass) in "Der Autor sucht sein Glas nicht." (the writer is not looking for his glass).
- . Negating the verb: "Sie trinken nicht" (They/You do not drink).
- . Negating an adverb or adverbial phrase. For instance, "Mein Mann isst nicht immer" (my husband does not eat at all times).
- . Negating an adjective that is used with "sein" (to be): "Du bist nicht hungrig" (you are not hungry).

Position of Nicht

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

The German "nicht" will precede adjectives and adverbs as in "Das Frühstück ist nicht schlecht" (the breakfast is not bad) and "Das Hemd ist nicht ganz blau" (the shirt is not entirely blue).

For verbs, "nicht" can either precede or follow the verb, depending the type of verb. Typically, "nicht" comes after conjugated verbs as in "Die Maus isst nicht" (the mouse does not eat). In conversational German, the perfect ("Ich habe gegessen" = "I have eaten") is often used to express simple past occurrences ("I ate"). If such statements are negated, "nicht" will come before the participle at the end of the sentence: "Ich habe nicht gegessen" (I did not eat/I have not eaten).

Finally, "nicht" also tends to come at the end of sentences (after direct objects like "mir" = "me," or after yes/no questions if there is just one conjugated verb). For example, "Die Lehrerin hilft mir nicht" (The teacher does not help me) and "Hat er den Ball nicht?" (Does he not have the ball?)

Kein

Simply put, "kein" is composed of "k + ein" and placed where the indefinite article would be in a sentence. For instance, look at the positive and negative statement about each noun: "ein Mann" (a man) versus "kein Mann" (not a/not one man), and "eine Frau" versus "keine Frau."

"Kein" is also used for negating nouns that have no article: "Man hat Brot" (one has bread) versus "Man hat kein Brot" (one has no bread).

Nicht versus Nichts

"Nicht" is an adverb and is useful for negations. On the other hand, "nichts" (nothing/anything) is a pronoun and its meaning is different from that of "nicht." Using "nicht" simply negates a fact, and is less overarching than "nichts." For example, "Der Schüler lernt nicht" (the student does not learn) is less extreme than "Der Schüler lernt nichts" (the student does not learn anything).

The word "nichts" can also be a noun if capitalized ("das Nichts" = nothingness).

This skill contains both negative and positive statements.

Adjectives: Tips and notes

HOW DO YOU LIKE THINGS IN GERMAN?

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

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

Ich mag Bier (I like beer)

Sie mag Katzen (She likes cats)

Wir mögen dich (We like you)

Ihr mögt Bücher (You like books)

***gern(e)* is used for verbs/activities:**

Ich trinke gern(e) Bier (I like to drink beer/I like drinking beer)

Er spielt gern(e) Fußball (He likes to play soccer/He likes playing soccer)

Wir lesen gern(e) Bücher (We like to read books/We like reading books)

Sie schreibt gern(e) Briefe (She likes to write letters/She likes writing letters)

***mögen* cannot be followed by another verb.**

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

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

Stuff: Tips and notes

German is well known for its very long words that can be made up on the go by

concatenating existing words. In this skill you will learn one very simple and commonly used way of forming compounds: adding "-zeug" ("=stuff") to existing words.

Accusative Pronouns: Tips and notes

Personal Pronouns in the Accusative Case

Aside from the nominative case, most of the German pronouns are declined in each of the four cases. Like in English, when the subject becomes the object, the pronoun changes. For instance, "ich" changes to "mich" (accusative object) as in "Ich sehe mich" (I see me).

In the accusative case of the third person pronouns, only the masculine gender shows the change, thus neither the feminine "sie" nor the neuter "es" change. For example, "Er/Sie/Es mag ihn/sie/es" (He/She/It likes him/her/it).

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

Demonstrative Pronouns in the Accusative Case

Similarly, only the masculine gender shows the change in the demonstrative pronouns: "der" (for "that one") changes to "den," but "die" and "das" (for "that one")

remain the same.

The demonstrative pronouns in the accusative case are thus: "den" = that one (masculine), "die" = that one (feminine), "das" = that one (neuter), and for the plural, "die" = "these." Take this example: "Er isst den" is "He is eating that one (masculine);" "Er isst die" and "Er isst das" are both "He is eating that one," but for the other two genders.

Conjunctions: Tips and notes

German Conjunctions

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

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

Examples: und, oder, aber, denn

Subordinating conjunctions combine an independent clause with a dependent clause; the dependent clause cannot stand on its own and its word order will be different than if it did. For instance, in "Er ist hungrig, weil er nichts aß" (he is hungry, because he ate nothing), the clause starting with "weil" is the dependent clause, which would be ordered as "er aß nichts" (he ate nothing) if it stood by itself.

Examples: weil, wenn, dass, obwohl

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

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

Questions 2: Tips and notes

Yes/No Questions

Questions can be asked by switching the subject and verb. For instance, "Du verstehst das." (You understand this) becomes "Verstehst du das?" (Do you understand this?). These kinds of questions will generally just elicit yes/no answers. In English, the main verb "to be" follows the same principle. "I am hungry." becomes "Am I hungry?". In German, all verbs follow this principle. There's no do-support.

Asking a Question in German With a W-Word

Six W-questions - "Wer" (Who), "Was" (What), "Wo" (Where), "Wann" (When), "Warum" (Why) and "Wie" (How) - can be asked in German to elicit more than yes/no answers. Two of the six adverbs are declineable (i.e. change with the case), whereas four are not.

wer (who)

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

- . If you ask for the subject of a sentence (i.e. the nominative object), "wer" (who) remains as is: "Wer sitzt da?" (Who is sitting there?).
- . If you ask for the direct (accusative) object in a sentence, "wer" changes to "wen" (who/whom). As a mnemonic, notice how "wen" sounds similar to "den" in "den Apfel." "Wen siehst du?" (Whom do you see?) - "Ich sehe den Sohn" (I see the son).
- . If you ask for the indirect object, "wer" changes to "wem" (who/to whom) and adjusts to the dative case. You could ask "Wem hast du den Apfel gegeben?" (To whom did you give the apple?) and the answer could be "Dem Mann" (the man). Notice again how the declined form of "wer" ("wem") sounds like the definite article of all masculine and neuter nouns in the dative case (like "dem Mann" or "dem Kind").
- . Lastly, asking about ownership (genitive case), changes "wer" to "wessen" (whose). "Wessen Schuhe sind das?" (Whose shoes are these?) - "Das sind die Schuhe des Jungen" (These are the boy's shoes). And notice once again how "wessen" (of the) and "des" (of the) include a lot of s-sounds.

was (what)

Similar to the changes made to "wer," "was" will decline depending on the four cases.

- . For both the nominative and accusative cases, "was" remains the same. It is common to ask "Wer oder was?" (who or what?), if you want to know more about the nominative object and do not know if it is a person (who) or a thing (what). You ask "Wen oder was?" (who/whom or what?), if you want to know more about the accusative object.
- . "Was" changes to "wessen" for questions about the genitive object as in "Wessen ist sie schuldig?" (What is she guilty of?).
- . For the dative, "was" changes to a compound of "wo(r)" + preposition. For instance, if the verb takes the German preposition "an" (on/about) as in "an etwas denken," you would ask "Woran denkt er?" (About what is he thinking?). Likewise, "hingehen" is a verb composed of "gehen" + "hin" (go + to) and you would ask "Wohin geht sie?" (To where is she going?).

wo (where)

In German, you can inquire about locations in several ways. "Wo" (where) is the general question word, but if you are asking for a direction in which someone or something is moving, you may use "wohin" (where to). Look at: "Wo ist mein Schuh?" (Where is my shoe?) and "Wohin kommt dieser Wein?" (Where does this wine go?). Furthermore, "Wohin" is separable into "Wo" + "hin." For example, "Wo ist mein Schuh hin?" (Where did my shoe go?).

Note that the sound of "Wer" is similar to "Where" and that of "Wo" to "Who," but they must not be confused. In other words: the two German questions words "Wer" (Who) and "Wo" (Where) are false cognates to English. They mean the opposite of what an English speaker would think.

wann (when)

"Wann" (when) does not change depending on the case. "Wann" can be used with conjunctions such as "seit" (since) or "bis" (till): "Seit wann haben Sie für Herrn Müller gearbeitet?" (Since when have you been working for Mr. Müller?) and "Bis wann geht der Film?" (Till when does the movie last?).

warum (why)

"Warum" (why) is also not declinable. "Wieso", "Weshalb", and "Weswegen" can be used instead of "Warum." There's no difference in meaning. For example, take "Warum ist das Auto so alt?" = "Wieso ist das Auto so alt?" = "Weshalb ist das Auto so alt?" = "Weswegen ist das Auto so alt?" (Why is the car so old?).

wie viel vs wie viele

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

Wie viel Milch trinkst du? = How much milk do you drink?

Wie viel(e) Tiere siehst du? = How many animals do you see?

Family 1: Tips and notes

Informal and formal words for family members

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

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

Alternative words for family members

There are countless alternative words for certain family members. A lot of them are

regionalisms or influenced by your own family's heritage. Some of them are ambiguous as well. For instance, some people call their father "papa", and some people call their grandfather "papa". We can't accept all these terms, and since translations used in the German course for English speakers may also pop up in the English course for German speakers, we don't want to confuse German speakers with these words. Please understand that we're not going to add more alternatives. In your own interest, stick to the ones suggested by Duolingo (see above).

Accusative Prepositions: Tips and notes

DATIVE PREPOSITIONS

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

Here they are: **aus, außer, bei, gegenüber, mit, nach, seit, von, zu**

ACCUSATIVE PREPOSITIONS

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

Here they are: **bis, durch, für, gegen, ohne, um**

TWO-WAY PREPOSITIONS

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

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

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

Here they are: **an, auf, entlang, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen**

No movement -> dative:

Ich bin in einem Haus (I am in a house)

Movement within a certain place -> dative:

Ich laufe in einem Wald (I am running in [within] a forest)

Movement from one place to another -> accusative:

Ich gehe in ein Haus (I am walking into a house)

CONTRACTIONS

Some prepositions and articles can be contracted.

preposition + article	contraction
an + das	ans
an + dem	am
auf + das	aufs
bei + dem	beim
in + das	ins
in + dem	im
hinter + das	hinters
über + das	übers
unter + das	unters
von + dem	vom
vor + das	vors

zu + dem	zum
zu + der	zur

ZU HAUSE AND NACH HAUSE

zu Hause means *at home*, and *nach Hause* means *home* (*homewards*, not *at home*). The -e at the end of *zu Hause* and *nach Hause* is an archaic dative ending, which is no longer used in modern German, but survived in certain fixed expressions.

Ich bin zu Hause (I am at home)

Ich gehe nach Hause (I am walking home)

Dative Case: Tips and notes

The Dative Case

The indirect object in a sentence is called the dative object. The indirect object is the receiver of the direct (accusative) object. For example, "Frau" is the indirect (dative) object in "Das Mädchen gibt einer Frau den Apfel." (A girl gives the apple to a woman).

The dative is also used for certain dative verbs such as "danken" (to thank) and "antworten" (to answer) and with dative prepositions such as "von" (by/of) and "mit" (with). For example, "Ich danke dem Koch" (I thank the cook) or "Wir spielen mit der Katze" (We play with the cat).

This case is known as the "Wem-Fall" (with whom-case), because to identify the word in the dative case, you have to ask "With/to whom ...?"

Note that the dative changes all articles for the words, the plural and pronouns. For example, even though "Frau" is a feminine noun, it will take the masculine article here to indicate the dative: "Ich danke der Frau" (I thank the woman).

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
------	-----------	----------	--------	--------

Nominative	der	die	das	die
Accusative	den	die	das	die
Dative	dem	der	dem	den

Case	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
Nominative	ein	eine	ein
Accusative	einen	eine	ein
Dative	einem	einer	einem

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

German Plurals: The Dative Case

There are some exceptions when it comes to pluralizing nouns in the dative case.

- As mentioned before, for most German one-syllable nouns, the -e ending will be needed in their plural form. However, in the dative case, the noun always adds an -en ending (and there may be umlaut changes). For "the hands," in the dative case it is "den Händen" and for "the dogs" it is "den Hunden."
- For most German masculine or neuter nouns, the plural will end in -er with the exception of the dative case: they will end in -ern in the dative case. There may also be umlaut changes. For example, for "the books" it is "den Büchern." An example sentence would be "Der Junge lernt mit den Büchern." (The boy is learning with the books). Or for "the children," this would mean "den Kindern."
- Whereas most neuter or masculine nouns ending in -chen, -lein, -el, or -er, require no change of the noun in the plural, they end in -n in the dative case. There may be umlaut changes. For example, for "the windows" it is "den Fenstern" for the dative plural. An example sentence would be: "Es funktioniert mit den Fenstern." (It works with the windows). For "the mothers," it is "den Müttern" as in: "Ich spreche mit den Müttern." (I talk with the

mothers).

Money: Tips and notes

Euro or Euros?

In German, the singular is *Euro* and the plural is usually *Euro* as well. As a rule of thumb, use *Euro* when talking about a specific amount, e.g. *200 Euro*. In some contexts, the form *Euros* is used as well. For instance, you can say *Euros* to refer to individual euro coins, an unquantified amount of euros, or euros as opposed to a different currency, e.g. *Ich habe hundert Schweizer Franken, aber keine Euros* (I have a hundred Swiss francs but no euros). At the end of the day, many native speakers use either plural form regardless of context.

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

Dative Pronouns: Tips and notes

Personal Pronouns in the Dative Case

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

Nominative	Accusative	Dative
ich (I)	mich (me)	mir (to me)
du (you singular informal)	dich (you singular informal)	dir (to you singular informal)
er (he) sie (she) es (it)	ihn (him) sie (her) es (it)	ihm (to him) ihr (to her) ihm (to it)

wir (we)	uns (us)	uns (to us)
ihr (you plural informal)	euch (you plural informal)	euch (to you plural informal)
sie (they)	sie (them)	ihnen (to them)
Sie (you formal)	Sie (you formal)	Ihnen (you formal)

This explains why when thanking a female person it is only correct to say "Ich danke ihr" (I thank her) and not "Ich danke sie" (I thank she).

Demonstrative Pronouns in the Dative Case

All four instances of demonstrative pronouns (the three genders and the plural) change in the dative case. For the masculine, the pronoun is "dem" (to/with that), for the feminine it is "der" (to/with that) and for the neuter it is "dem" (to/with that); for the plural it is "denen" (to/with them).

Family 2: Tips and notes

DIE FRAU KENNT SEINEN ONKEL - WHY NOT IHREN ONKEL?

Both *Die Frau kennt ihren Onkel* and *Die Frau kennt seinen Onkel* are grammatically correct, but they don't have the same meaning. When you say *Die Frau kennt ihren Onkel*, you're either talking about the woman's own uncle, another female person's uncle, or the uncle of multiple people. When you say *Die Frau kennt seinen Onkel*, you're talking about another person's uncle, and that person is male. People can know other people's relatives.

TALL AND SHORT PEOPLE

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

Dative Prepositions: Tips and notes

DATIVE PREPOSITIONS

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

Here they are: **aus, außer, bei, gegenüber, mit, nach, seit, von, zu**

ACCUSATIVE PREPOSITIONS

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

Here they are: **bis, durch, für, gegen, ohne, um**

TWO-WAY PREPOSITIONS

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

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

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

Here they are: **an, auf, entlang, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen**

No movement -> dative:

Ich bin in einem Haus (I am in a house)

Movement within a certain place -> dative:

Ich laufe in einem Wald (I am running in [within] a forest)

Movement from one place to another -> accusative:

Ich gehe in ein Haus (I am walking into a house)

CONTRACTIONS

Some prepositions and articles can be contracted.

preposition + article	contraction
an + das	ans

an + dem	am
auf + das	aufs
bei + dem	beim
in + das	ins
in + dem	im
hinter + das	hinters
über + das	übers
unter + das	unters
von + dem	vom
vor + das	vors
zu + dem	zum
zu + der	zur

ZU HAUSE AND NACH HAUSE

zu Hause means *at home*, and *nach Hause* means *home (homewards, not at home)*. The -e at the end of *zu Hause* and *nach Hause* is an archaic dative ending, which is no longer used in modern German, but survived in certain fixed expressions.

Ich bin zu Hause (I am at home)

Ich gehe nach Hause (I am walking home)

Formal You: Tips and notes

German You: du, ihr, Sie

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

In German, if you are familiar with someone, you use "du" (which is called "duzen"). For example, if you talk to your mother, you would say: "Hast du jetzt Zeit, Mama?" (Do you have time now, Mommy?). But if you are not familiar with someone or still wish to stay formal and express respect, you use "Sie" (so-called "siesen"). For example, you would always address your professor like this: "Haben Sie jetzt Zeit, Herr Smith?" (Do you have time now, Mr. Smith?) The person who is addressed with a "Sie" has to offer you a "du" before you can use it.

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

You can distinguish the formal "Sie" from the plural "sie" (they) because the formal "Sie" will always be capitalized, but it will remain ambiguous at the beginning of written sentences. For instance, "Sie sind schön." can either refer to a beautiful individual or a beautiful group of people. The verbs for "sie" (they) and "Sie" (you) are conjugated the same. On Duolingo, either should be accepted unless the context suggests otherwise. In real life, there's always context. Don't worry about misunderstandings.

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

"ihr"

Lastly, the German "ihr" is the informal plural of "you," like in "Tom und Sam, habt ihr Zeit?" (Tom and Sam, do you have time?). Duolingo accepts "you all" and "you guys" for "ihr" but not for the more formal "Sie".

You will encounter the informal you in this skill as well

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

Travel: Tips and notes

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

Let's look at each part and its meaning.

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

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

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

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

Often the ending of a compound noun is a good indicator for the gender of the noun. For example, if a noun ends in *-keit*, chances are high that it is feminine (die).

Colors: Tips and notes

Adjectives are only inflected when they come before a noun.

Der Käse ist alt.

*Das ist ein **alter** Käse.*

There are three declension classes.

STRONG INFLECTION

Strong inflection is used:

When no article is used

When a quantity is indicated by

etwas (some; somewhat), *mehr* (more)

wenig- (few), *viel-* (much; many), *mehrer-* (several; many), *einig-* (some)

a number (greater than one, i.e. with no endings)

non inflectable phrases: *ein paar* (a couple; a few), *ein bisschen* (a bit; a little bit)

The adjective endings are the same as the definite article endings, apart from the adjectival ending **"-en"** in the masculine and neuter genitive singular.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alter	altes	alte	alte
Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alte
Dative	altem	altem	alter	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alter	alter

MIXED INFLECTION

Mixed inflection is used after:

indefinite articles *ein-*, *kein-*

possessive determiners *mein-*, *dein-*, *sein-* etc.

Nominative and accusative singular endings follow the definite article; all other forms end with **"-en"**.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alter	altes	alte	alten
Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alten
Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten

WEAK INFLECTION

Weak inflection is used after:

definite articles (*der, die, das*, etc)

derselb- (the same), *derjenig-* (the one)

dies- (this/that), *jen-* (that), *jeglich-* (any), *jed-* (every), which decline like the definite article.

manch- (some), *solch-* (such), *welch-* (which), which decline like the definite article.

alle (all)

Five endings in the nominative and accusative cases end with **-e**, all others with **-en**.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alte	alte	alte	alten
Accusative	alten	alte	alte	alten
Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten

Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten
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Verbs, Imperative: Tips and notes

The imperative mood is used to express commands.

There are three different forms.

The first one is used to address one person informally. It is formed by dropping the infinitive ending *-en* and adding *-e*. More often than not, this *-e* ending is dropped, especially in spoken German. This form of the imperative does not include a personal pronoun.

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

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

Trink(e) es! = Drink it! (informal, addressing one person)

Trinkt es! = Drink it! (informal, addressing more than one person)

Trinken Sie es! = Drink it! (formal, addressing one or more people)

Some verbs have irregular imperative forms.

infinitive	infml. sg.	infml. pl.	formal
lesen (to read)	lies	lest	lesen Sie
geben (to give)	gib	gebt	geben Sie

nehmen (to take)	nimm	nehmt	nehmen Sie
sein (to be)	sei	seid	seien Sie

Occupation 1: Tips and notes

Student or Schüler?

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

Dropping articles

When talking about your or someone else's profession in sentences such as *I'm a teacher* or *She's a judge*, German speakers **usually drop the indefinite article** (*ein/eine*). It sounds more natural to say *Ich bin Lehrer* and *Sie ist Richterin* than *Ich bin ein Lehrer* and *Sie ist eine Richterin*. This rule also applies to students.

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

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

Male and female variants

The grammatical gender usually matches the biological sex of the person you're referring to, i.e. the word that refers to a male baker is grammatically masculine, and the word that refers to a female baker is grammatically feminine. In the vast majority of cases, **the female variant is formed by simply adding the suffix *-in* to the male variant**, e.g. *der Bäcker* becomes *die Bäckerin* and *der Schüler* (the pupil) becomes *die Schülerin*.

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

Keep in mind that, in some cases, the plural comes with an unlauded stem vowel. This applies to the female variant as well, e.g. "der Koch" becomes "die Köche" and

"die Köchin" becomes "die Köchinnen".

Prepositions: Tips and notes

DATIVE PREPOSITIONS

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

Here they are: **aus, außer, bei, gegenüber, mit, nach, seit, von, zu**

ACCUSATIVE PREPOSITIONS

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

Here they are: **bis, durch, für, gegen, ohne, um**

TWO-WAY PREPOSITIONS

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

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

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

Here they are: **an, auf, entlang, hinter, in, neben, über, unter, vor, zwischen**

No movement -> dative:

Ich bin in einem Haus (I am in a house)

Movement within a certain place -> dative:

Ich laufe in einem Wald (I am running in [within] a forest)

Movement from one place to another -> accusative:

Ich gehe in ein Haus (I am walking into a house)

CONTRACTIONS

Some prepositions and articles can be contracted.

an + das	ans
an + dem	am
auf + das	aufs
bei + dem	beim
in + das	ins
in + dem	im
hinter + das	hinters
über + das	übers
um + das	ums
unter + das	unters
von + dem	vom
vor + das	vors
zu + dem	zum
zu + der	zur

ZU HAUSE AND NACH HAUSE

zu Hause means *at home*, and *nach Hause* means *home (homewards, not at home)*. The *-e* at the end of *zu Hause* and *nach Hause* is an archaic dative ending, which is no longer used in modern German, but survived in certain fixed

expressions.

Ich bin zu Hause (I am at home)

Ich gehe nach Hause (I am walking home)

Numbers 3: Tips and notes

ORDINAL NUMBERS

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

number range		ending
1-19		-te
> 19		-ste
	Irregular forms	
1.	erste	
3.	dritte	
7.	siebte	
8.	achte	

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

Er kennt **den** ersten Sänger.

Er ist **am** sechsten August geboren.

Ich bin **seine** tausendste Lehrerin.

Household 2: Tips and notes

DAS HANDTUCH = THE TOWEL; DAS TUCH = THE CLOTH

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

Location: Tips and notes

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

Let's look at a few examples:

Wir sind da. (We are here/there.)

Da ist ein Apfel. (Here/There is an apple.)

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

hier (here)

da (here/there)

dort (there)

In colloquial language...

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

das hier (this)

das da (this/that)

das dort (that)

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

appropriate for written, formal language.

der/die/das hier (this)

der/die/das da (this/that)

der/die/das dort (that)

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

For example:

Der Apfel da ist groß. (That apple is big.)

Die Katzen da sind süß. (Those cats are cute.)

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

Der Apfel da drüben ist groß. (That apple over there is big.)

Die Katzen dort drüben sind süß. (Those cats over there are cute.)

Medical: Tips and notes

WHAT IS A PFLASTER?

A *Pflaster* (neuter) is a small adhesive bandage.

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

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

Verbs, Future 1: Tips and notes

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

German	English
ich werde spielen	I will play
du wirst spielen	you will play
er/sie/es wird spielen	he/she/it will play
wir werden spielen	we will play
ihr werdet spielen	you will play
sie werden spielen	they will play
Sie werden spielen	you will play

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

German normally uses the present tense to indicate the future. For example, "ich gehe morgen ins Kino" translates to "I will go to the movies tomorrow".

Genitive Case: Tips and notes

The genitive case

The genitive case is used to indicate possession.

Das Fahrrad **des Mannes** ist schwarz.

Das Fahrrad **des Kindes** ist blau.

Das Fahrrad **der Frau** ist grün.

	masculine	neuter	feminine
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nominative	der	das	die
accusative	den	das	die
dative	dem	dem	der
genitive	des	des	der

Das Fahrrad **eines Mannes** ist schwarz.

Das Fahrrad **eines Kindes** ist blau.

Das Fahrrad **einer Frau** ist grün.

	masculine	neuter	feminine
nominative	ein	ein	eine
accusative	einen	ein	eine
dative	einem	einem	einer
genitive	eines	eines	einer

NOUNS

Nouns consisting of one syllable tend to add *-es* in the masculine and neuter. The ending is often reduced to just *-s*, especially in colloquial speech.

Nouns consisting of more than one syllable, tend to add just *-s*.

Weak nouns add *-n* or *-en* in the genitive as well (all cases but the nominative), e.g. *des Jungen* and *des Studenten*.

GENITIVE PHRASES HAVE A FIXED WORD ORDER

You can say *das Fahrrad des Kindes*, but you cannot say *des Kindes Fahrrad*. The latter word order used to be acceptable hundreds of years ago, and you may still

occasionally find it in poetry, but it's no longer used in contemporary Standard German .

PROPER NAMES

In contrast to common nouns, proper names precede the noun.

Peters Fahrrad ist neu.

Do not add an apostrophe unless the name already ends in -s or -z. In the latter case, the apostrophe comes at the very end of the name.

Hans' Fahrrad ist alt.

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives describing singular masculine and singular neuter nouns always add -en.

Adjectives describing singular feminine nouns and plural nouns of any gender add -en (if preceded by an article) or -er (if not preceded by an article).

	preceded by an article	not preceded by an article
masculine	das Fahrrad des großenMannes	wegen neuen Termins
feminine	das Fahrrad der kleinen Frau	trotz großer Freude
neuter	das Fahrrad des kleinen Kindes	trotz ruhigen Wesens
plural (any gender)	das Fahrrad der kleinen Kinder	wegen neuerInformationen

PREPOSITIONS THAT TAKE THE GENITIVE CASE

The most common prepositions that take the genitive case are *anstatt* (instead of), *aufgrund* (because of), *statt* (instead of), *trotz* (despite/in spite of), *während* (during), and *wegen* (because of).

In colloquial speech, some prepositions that are supposed to take the genitive

sometimes take the dative.

VERBS THAT TAKE THE GENITIVE CASE

There's a small set of verbs that take genitive. Most of them are not used a lot in everyday speech and they may sound a bit stilted.

THE DATIVE AS AN ALTERNATIVE

As an alternative for the genitive, you can use *von* followed by the dative case, e.g. *das Fahrrad von dem Mann, das Fahrrad von der Frau, das Fahrrad von dem Kind, das Fahrrad von Peter*. Mind you, the genitive case is usually preferred in terms of style.

Occupation 2: Tips and notes

Student or Schüler?

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

Dropping articles

When talking about your or someone else's profession in sentences such as *I'm a teacher* or *She's a judge*, German speakers **usually drop the indefinite article** (*ein/eine*). It sounds more natural to say *Ich bin Lehrer* and *Sie ist Richterin* than *Ich bin ein Lehrer* and *Sie ist eine Richterin*. This rule also applies to students.

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

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

Male and female variants

The grammatical gender usually matches the biological sex of the person you're referring to, i.e. the word that refers to a male baker is grammatically masculine, and the word that refers to a female baker is grammatically feminine. In the vast majority of cases, **the female variant is formed by simply adding the suffix -in**

to the male variant, e.g. *der Bäcker* becomes *die Bäckerin* and *der Schüler* (the pupil) becomes *die Schülerin*.

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

Keep in mind that, in some cases, the plural comes with an umlauted stem vowel. This applies to the female variant as well, e.g. "der Koch" becomes "die Köche" and "die Köchin" becomes "die Köchinnen".

Verbs, Perfect 1: Tips and notes

WHEN IS THE *PERFEKT* USED?

The *Perfekt* is used to describe past events. In spoken German, the *Perfekt* is preferred over the *Präteritum*. Using the *Präteritum* in normal conversation may sound unnatural or pretentious.

There are a few exceptions to this rule of thumb. *sein* (to be), *haben* (to have), *wissen* (to know), and the modal auxiliaries *dürfen* (to be allowed to), *können* (to be able to), *müssen* (to have to), *sollen* (to be supposed to), *wollen* (to want to) are used in the *Präteritum* in informal contexts as well.

In contrast to the English *present perfect*, the German *Perfekt* is not used to describe events that started in the past and are still ongoing. In such cases, German speakers use the *present tense*, e.g. *I have been living here for three years* translates to *Ich lebe seit drei Jahren hier*.

HOW IS THE *PERFEKT* FORMED?

The *Perfekt* is formed by combining a conjugated form of *haben* (to have) or *sein* (to be) in the present tense with the past participle of the main verb.

The vast majority of verbs take *haben*. Verbs that take *sein* have to be intransitive, i.e. they can't take an object, and they have to indicate a change of position or condition. *sein* (to be), *bleiben* (to stay), and *passieren* (to happen) take *sein* even though they don't indicate a change of position or condition.

In order to form the past participle of a weak verb, add the prefix *ge-* and the suffix -

t or *-et* to the stem, e.g. *machen* (to do/to make) becomes *ge-mach-t*.

machen (to do/to make)

<i>Präsens</i>	<i>Perfekt</i>
<i>ich mache</i> (I do/make)	<i>ich habe gemacht</i> (I have done/made)
<i>du machst</i> (you do/make)	<i>du hast gemacht</i> (you have done/made)
<i>er/sie/es macht</i> (he/she/it does/ makes)	<i>er/sie/es hat gemacht</i> (he/she/it has done/made)
<i>wir machen</i> (we do/make)	<i>wir haben gemacht</i> (we have done/made)
<i>ihr macht</i> (you do/make)	<i>ihr habt gemacht</i> (you have done/made)
<i>sie/Sie machen</i> (they/you do/make)	<i>sie/Sie haben gemacht</i> (they/you have done/ made)

laufen (to run/to walk)

<i>Präsens</i>	<i>Perfekt</i>
<i>ich laufe</i> (I run)	<i>ich bin gelaufen</i> (I ran/have run)
<i>du läufst</i> (you run)	<i>du bist gelaufen</i> (you ran/have run)
<i>er/sie/es läuft</i> (he/she/it runs)	<i>er/sie/es ist gelaufen</i> (he/she/it ran/has run)
<i>wir laufen</i> (we run)	<i>wir sind gelaufen</i> (we ran/have run)
<i>ihr lauft</i> (you run)	<i>ihr seid gelaufen</i> (you ran/have run)
<i>sie/Sie laufen</i> (they/you run)	<i>sie/Sie sind gelaufen</i> (they/you ran/have run)

Strong verbs add the prefix *ge-*, change the stem vowel or the entire stem, and add the suffix *-t*, *-et* or *-en*, e.g. *nennen* (to call) becomes *ge-nann-t*, *sein* becomes *ge-wes-en*, *sprechen* (to speak/to talk) becomes *ge-sproch-en*. These forms are not quite predictable. You need to memorize them.

A separable prefix will precede the *ge-* prefix, e.g. *aufmachen* (to open) becomes *auf-ge-mach-t*.

An inseparable prefix will replace the *ge-* prefix, e.g. *veröffentlichen* (to publish) becomes *ver-öffentlich-t*.

Verbs that end in *-ieren* will not be prefixed, e.g. *informieren* becomes *informier-t*.

Adjectives, Nominative 1: Tips and notes

Adjectives are only inflected when they come before a noun.

Der Käse ist alt.

*Das ist ein **alter** Käse.*

There are three declension classes.

STRONG INFLECTION

Strong inflection is used:

When no article is used

When a quantity is indicated by

etwas (some; somewhat), *mehr* (more)

wenig- (few), *viel-* (much; many), *mehrer-* (several; many), *einig-* (some)

a number (greater than one, i.e. with no endings)

non inflectable phrases: *ein paar* (a couple; a few), *ein bisschen* (a bit; a

little bit)

The adjective endings are the same as the definite article endings, apart from the adjectival ending **"-en"** in the masculine and neuter genitive singular.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alter	altes	alte	alte
Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alte
Dative	altem	altem	alter	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alter	alter

MIXED INFLECTION

Mixed inflection is used after:

indefinite articles *ein-*, *kein-*

possessive determiners *mein-*, *dein-*, *sein-* etc.

Nominative and accusative singular endings follow the definite article; all other forms end with **"-en"**.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alter	altes	alte	alten
Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alten
Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten

WEAK INFLECTION

Weak inflection is used after:

definite articles (*der, die, das*, etc)

derselb- (the same), *derjenig-* (the one)

dies- (this/that), *jen-* (that), *jed-* (every), which decline like the definite article.

manch- (some), *solch-* (such), *welch-* (which), which decline like the definite article.

alle (all)

Five endings in the nominative and accusative cases end with **-e**, all others with **-en**.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alte	alte	alte	alten
Accusative	alten	alte	alte	alten
Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten

Adjectives, Accusative: Tips and notes

Adjectives are only inflected when they come before a noun.

Der Käse ist alt.

*Das ist ein **alter** Käse.*

There are three declension classes.

STRONG INFLECTION

Strong inflection is used:

When no article is used

When a quantity is indicated by

etwas (some; somewhat), *mehr* (more)

wenig- (few), *viel*- (much; many), *mehrer*- (several; many), *einig*- (some)

a number (greater than one, i.e. with no endings)

non inflectable phrases: *ein paar* (a couple; a few), *ein bisschen* (a bit; a little bit)

The adjective endings are the same as the definite article endings, apart from the adjectival ending "-en" in the masculine and neuter genitive singular.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alter	altes	alte	alte
Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alte
Dative	altem	altem	alter	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alter	alter

MIXED INFLECTION

Mixed inflection is used after:

indefinite articles *ein*-, *kein*-

possessive determiners *mein*-, *dein*-, *sein*- etc.

Nominative and accusative singular endings follow the definite article; all other

forms end with **"-en"**.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alter	altes	alte	alten
Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alten
Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten

WEAK INFLECTION

Weak inflection is used after:

definite articles (*der, die, das*, etc)

derselb- (the same), *derjenig-* (the one)

dies- (this/that), *jen-* (that), *jeglich-* (any), *jed-* (every), which decline like the definite article.

manch- (some), *solch-* (such), *welch-* (which), which decline like the definite article.

alle (all)

Five endings in the nominative and accusative cases end with **-e**, all others with **-en**.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alte	alte	alte	alten
Accusative	alten	alte	alte	alten

Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten

Adjectives, Dative: Tips and notes

Adjectives are only inflected when they come before a noun.

Der Käse ist alt.

*Das ist ein **alter** Käse.*

If more than one adjective appears before a noun, they will all receive the same ending.

In the Dative (and Genitive) case, all adjectives before nouns will end in **-en** (except for strong inflection, see below):

*Ich gebe dem **alten** Mann Geld.*

*Ich gebe den **alten** Männern Geld.*

*Ich gebe einer **alten** Frau eine Rose.*

There are three declension classes, mostly depending on what type of article is used.

WEAK INFLECTION

Weak inflection is used after:

definite articles (*der, die, das*, etc)

derselb- (the same), *derjenig-* (the one)

dies- (this/that), *jen-* (that), *jed-* (every), *jed-* (every), which decline like the definite article.

manch- (some), *solch-* (such), *welch-* (which), which decline like the definite

article.

alle (all)

Five endings in the nominative and accusative cases end with **-e**, all others with **-en**.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alte	alte	alte	alten
Accusative	alten	alte	alte	alten
Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten

MIXED INFLECTION

Mixed inflection is used after:

indefinite articles *ein-*, *kein-*

possessive determiners *mein-*, *dein-*, *sein-* etc.

Nominative and accusative singular endings follow the definite article; all other forms end with **"-en"**.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alter	altes	alte	alten
Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alten
Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten

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Strong inflection is used:

When no article is used

When a quantity is indicated by

etwas (some; somewhat), *mehr* (more)

wenig- (few), *viel-* (much; many), *mehrer-* (several; many), *einig-* (some)

a number (greater than one, i.e. with no endings)

non inflectable phrases: *ein paar* (a couple; a few), *ein bisschen* (a bit; a little bit)

The adjective endings are the same as the definite article endings, apart from the adjectival ending "-en" in the masculine and neuter genitive singular.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alter	altes	alte	alte
Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alte
Dative	altem	altem	alter	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alter	alter

Adjectives, Nominative 2: Tips and notes

Adjectives are only inflected when they come before a noun.

Der Käse ist alt.

*Das ist ein **alter** Käse.*

There are three declension classes.

STRONG INFLECTION

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When no article is used

When a quantity is indicated by

etwas (some; somewhat), *mehr* (more)

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Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alte
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Genitive	alten	alten	alter	alter

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Mixed inflection is used after:

indefinite articles *ein-*, *kein-*

possessive determiners *mein-*, *dein-*, *sein-* etc.

Nominative and accusative singular endings follow the definite article; all other forms end with "-en".

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alter	altes	alte	alten
Accusative	alten	altes	alte	alten
Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten

WEAK INFLECTION

Weak inflection is used after:

definite articles (*der*, *die*, *das*, etc)

derselb- (the same), *derjenig-* (the one)

dies- (this/that), *jen-* (that), *jeglich-* (any), *jed-* (every), which decline like the definite article.

manch- (some), *solch-* (such), *welch-* (which), which decline like the definite article.

alle (all)

Five endings in the nominative and accusative cases end with **-e**, all others with **-en**.

	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Plural
Nominative	alte	alte	alte	alten

Accusative	alten	alte	alte	alten
Dative	alten	alten	alten	alten
Genitive	alten	alten	alten	alten

Verbs, Preterite: Tips and notes

WHEN IS THE *PRÄTERITUM* USED?

The *Präteritum* (also called *Imperfekt*) is used to describe past events. Its use is mostly limited to formal writing and formal speech. In informal writing and speech, the *Perfekt* (e.g. *Ich habe geschlafen*) tends to be preferred. Using the *Präteritum* in normal conversation may sound unnatural or pretentious.

There are a few exceptions to this rule of thumb. *sein* (to be), *haben* (to have), *wissen* (to know), and the modal auxiliaries *dürfen* (to be allowed to), *können* (to be able to), *müssen* (to have to), *sollen* (to be supposed to), *wollen* (to want to) are used in the *Präteritum* in informal contexts as well.

The verb *möchten* (would like to/to want to), which is technically the subjunctive of *mögen*, does not have a preterite form. Instead, the preterite of *wollen* (to want [to]) is used.

HOW IS THE *PRÄTERITUM* FORMED?

The *Präteritum* of **regular weak verbs** is formed by adding *-(e)te*, *-(e)test*, *-(e)ten*, or *-(e)tet* to the stem.

sagen (to say)

Present	Präteritum
<i>ich sage</i> (I say)	<i>ich sagte</i> (I said)
<i>du sagst</i> (you say)	<i>du sagtest</i> (you said)

<i>er/sie/es sagt</i> (he/she/it says)	<i>er/sie/es sagte</i> (he/she/it said)
<i>wir sagen</i> (we say)	<i>wir sagten</i> (we said)
<i>ihr sagt</i> (you say)	<i>ihr sagtet</i> (you said)
<i>sie/Sie sagen</i> (they/you say)	<i>sie/Sie sagten</i> (they/you said)

The *Präteritum* of **irregular weak verbs** is formed by adding *-(e)te*, *-(e)test*, *-(e)ten*, or *-(e)tet* to a changed stem.

haben (to have)

Present	Präteritum
<i>ich habe</i> (I have)	<i>ich hatte</i> (I had)
<i>du hast</i> (you have)	<i>du hattest</i> (you had)
<i>er/sie/es hat</i> (he/she/it has)	<i>er/sie/es hatte</i> (he/she/it had)
<i>wir haben</i> (we have)	<i>wir hatten</i> (we had)
<i>ihr habt</i> (you have)	<i>ihr hattet</i> (you had)
<i>sie/Sie haben</i> (they/you have)	<i>sie/Sie hatten</i> (they/you had)

wollen (to want [to])

Present	Präteritum
<i>ich will</i> (I want)	<i>ich wollte</i> (I wanted)
<i>du willst</i> (you want)	<i>du wolltest</i> (you wanted)

<i>er/sie/es will</i> (he/she/it wants)	<i>er/sie/es wollte</i> (he/she/it wanted)
<i>wir wollen</i> (we want)	<i>wir wollten</i> (we wanted)
<i>ihr wollt</i> (you want)	<i>ihr wolltet</i> (you wanted)
<i>sie/Sie wollen</i> (they/you want)	<i>sie/Sie wollten</i> (they/you wanted)

The *Präteritum* of **strong verbs** is not quite predictable. They usually change the stem and add *-st*, *-en*, *-t*, or no ending at all.

finden (to find)

Present	Präteritum
<i>ich finde</i> (I find)	<i>ich fand</i> (I found)
<i>du findest</i> (you find)	<i>du fandest</i> (you found)
<i>er/sie/es findet</i> (he/she/it finds)	<i>er/sie/es fand</i> (he/she/it found)
<i>wir finden</i> (we find)	<i>wir fanden</i> (we found)
<i>ihr findet</i> (you find)	<i>ihr fandet</i> (you found)
<i>sie/Sie finden</i> (they/you find)	<i>sie/Sie fanden</i> (they/you found)

sein (to be)

Present	Präteritum
<i>ich bin</i> (I am)	<i>ich war</i> (I was)
<i>du bist</i> (you are)	<i>du warst</i> (you were)

<i>er/sie/es ist</i> (he/she/it is)	<i>er/sie/es war</i> (he/she/it was)
<i>wir sind</i> (we are)	<i>wir waren</i> (we were)
<i>ihr seid</i> (you are)	<i>ihr wart</i> (you were)
<i>sie/Sie sind</i> (they/you are)	<i>sie/Sie waren</i> (they/you were)

Communication: Tips and notes

PHONES AND CELLPHONES

Believe it or not, people still use landline phones, especially in business contexts. A (tele)phone can be a cellphone or a landline phone. The word *(tele)phone* is to the word *cellphone* what the word *pet* is to the word *dog*, i.e. generic vs. specific.

the tele(phone) = das Telefon

the cellphone (the mobile phone) = das Handy / das Mobiltelefon

Regardless of whether you always refer to your cellphone as a *phone*, in this course, you will not be able to use *(tele)phone/Telefon* and *cellphone/Handy* interchangeably.

Verbs, Future 2: Tips and notes

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

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

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

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

Verbs, Past Perfect: Tips and notes

WHEN IS THE PAST PERFECT USED?

The past perfect is used to describe past events, more specifically events that happened *way* back in the past or any time before another event in the past.

past perfect	preterite
Ich hatte ihn schon gesehen,	als er mich sah
I had already seen him	when he saw me

HOW IS THE PAST PERFECT FORMED?

The past perfect is formed by combining a conjugated form of *haben* (to have) or *sein* (to be) in the perfect tense with the past participle of the main verb.

The vast majority of verbs take *haben*. Verbs that take *sein* have to be intransitive, i.e. they can't take an object, and they have to indicate a change of position or condition. *sein* (to be), *bleiben* (to stay), and *passieren* (to happen) take *sein* even though they don't indicate a change of position or condition.

In order to form the past participle of a weak verb, add the prefix *ge-* and the suffix *-t* or *-et* to the stem, e.g. *machen* (to do/to make) becomes *ge-mach-t*.

machen (to do/to make)

present	past perfect
<i>ich mache</i> (I do/make)	<i>ich hatte gemacht</i> (I had done/had made)
<i>du machst</i> (you do/make)	<i>du hattest gemacht</i> (you had done/had made)
<i>er/sie/es macht</i> (he/she/it does/makes)	<i>er/sie/es hatte gemacht</i> (he/she/it had done/had made)
<i>wir machen</i> (we do/make)	<i>wir hatten gemacht</i> (we had done/had made)
<i>ihr macht</i> (you do/make)	<i>ihr hattet gemacht</i> (you had done/had made)
<i>sie/Sie machen</i> (they/you do/make)	<i>sie/Sie hatten gemacht</i> (they/you had done/had made)

laufen (to run/to walk)

Präsens	Perfekt
<i>ich laufe</i> (I run)	<i>ich war gelaufen</i> (I had run)
<i>du läufst</i> (you run)	<i>du warst gelaufen</i> (you had run)
<i>er/sie/es läuft</i> (he/she/it runs)	<i>er/sie/es war gelaufen</i> (he/she/it had run)
<i>wir laufen</i> (we run)	<i>wir waren gelaufen</i> (we had run)
<i>ihr lauft</i> (you run)	<i>ihr wart gelaufen</i> (you had run)
<i>sie/Sie laufen</i> (they/you run)	<i>sie/Sie waren gelaufen</i> (they/you had run)

Strong verbs add the prefix *ge-*, change the stem vowel or the entire stem, and add the suffix *-t*, *-et* or *-en*, e.g. *nennen* (to call) becomes *ge-nann-t*, *sein* becomes *ge-*

wes-en, sprechen (to speak/to talk) becomes *ge-sproch-en*. These forms are not quite predictable. You need to memorize them.

A separable prefix will precede the *ge-* prefix, e.g. *aufmachen* (to open) becomes *auf-ge-mach-t*.

An inseparable prefix will replace the *ge-* prefix, e.g. *veröffentlichen* (to publish) becomes *ver-öffentlich-t*.

Verbs that end in *-ieren* will not be prefixed, e.g. *informieren* becomes *informier-t*.

Education: Tips and notes

Student or Schüler?

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

A Hochschule is not a high school

Careful: a *Hochschule* is not a high school. Depending on the context, *Hochschule* is either an umbrella term that comprises *Universitäten* and *Fachhochschulen*, or it's a synonym for *Fachhochschule*.

A *Universität* is a full research university and a *Fachhochschule* (often just called *Hochschule*) is a university with a practical focus that offers Bachelor and Master degrees. PhD programmes may be offered in cooperation with other universities.

A Gymnasium is not a gym

In German, the word *Gymnasium* refers to a university prep-school.

The German for a sports gym is *Turnhalle* (used by schools and sports clubs) or *Fitnessstudio* (commercial).

Verbs, Future Perfect: Tips and notes

The future perfect talks about actions that will have been completed in the future.

It's used pretty much like the English future perfect, but it's formed slightly differently.

The future perfect consists of the future tense of the auxiliary verb *haben* or *sein*, and the past participle of the main verb.

essen (to eat):

The auxiliary verb that goes with *essen* is *haben*. All you need to do is form the future tense of *haben* (*ich werde haben*) and add the past participle of the main verb *essen*(*gegessen*) to the left of *haben*.

German	English
ich werde gegessen haben	I will have eaten
du wirst gegessen haben	you will have eaten
er/sie/es wird gegessen haben	he/she/it will have eaten
wir werden gegessen haben	we will have eaten
ihr werdet gegessen haben	you will have eaten
sie werden gegessen haben	they will have eaten
Sie werden gegessen haben	you will have eaten

gehen (to leave/to go):

The auxiliary verb that goes with *gehen* is *sein*. All you need to do is form the future tense of *sein* (*ich werde sein*) and add the past participle of the main verb *gehen*(*gegangen*) to the left of *sein*.

German	English
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ich werde gegangen sein	I will have left
du wirst gegangen sein	you will have left
er/sie/es wird gegangen sein	he/she/it will have left
wir werden gegangen sein	we will have left
ihr werdet gegangen sein	you will have left
sie werden gegangen sein	they will have left
Sie werden gegangen sein	you will have left

haben vs sein

The vast majority of verbs take *haben*. Verbs that take *sein* have to be intransitive, i.e. they can't take an object, and they have to indicate a change of position or condition. *sein* (to be), *bleiben* (to stay), and *passieren* (to happen) take *sein* even though they don't indicate a change of position or condition.

Verbs, Conditional: Tips and notes

There are several possibilities to express the notion of *would* in German. We concentrate on the most common and simple one: *würden* + the infinitive (base form) of a verb.

German	English
ich würde spielen	I would play
du würdest spielen	you would play
er/sie/es würde spielen	he/she/it would play

wir würden spielen	we would play
ihr würdet spielen	you would play
sie würden spielen	they would play
Sie würden spielen	you would play

The second possibility is to conjugate the verb directly. In modern language, this form is only common for a few frequent verbs such as *sein* and *haben*.

sein - wären	haben - hätten
ich wäre	ich hätte
du wärest	du hättest
er/sie/es wäre	er/sie/es hätte
wir wären	wir hätten
ihr wäret	ihr hättet
sie wären	sie hätten
Sie wären	Sie hätten

Verbs, Conditional Perfect: Tips and notes

Conditional Perfect works just as normal Perfect, but uses the conditional form of "haben" instead. So, "Ich **habe** ihn gesehen" becomes "Ich **hätte** ihn gesehen".

Be aware that in some verbs, such as *behalten*, *verlassen*, *erfahren*, the Participle looks like the Infinitive. Don't let that confuse you, always use the Participle!

Relative Pronouns: Tips and notes

The relative pronouns follow the same pattern as the definite articles with the exception of the dative plural and the genitive forms.

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

In German, relative clauses are **always** set off by commas from the rest of the sentence.

There's no distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.

Also, relative pronouns can never be dropped.

The form you need to use is governed by the grammatical gender and number of the word that is being referred to (outside the relative clause), and the case is governed by the context of the relative clause.

Keep in mind that certain prepositions and verbs always trigger a certain case, e.g. the preposition "mit" always takes the dative case and so does the verb "helfen".

German Culture: Tips and notes

WHAT IS A *WURST*?

A *Wurst* is a sausage. It does not specifically refer to any kind of sausage. It could be a salami, chorizo, mortadella, frankfurter, etc.

Bratwurst specifically refers to a fried or grilled sausage.