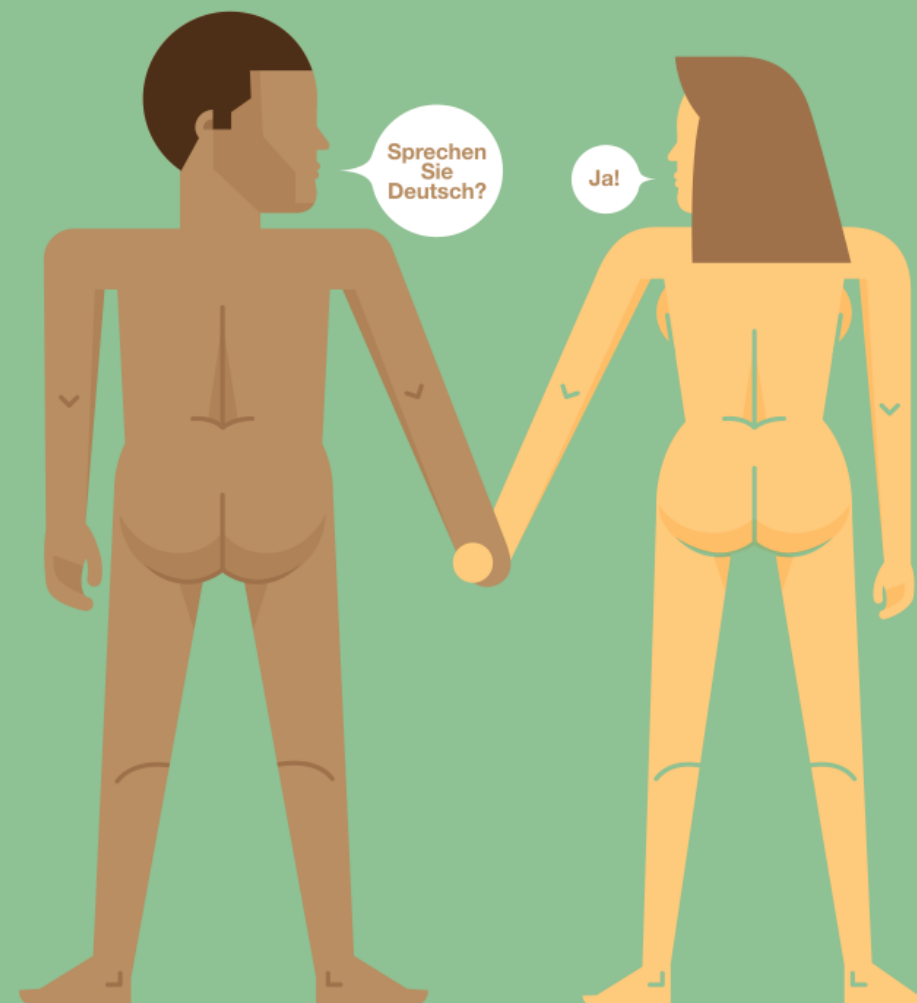


German Crystal Clear

A simplified German grammar for

level A1



Introduction

Einleitung

*If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart. **Nelson Mandela***

Heartly welcome

Herzlich willkommen

The German language is much more beautiful than its reputation makes some people believe. Especially its grammar is far simpler and more logical than you would expect. My aim was to create a grammar book that is actually enjoyable to read. And I hope I have achieved that with this first ebook of mine. As I am author, editor and publishing house in one person, it is not perfect and therefore I will need your help. Share any mistake you find with me so I can make it even better. Of course you will get access to the updated version. Now enjoy the beauty of German grammar. The beautiful illustrations are the work of Ray Noland (www.behance.net/raynoland), a truly gifted illustrator that I had the pleasure to collaborate with last year.

I wish you success and understanding
Yours

Michael Schmitz



How to work with this book

This book is a grammar book. You can read it from the beginning to the end or pick out a topic that you'd like to have clarity about. Use the glossary to find out about grammatical terms that you are not yet familiar with. I tried to reduce those to a minimum. But I also assume that you are capable of dealing with twenty additional new words if you are learning German. This book is a book based on fifteen years of experience as a German tutor with over 10.000hrs taught and with over a thousand students. It is a simplified grammar that means you won't find all possible exceptions, maybe not even all the topics you would find in a normal grammar issued by a specialized publishing house or official institution. Its content nevertheless is logically and contentwise as correct as possible. This is the first of three ebooks on this matter that I am about to write. The other books will take a few more weeks to get finished. Although it is written with level A1 CEFR in mind, it contains three wonderful and effective learning methods that will help you even on the highest levels of German.

You will need more help than this book to actually learn German. Therefore let me provide you with a few links and resources that I consider the best material out there:

Recommended tools

Memrise <<< [click on name to get to that page](#)

This gorgeous vocabulary app is available on all significant platforms and will save you an immense amount of time by helping you to organise your vocabulary training. Don't miss out on this tool. It is the best of its kind.

Linguee <<< [click on name to get to that page](#)

A good dictionary is important. Linguee provides you with samples from the real world and also gives you an indication whether a word is more frequent than another.

Meister der Konjugation <<< [click on name to get to that page](#)

This app is a dream and totally worth the 7€ it costs to unlock the premium functions. It will help you to master the German verbs.

Grammar training

To practice your grammar I recommend the following pages:

Schubert Verlag <<< [click](#)

Mein Deutschbuch <<< [click](#)

Vocabulary and Text Resources

Take a look at [Deutsche Welle's slowly spoken news](#). Those come with transcript and audio in two speeds. Those are real life news.

A similar concept but with simplified texts is [Nachrichten-leicht](#).

Another good resource are so called easy readers. I usually work with this one: [Jeder ist käuflich](#). But if you [follow this link here](#), you will see many others by the same publisher. For Jeder ist käuflich you will find a ready made vocabulary course on memrise which would save you valuable hours of your time. Make sure to get those or any other books with the audio as without it it is way too inefficient.

Writing training

To practice your writing skills, [register at lang-8](#) and figure out how it works. You will have to correct other learner's written work in your language. In return they will correct your German writing. All for free. Make frequent use of it.

Speaking training

[Read this article of mine](#) to find a reliable conversation trainer or partner.

Grammar Videos

I have created a series of German Grammar videos that [you can preview here](#). They contain the same information as this book but also additional topics and material like a 100 pages workbook with exercises and lists created to practice the sG-specific learning techniques that you will get a glimpse of here. Make sure to check the freebies out before you purchase anything.

That should get you started. I now wish you success with your German. I am thankful for any feedback that you can provide and if you like my work, please leave a review in the following places:

[Google+](#) (very important and helpful)

[My homepage](#) (also important for those who don't see G+)

The Article

Der Artikel

Every noun has a gender, and there is no sense or system in the distribution; so the gender of each must be learned separately and by heart. There is no other way. To do this one has to have a memory like a memorandum-book. In German, a young lady has no sex, while a turnip has.

Mark Twain



What is an Article?

Was ist ein Artikel?

Gender

Certain words in German have a gender. Genders are **masculine** (m), **feminine** (f) and **neuter** (n). The only words that have a gender are called nouns. Those are words that in English can be used with *the*. So *house* is a noun because you can say *the house*. And that's why the German equivalent for *house* - *Haus* is also a noun and it's of neuter gender - *das Haus*.

While in English you are perfectly fine with *the* in German there are six *thes*, namely:

der, das, die, den, dem & des

And that's not all yet. There are several groups of articles, which are the same as in English although you might not have considered them to be an article.

Other articles are

<i>a:</i>	<i>ein, eine, einen, einem, einer, eines</i>
<i>my:</i>	<i>mein, meine, meinen, meinem, meiner meines</i>
<i>not a:</i>	<i>kein, keine, keinen, keinem, keiner, keines</i>
<i>which:</i>	<i>welcher, welches, welche, welchen, welchem</i>
<i>this:</i>	<i>dieser, dieses, diese, diesen, diesem, dieses</i>

This list is not complete but more than enough for the beginning. Any of the above articles can be used with a noun, e.g. *the house, my house or which house* - *das Haus, mein Haus oder welches Haus*.

You need to know the basic gender (often expressed by *der, das, die*) of each noun to be able to speak German correctly. So let me show you two really neat techniques that will help you with this task.

How to learn the Articles?

Wie lernt man die Artikel?

Article Signals

You need to nail the article if you want to sound proper and smart. If you don't want to sound like that, that's fine. You might still want to read the following paragraphs so that at least you have a choice.

The German article can be recognized in let's say 25% of the cases even without understanding the word. All you have got to do is to learn three magic words. They are difficult words but with a bit of practice you'll get by:

der Iglingorismuser

das Tumchenmamentumleinnis

die Heitungkeiteischaftionietätikure

Learn them by heart by saying them out loud together with their article, as this is what you want to learn.

These three words consist of the most popular word-endings that give away the article of a specific word. A few examples should make that clear:

Käfig ends in **-ig** and shows you that it needs the article **der**.

Mädchen ends in **-chen** which tells you that it needs **das**.

Freiheit ends in **-heit** meaning that it is needs **die**.

Substitution-Technique

You might quickly realize that often a noun doesn't end in one of our magic endings or that it simply is an exception from the rule. Don't despair, there's also a very efficient technique for those. I call it the **Superhero-Technique**. Let's start with three examples and then I will explain the technique in detail to make sure it is clear. Please imagine the following situations:

- A **superhero** has a long, gray **beard** that he plays with.
- **The Queen** owns the world's largest pink **potato** collection.
- A big fat German **baby** is playing the **piano**.

Go through these examples once again. This time, make it more vivid, add some mojo to your phantasy. The imagery has to be very remarkable. In German we say merkwürdig i.e. remember-worthy. Let me give you an example of what I mean:

I see the Queen standing in a giant room. That's the room in which she keeps her pink potatoes. Those potatoes are huge. She loves them. She caresses them. She breathes in the air of that room and I can smell what she smells: a strong potatoe scent.

Did you feel the difference? Add sensations and feelings to your imagination and you will never forget any article ever again. What article? Well, read on.

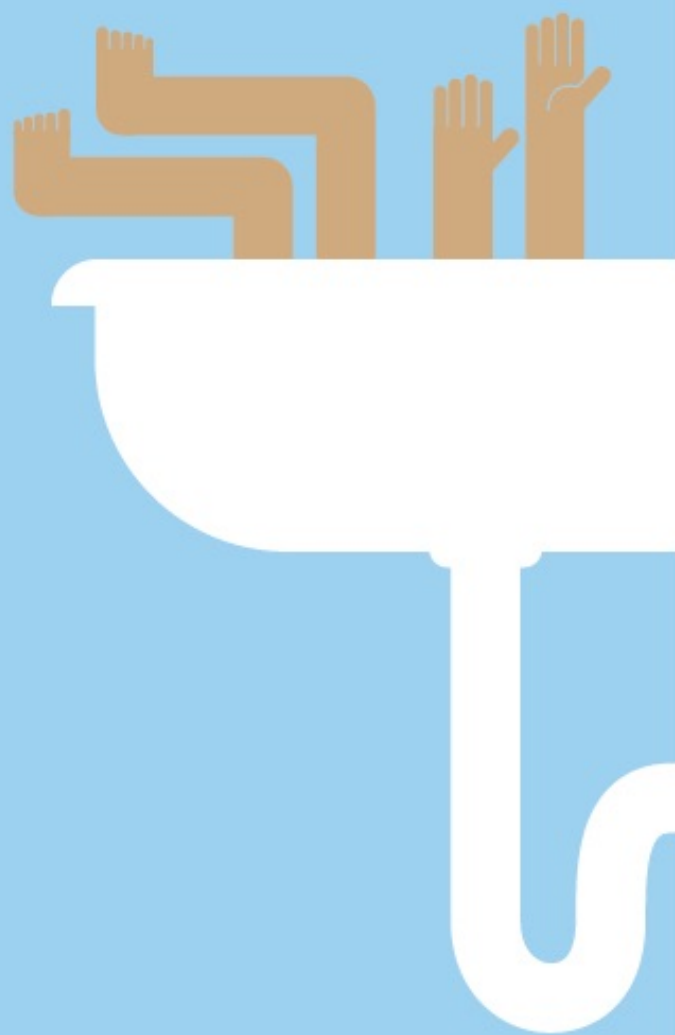
Explanation

As you hopefully remember there are three genders in German: masculine, neuter and feminine. Those mostly follow no logic and are therefore hard to remember. What I did with the superhero, the Queen and the baby was that I substituted the gender with a concrete, easy to visualize image. So now, whenever you learn a new noun, you simply add one of these three figures to the word's meaning and will memorize its gender easily. Take a look the examples from before:

- **The superhero** had a beard. *Beard* is *Bart* in German. As it is connected now with superhero I know that it is *masculine* and can use the appropriate masculine articles. Yes, there are more of them but that's for dessert.
- *Potato >> Kartoffel* is *feminine* as indicated by **the Queen** in our example.
- And, you might have guessed it already, *piano >> Klavier* is *neuter*, given away by its connection with **baby**.

das Becken

“the sink”



Practice

Now practice this technique and then test your new skill. Imagine the following twelve scenes and pay special attention to the highlighted words:

1. A baby is sleeping in a **glas sink**.
2. It's **face** is painted in **gold**.
3. Every day it is bathed in original German **beer**.
4. **Life** is a **pleasure** in **paradise** for German babies.
5. The Queen is at the **post office** waiting in **line**.
6. She's picking up a giant horse-meat **sausage**.
7. The waiting **time** passes extremely slowly.
8. She stretches by pressing her **hands** against the **wall**.
9. Our Superhero walks on top of a **forest**.
10. A super **rain** and **wind** are making his **beard** wet.
11. He takes out his super-**umbrella** in form of a **fish**.
12. He's on **holiday**. Nothing can bother him.

Take a short break, make yourself a cup of coffee and go through these images one more time. Make them even more remarkable. Soon you won't have to invest that much time into memorizing any more. But if you invest half an hour now you'll benefit from it for the next 40 years. Remember to eat healthy, sleep enough and learn German to grow old. Later today or tomorrow test yourself by trying to remember the articles of the following words: **holiday, glas, fish, face, wall, post, gold, beer, umbrella, hand, beard, life, time, pleasure, wind, sausage, rain, line, forest, paradise.**

Words which genders you have just learned

English	German
glas	das Glas
sink	das Waschbecken
face	das Gesicht
gold	das Gold (and other metals)
life	das Leben
pleasure	das Vergnügen
paradise	das Paradies
post (office)	die Post
line	die (Warte-)Schlange
sausage	die Wurst
time	die Zeit
hand	die Hand
wall	die Wand
forest	der Wald
rain	der Regen
wind	der Wind
beard	der Bart
umbrella	der (Regen-)Schirm
fish	der Fisch
holiday	der Urlaub

How to use the Articles?

Wie benutzt man die Artikel?

The German article

Luckily the German article is mostly used in the same way as in English. But you might want to pay special attention to the few situations where it is different from English. Just some examples:

Identical usage

*Ich sehe **ein** Auto. **Das** Auto ist grün.*

*I see **a** car. **The** car is green.*

At times we don't use an article. That is called **zero article**.

*Ich habe **Kinder**. **Die** Kinder sind schon groß.*

*I have **children**. **The** children are big.*

Different usage

Ich fahre mit **dem** Bus.

I go by **xxx** bus.

transportation

Du wohnst also in **der** Lindenstraße.

So you live in **xxx** Lindenstreet?

streets & squares

Ich bin noch auf **der** Arbeit.

I am still at **xxx** work.

Arbeit, Kirche
Schule, Bett

Which Article to use?

Welchen Artikel soll ich benutzen?

German is a bit more precise than English when it comes to its articles. E.g. instead of *the* we use *der, das, die, den, dem* or *des*, which now creates the problem of finding out when to use which article. And this is where the **cases** > **Fälle** come into play.

These will be covered in the next chapter but just to give you a short introduction a quick overview:

There are four cases in German:

- I. Nominativ
- II. Akkusativ
- III. Dativ
- IV. Genitiv

There are clear rules on when to use which case. All articles change according to the case that the noun that it accompanies is used in. One example:

The word *Hund* > *dog* is masculine. Its a Super-dog. The article changes as follows depending on the case *Hund* is used in:

Der Hund ist jung.	Nominativ
Ich lieben den Hund.	Akkusativ
Ich helfe dem Hund.	Dativ
Das Herrchen des Hundes ist groß.	Genitiv

You will have to learn all article forms of each gender. That's best achieved by learning the following two tables by heart. The colors are used to show similarities and simplify memorization.

These tables play a very important role for speaking correct German. Every minute invested in learning them is well invested. So maybe write them down a few times until they stick to your memory.

Definitivartikel

CASE	MASKULIN	NEUTRAL	FEMININ	PLURAL
Nominativ	der	das	die	die
Akkusativ	den	das	die	die
Dativ	dem	dem	der	den
Genitiv	des	des	der	der

Indefinitivartikel

CASE	MASKULIN	NEUTRAL	FEMININ	PLURAL
Nominativ	ein	ein	eine	-
Akkusativ	einen	ein	eine	-
Dativ	einem	einem	einer	-
Genitiv	eines	eines	einer	-

If you compare these two tables you will notice that with the exception of the three **ains** in Nominative and Accusative the endings (highlighted a bit) are absolutely the same in both tables. Keep this in mind for when we come to the Adjectives.

For those keen on grammatical terms: The first table shows the **definite articles** while the second one the **indefinite articles**.

The possessive articles

You soon will want to talk about things you possess. For that you will have to use an article that is actually pretty much the same as **ein**. The only difference is that there are six variants of it:

Nominative*

masculine/neuter	feminine/plural	English
mein	meine	my
dein	deine	your
sein (Auto)	seine	his (car)
sein	seine	its
ihr	ihre	her
unser	unsere	our
euer	eure	your (guys)
ihr	ihre	their
Ihr	Ihre	your (Sir/Mam)

*The Accusative/Dative and Genitive versions only differ in the endings which are identical to the endings of **ein**.

The Cases

Die Fälle

Genitiv ins Wasser. Wieso? Ist es Dativ? **Wordplay**

Explanation:

Genitiv sounds like: Geh' nicht tief > Don't go deep

Dativ sounds like: da tief > deep there

Genitiv



The Nominative

Der Nominativ

Its forms

The Nominative is actually nothing more than a set of article endings and a few personal pronouns. Those are:

Maskulinum:	der
Neutrum:	das
Femininum:	die
Plural:	die

Personalpronomen

ich I	wir we
du you	ihr you (guys)
er he	sie they
es it	Sie you (sir/mam)
sie she	

You can easily memorize the article endings with help of the keyword: **Nordsee** with **No** standing for **Nominativ**. It is the endings you want to learn as they are used with all kinds of articles, like e.g. **welcher (m)**, **dieses (n)**, **meine (f)**.

When do I use it?

The Nominative is used for the **subject** of a sentence. Subjects are those nouns or pronouns that *do* the action in a sentence.

Der Hund bellt.

The dog barks.

The dog is doing the barking, so it is the subject of that sentence. And you can see that it uses *der* and not any other of the masculine articles like e.g. *den*, *dem* or *des* (see table on page 8).

Then there are three other situations after which you will need to use the Nominative in addition (!) to the subject: After *sein*, *bleiben* and *werden* (to be, to stay/remain, to become). Take a look at these examples.

Der Lehrer ist der Vater (von meinem Freund).

The teacher is the father (of my friend).

Der Hund bleibt **der** beste Freund (des Menschen).
The dog remains the best friend (of a man).

Der Mann wird **der** Gatte (meiner Schwester).
The man will become the husband (of my sister).

How do I find the subject?

You can find the subject by asking the question *wer* for persons or *was* for non-persons:

Wer singt? **Der** Chor. > *Who* is singing? *The choir.*
Was ist kaputt? **Das** Auto. > *What* is broken? *The car.*

Note the similarity between **wer** and **der** or **was** and **das**.

The Accusative

Der Akkusativ

Its forms

The Accusative is again nothing more than a set of article endings and a few personal pronouns. Those are:

Maskulinum:	den
Neutrum:	das
Femininum:	die
Plural:	die

Personalpronomen

mich me	uns us
dich you	euch you (guys)
ihn him	sie them
es it	Sie you (sir/mam)
sie her	

You can easily memorize its article endings by remembering that the only difference to the Nominative is found in the masculine form which ends in *n*. The *n* has two strokes down and Accusative is the second case of four.

When do I use it?

There are four situations in which you need to use the Accusative:

1. After an Accusative preposition
2. After a two-way preposition
3. After an Accusative verb
4. For the *gift* if there are two objects in one sentence

1. After an Accusative preposition

A preposition stands as its name gives it already away **pre** i.e. before a noun and usually gives us information e.g. about location or time but at times also about a mode (of movement e.g.) There are a few prepositions that always require the Accusative:

entlang along	für for
durch through	bis until
um around/at	ohne without
gegen against	

After any of these prepositions you will have to use the Accusative. You'll never come across a *durch der* or *ohne der* etc.

[Click here to learn them with help of a short video - You'll need an internet connection.](#)

2. After a two-way preposition answering **Wohin?**

These are the following:

vor before/in front of

hinter behind

über above

unter under

neben next to

an at/on

zwischen in between

auf on (top)

in in

Wohin fahren wir? **In die Türkei.** (A)

Literally: Where-to go we? Into the Turkish country.

There will be an extra chapter about the two-way prepositions later on covering the origin of their weird name and a more precise description of their usage.

3. After an Accusative verb

The Accusative is used for the **object** of a sentence:

Der Hund frisst **einen Knochen.**

The dog eats a bone.

The dog is doing the eating, so it is the **subject** of that sentence. What's left is the bone. As there can only be one subject per sentence* it is the object. An object usually is the thing or person, to which the action is done. It's not always that obvious, but you can simply assume that any other (pro)noun in a sentence besides the subject is an object. And as only the subject allows the use of the Nominative, the object can not use the Nominative case anymore.

And although an object could be used in the Accusative, the Dative or the Genitive, in 90% of the situations you will have to use the Accusative. A good rule of thumb hence is to always use the Accusative for an object in case of doubt. Chances are high that you will guess correctly. To raise your chances you will have to learn when to use the Dative or the Genitive for an object, which I'll talk about in a few pages.

*be careful even if you talk about two people or things they are just one subject:
Peter und Heidi gehen auf die Straße. > *Peter and Heidi are going on the street.*
Although *Peter and Heidi* are two people, they are only one subject.

Akkusativ



4. For the **gift** if there are two objects in one sentence

There are verbs that can take two objects. In almost all the cases you will then have one Dative and one Accusative object. There are only three exceptions for now.* The good news is that these verbs with two objects are universal. That means even on Mars they would have such verbs. One example:

*Bringst Du mir **einen Wein**?*

Will you bring me (a bottle of) wine?

You could leave out the *mir* but not the *Wein*. In all languages you can bring something to somebody. And the thing that is being „given“ to someone, the gift, is always used in the Accusative. Some more common verbs of this kind are:

bringen to bring

geben to give

kaufen to buy

machen to give

schenken to give as a gift

erzählen to tell

sagen to say

verraten to give away (a secret)

leihen to borrow/lend

*those are *lehren* >to teach, *kosten* >to cost and *nennen* >to name which use two Accusatives and are very rarely used so that we can calmly ignore them.

How do I find the Accusative?

You can find the Accusative by asking the questions **wen** for persons or **was** for non-persons.

*Der Chef kauft **einen neuen Computer**.*

*The boss is buying **a new computer**.*

Accusative: **Was** kauft der Chef? Einen neuen Computer.

*Die Frau liebt **ihren Mann**.*

*The woman loves **he husband**.*

Accusative: **Wen** liebt die Frau? Ihren Mann.

One trick to remember the questions:

wen ends in **n** just like **den** or **einen** (Accusative masculine)

was ends in **s** just like **das** or **dieses** (Accusative neuter)

The Dative

Der Dativ

Its forms

The Dative is nothing more than a set of article endings with a little add-on in the plural and a set of personal pronouns:

Maskulin:	dem
Neutral:	dem
Feminin:	der
Plural:	den + n

Personalpronomen

mir me	uns us
dir you	euch you (guys)
ihm him	ihnen them
ihm it	ihnen you (sir/mam)
ihr her	

You can easily memorize its article endings with help of the keyword: **dimmerin²g** or if you prefer German: **Dämmerun²g** > *dawn*. Also note that the *m* has three strokes down and Dative is the third case of four.

When do I use it?

There are four situations in which you would have to use it:

1. After a Dative **preposition**
2. After a two-way preposition (there will be an extra segment)
3. After a Dative verb
4. For the **receiver** if there are two objects in one sentence

1. After a Dative preposition

There are only a few Dative prepositions. The most common ones are:

ab from	seit since
aus from/out of	von from/of
bei at	zu to
mit with	außer except
nach after/to	gegenüber opposite of.

After any of these prepositions you will have to use the Dative. You will never come across a *mit das* or *mit die* e.g.

[Click here to get to the video - You'll need an internet connection.](#)

2. After a two-way preposition answering to **Wo**?

These are the following:

vor before/in front of

hinter behind

über above

unter under

neben next to

an at/on

zwischen in between

auf on (top)

in in

Wo ist mein Bleistift? **Auf dem** Tisch. (D)

Where is my pencil? On the table.

There will be an extra segment about the two-way prepositions later on covering the origin of their weird name and a more precise description of their usage.

3. After a Dative verb

There are about 50 Dative verbs of which you might simply want to learn the most important 25 given in the appendix of this book. In the How To-chapter later on I will show you a wonderful technique that will help you to learn these in about one hour.

4. For the **receiver** if there are two objects in one sentence

There are verbs that can take two objects. In almost all the cases you will then have one Dative and one Accusative object. There are only three exceptions for now.* The good news is that these verbs are universal. That means even on Mars they would have such verbs. One example:

*Bringst Du **mir** einen Wein?*

Will you bring me (a bottle of) wine?

You could leave out the *mir* but not the *Wein*. Yet in all languages you can bring something to somebody. And that *somebody* in German is put into the Dative. One could say that the **receiver** of the *gift* -remember that's always in the Accusative- is always in the **Dative**.

*those are *lehren* >to teach, *kosten* >to cost and *nennen* >to name which use two Accusatives and are very rarely used so that we can calmly ignore them.

How do I find the Dative?

You can find the Dative by asking the questions *wem*. There is no difference between persons and non-persons.

*Die Kinder helfen **den Nachbarn**.*

*The children are helping **the neighbors**.*

Subject: *Wer hilft den Nachbarn? Die Kinder.*

Dative: ***Wem** helfen die Kinder? **Den Nachbarn**.*

One trick to remember the question:

wem ends in *m* just like *dem* or *einem* (Dative masculine)

The Dative plural

The add-on *n* is added to the noun in the plural if there's not already an *n* like in the above example (Nachbarn is the regular plural so no extra *n*). So here one final example of the Dative plural:

*Ich tippe mit zehn **Fingern**.*

I type with ten fingers.

The normal plural of *Finger* is *Finger*. Thanks to the Dative it gets an additional *n* in this case's plural (only).

The Genitive

Der Genitiv

Its forms

The Genitive is nothing more than a set of article endings with a little add-on in the masculine and neuter forms. The personal pronouns are outdated and not used by beginners.

Maskulinum: des + s

Neutrum: des + s

Femininum: der

Plural: der

You can easily memorize the article endings with help of the keyword: **Guess the error** or if you prefer German: **Genie-sser² > gourmet**.

Genitiv



When do I use the Genitive?

The Genitive is often used when you could use **of the** or **of my** in English. It is used to express relations. As relations are often easier expressed with help of possessive articles like e.g. *mein*, *dein*, *sein*, the Genitive tends to be neglected. Please don't mistake *mein* & co. for the Genitive. They are articles or at times pronouns that can stand in any of the four German cases. See an example for the masculine gender:

Nominativ:	mein
Accusativ:	meinen
Dativ:	meinem
Genitiv:	meines

Some examples for the Genitive now:

Das Auto meines Freundes...

*The car **of my** friend*

Der Ton des Redners...

*The tone **of the** speaker...*

Die Kinder meiner Frau...

*The children **of my** wife...*

Besides this there are some prepositions after which you need to use the Genitive. There are also certain fixed constructions that require the Genitive that I will skip here as they are not relevant for beginners.

Genitive prepositions

laut *according to* (also used with Dative)

wegen *because of* (also used with Dative)

trotz *despite* (also used with Dative)

während* *during* -

How do I find the Genitive?

You can ask for the Genitive object with the question *wessen?*

Wessen Kinder sind süß? Die Kinder meines Bruders.

Whose children are sweet? The children of my brother.

Let's test your new knowledge of the cases on the next page.

*Be careful with **während** as it has got a twin sister:

a) **Während der Arbeit** darf man nicht im Internet surfen. -> Genitive preposition
During work one is not allowed to surf in the internet

b) **Während** er arbeitet, darf er nicht im Internet surfen. -> Conjunction
While he's working, he is not allowed to surf in the internet.

The Plural

Der Plural

Davon kann man gar nicht genug bekommen.



The Plural looks worse than it is

Es sieht schlimmer aus, als es ist

If you want to talk about more than one thing or person you use the plural. In English in most cases you simply add an s to the end of the noun and you are done. In German you can distinguish eight (!) -often similar- plural forms.

The good news is that in the end everything comes down to two forms that strongly depend on the article (I told you so). So let's get started.

The eight forms are:

1.	der Lehrer (singular) -	die Lehrer (plural)
2.	<i>der Vater</i>	- <i>die Väter</i>
3.	das Auto	- die Autos
4.	das Kind	- die Kinder
5.	<i>das Land</i>	- <i>die Länder</i>
6.	der Fisch	- die Fische
7.	<i>der Bart</i>	- <i>die Bärte</i>
8.	die Lampe	- die Lampen

You can easily see that forms 1+2, 4+5 and 6+7 are actually the same form with the difference that any word containing an *a* or *o* or *u* often turns these into an umlaut *ä* or *ö* or *ü*. Unfortunately this change is not 100% regular. It will still make a good guess. So knowing about the umlauts we are left with five forms:

1.+2.	no change
3.	+s
4.+5.	+er
6.+7.	+e
8.	+n

The first three forms (1-5) are easily learned and also not too prominent. So let's quickly browse through them.

1.+2. no change

Nouns that end in *el*, *er* or *chen* don't have an extra plural ending. Remember the umlaut though.

The rule is: **el-er-chen stays el-er-chen.**

der Löffel	-	die Löffel	the spoon
der Eimer	-	die Eimer	the bucket
das Mädchen	-	die Mädchen	the girl

But: die Klingel-die Klingeln the bell because it's feminine.

3. +s

A few words end in *a, o, u, y* or *i*. Those get an extra *s* in the plural. They are few and always of non-German origin.

die Oma	-	die Omas	the grandmother
das Kino	-	die Kinos	the cinema
der Uhu	-	die Uhus	the (kind of) owl
das Handy	-	die Handys	the mobile phones
der Pulli	-	die Pullis	the sweater

4.+5. +er

Only 3% of the German nouns end in *er* in the plural. [Seriously, there was an Ukrainian who found that out]. You'll learn them without problems as they kind of stick out. All of them are either masculine or neuter.

das Kind	-	die Kinder	the child
das Land	-	die Länder	the country
das Ei	-	die Eier	the egg
der Mann	-	die Männer	the man
das Rad	-	die Räder	the wheel/bike

6.+7. +e

This plural form is found with 23% of the German nouns. It is mainly reserved for masculine and neuter words. Unfortunately that's only 95% accurate. But better than nothing, right? So if you know the noun is masculine or neuter but are not familiar with its plural yet, go for *e*.

das Regal	-	die Regale	the shelf
der Kopf	-	die Köpfe	the head
der Berg	-	die Berge	the mountain
der Stuhl	-	die Stühle	the chair
das Schaf	-	die Schafe	the sheep

but: die Hand	-	die Hände	the hand
die Wand	-	die Wände	the wall

8. +(e)n

This form is found with 51% of the German nouns. 95% of which are feminine. There is two nice turns to this ending:

- a) Any (!) noun ending in *e*, independent of its gender, builds the plural with *n*:

die Nase	-	die Nasen	the nose
das Auge	-	die Augen	the eye
der Pole	-	die Polen	the Pole

b) Remember the article signals for the *die*-article? Words with those endings all end in (e)n, too:

die Freiheit-die Freiheiten the freedom
die Zeitung-die Zeitungen the newspaper
die Süßigkeit-die Süßigkeiten the sweet(s)
etc.

Summary

The plural mainly comes down to knowing whether a noun is either masculine/neuter or feminine.

masculine/neuter nouns are ending in -e

feminine nouns are ending in -en

+ any (!) noun ending in e builds the plural with n

Now test your knowledge on the next page.

The Verbs

Die Verben

*Es gibt nichts Gutes, außer man tut es. **Erich Kästner***

Präsens



Regular Verbs

Regelmäßige Verben

For a beginner it is sufficient to differentiate between: regular verbs, irregular verbs and modal verbs.

Modal verbs are rather a subdivision of the irregular verbs but they deserve special attention as well as a few very irregular verbs that we will talk about later on.

The German verbs change their endings according to the subject. Remember? That person or thing *performing* the action that we talk about.

These endings are pretty regular throughout all tenses or modes as you will see later on. There are only a few exceptions.

ich	mache e	to make	wir	mache n
du	mach st		ihr	mach t
er/es/sie	mach t		sie/Sie	mache n

This change of the last letters of a verb is called **conjugation**. While the endings are generally the same for both regular as well as irregular verbs there are certain differences that will become clear soon.

Verbs are used to talk about what is happening and when those things are happening. For example to talk about something that is happening in this moment, the present or that is about to happen in the future, Germans use the so called **Präsens** tense. In many languages there are regular and irregular verbs. It sounds worse than it is. The regular verbs in the Präsens tense are conjugated like you have seen in the last example of *machen*. All you have to do to find the right form is the following:

1. Take the **infinitive** of the verb (the form ending in *-en*)
2. Cut off the *-en* ending, what's left then is called **the stem**
3. Add the personal ending (those in red) and you are done.

The final result is called the **finite verb** which means as much as *the finished verb* as opposed to *infinite > not finished*.

At times you will have to add an extra *e* to the end of the stem to make the verb pronounceable. This is usually the case when the stem ends in **d** or **t**. One example:

arbeiten > infinitive-stem ends in **t**

ich	arbeite	to work	wir	arbeiten
du	arbeitest		ihr	arbeitet
es	arbeitet		sie	arbeiten

By the way: There's no way that you can see whether a verb is regular or irregular simply by looking at its infinitive!

Other examples are: finden*, binden*, leiten*, gleiten*.

*to find, to bind, to lead and to glide

Irregular Verbs-Present

Unregelmäßige Verben- Präsens

You can recognize an irregular verb when you look at its stem. I have marked the stems red here where it matters. Take a look:

ich	fahre	to drive	wir	fahren
du	fährst		ihr	fahrt
es*	fährt		sie*	fahren
ich	lese	to read	wir	lesen
du	liest		ihr	lest
es*	liest		sie	lesen
ich	nehme	to take	wir	nehmen
du	nimmst		ihr	nehmt
es*	nimmt		sie	nehmen

*For reasons of clarity I won't write er /sie or Sie anymore in any such overview. You know where they belong now and that es / sie are representing them.

The lovely thing about German irregular verbs is that they are very often pretty regular in their irregularity. Take a look at the three examples from before and see whether you understand the following:

The steps above provide you with a generally applicable set

1. There are only two kind of changes in the stem:
 - the letter **a** changes to **ä**
 - the letter **e** adds/changes to an **i**
2. A change **only** appears in the **du** and **es**-forms.
3. The plural is **always** regular
4. Some verbs change more than one letter > *nimmt*
5. The *du*-form loses the *s* of the ending after a **stem-s** > *du liest*, *du isst*, *du heiß* making the *du* and *es* forms look alike

of rules that will get you started. In the following we will take a look at some specialties. Above all the verb *sein* > *to be* and some of the more irregular verbs. Irregular verbs in the past are a bit more work than in the Präsens but it's also pretty easy to learn those. I'll come back to those later on.

*Actually there is a third one but I have only found one example and it wouldn't make sense to sell that as a pattern: stoßen > to push.

Irregular Verbs



More irregular verbs

Unregelmäßigere Verben

There is no rule to teach here. I just want to show you some of the more irregular verbs in the present tense. Those are widely used and you should study them intensively. Note that with the sole exception of *sein* the **plural is always regular!** And the fun begins with the past tenses that we will talk about shortly.

sein > to be

The verb to be is the most irregular verb in German. It's present-forms are:

<i>ich</i> bin	<i>wir</i> sind
<i>du</i> bist	<i>ihr</i> seid
<i>es</i> ist	<i>sie</i> sind

Now to some less peculiar candidates:

haben > to have

haben changes in a peculiar way: it leaves out the **stem-b** in the *du* and *es* forms. Otherwise it is totally normal:

<i>ich</i> habe	<i>wir</i> haben
<i>du</i> hast	<i>ihr</i> habt
<i>es</i> hat	<i>sie</i> haben

werden > to become

werden shows the usual change from *e* to *i* in the *du* and *es*-forms but also skips the *t*-ending in the latter instead of adding another *e* (which would result in *wirdet*) as one might expect:

<i>ich</i> werde	<i>wir</i> werden
<i>du</i> wirst	<i>ihr</i> werdet
<i>es</i> wird	<i>sie</i> werden

wissen > to know

One of the few verbs also changing the *ich*-form, having no ending in the *ich*-form, plus it changes the other way round: **i > ie**.

<i>ich</i> weiß*	<i>wir</i> wissen
<i>du</i> weißt	<i>ihr</i> wisst
<i>es</i> weißt	<i>sie</i> wissen

*There is no such verb-form as *ich weiße*.

nehmen > to take

Simply doubling the *m* while skipping the *h*.

<i>ich</i> nehme	<i>wir</i> nehmen
<i>du</i> nimmst	<i>ihr</i> nehmt
<i>es</i> nimmt	<i>sie</i> nehmen

treten > to kick

It's getting wild now: *du* doubles the *t* while *es* skips the usual *e* which would have resulted in *es tritet*. But that form unfortunately does not exist.

<i>ich</i> trete	<i>wir</i> treten
<i>du</i> trittst	<i>ihr</i> tretet
<i>es</i> tritt	<i>sie</i> treten

Last but not least: The modal verbs

Those are the following six verbs [*mögen* and *möchten* are actually the same word with slightly different meanings]. Besides their unusual declination, they are also special in other ways, so they deserve their own segment. Here I will only cite the irregular forms of the *third person singular* (that's the *er/es/sie* form):

Infinitiv	Englisch	3. Person Singular
können	<i>to be able to</i>	es kann
müssen	<i>to have to</i>	es muss
dürfen	<i>to be allowed to</i>	es darf
sollen	<i>should</i>	es soll
wollen	<i>to want</i>	es will
mögen	<i>to like</i>	es mag
möchten	<i>to want</i>	es möchte

>>>

The Modal Verbs

Die Modalverben

Modal verbs are not only irregular formwise but also when it comes to their use: they can have another verb as a partner. Actually, they most of the time have another verb as a partner. That verb then is used in its basic form at the very end of that same sentence. See it here:

*Ich **kann** nicht **kommen**.*

I can't come. [partner-verb]

This peculiarity will not cause you much trouble as in English you have the same phenomenon as you can see in the translation of the above example.

So all you need to do is to learn the irregularities in their forms and their meanings and you'll be fine.

The forms

The modal verbs show changes in the first three persons (ich/du/es) and also do not have endings for *ich* and *es*. As mentioned before: the plural is always regular. Modal verbs are no exception to this rule.

	können	müssen	wollen	möchten	dürfen	sollen
ich	kann	muss	will	möchte	darf	soll
du	kannst	musst	willst	möchtest	darfst	sollst
es	kann	muss	will	möchte	darf	soll
wir	können	müssen	wollen	möchten	dürfen	sollen
ihr	könnt	müsst	wollt	möchtet	dürft	sollt
sie	können	müssen	wollen	möchten	dürfen	sollen

Attention please!

Pay attention to the following translations:

können	> to be able to
müssen	> to have to
wollen	> to want (strong)
dürfen	> to be allowed to
sollen	> to should

nicht müssen > I don't have to
not: I must not

„möchten“ > to would like to (gentle)

möchten

There is actually no such infinitive as *möchten*. The origin of this word is **mögen** > to like. *möchten* is actually in the so called **Konjunktiv II** = subjunctive which we will discuss later.

Take a look at the conjugation of **möchten** and **mögen**:

	möchten (to would like)	mögen (to like)
ich	möchte *	mag *
du	möchte st	mag st
es	möchte *	mag *
wir	möchte n	mög en
ihr	möchte t	mög t
sie	möchte n	mög en

Ich möchte ein Bier. > I would like (to have) a beer.

Ich mag Bier. > I like (e.g. the taste of) beer.



Separable Verbs

Trennbare Verben

Separable verbs are verbs with one peculiarity: they separate at times. To be able to separate they must be compound verbs. Those are e.g.

ein.kaufen
auf.stehen [the dots are just for illustration]
an.machen

The front part of such a verb is called **Präfix**. There are also prefixes that are not separable which will be covered in the next segment. Now, in a standard sentence this prefix would wander off to the very end of that sentence therefore separating from the core verb:

Ich kaufe immer bei ZEWE ein .	> I always shop at ZEWE.
Stehst du bitte auf !	> Would you please get up!
Er macht das Licht an .	> He turns the light on.

Please note that a prefix can give a verb a completely new meaning:

machen > to make	vs	anmachen > to turn on
sehen > to see	vs	absehen > to abstain
hören > to hear	vs	aufhören > to stop/to quit

Behaviour in side clauses

However, there are quite a few situations in which these verbs are simply not really separated like e.g. in a so called **side clause** that I'll talk about later on:

Ich sehe besser, *wenn* ich das Licht **anmache**.

> I see better when I turn the light on.

wenn is initiating such a side clause and is pushing **anmachen** to the end of that sentence where it is written in one piece again. That's by the way the nature of all side clauses, that they push their verbs to the end.

Behaviour with other verbs

The same happens when separable verbs are used together with other verbs, like e.g. modal verbs or in the past with *haben* or *sein*. Two examples:

Kannst du bitte das Licht **anmachen**?

> Can you please turn the light on?

Hast du das Licht **angemacht**?*

> Have you turned on the light?

How to know which verbs are separable

Usually you will get a quick grip on these verbs without muss struggling but there is a tiny little trick that helps you to identify the separable prefixes and therefore the separable verbs:

The separable prefixes quite often resemble prepositions. As I haven't covered these yet, just a quick overview of the most important separable prefixes:

Präfix resembles	Präposition
aus-	aus
bei-	bei
mit-	mit
nach-	nach
zu-	zu
vor-	vor
an-	an
auf-	auf
ein-	in

*The -ge- is still a bit separating the verb anmachen, yet its parts are in correct order: an + mach.

There are other separable prefixes and prefixes that can be either separable or inseparable and there are also prepositi-

ons that resemble prefixes but are not separable. But those nine examples above will make a very solid beginning. And another way of remembering which prefixes are separable is to simply learn the inseparable ones in addition to those ones above.

Inseparable Verbs

Untrennbare Verben

Inseparable verbs are also compound words. They consist of a prefix and a stem. Some examples:

Ich **besuche** meine Eltern. *be.suchen*
> I visit my parents.

Hier **entsteht** ein neues Einkaufszentrum. *ent.stehen*
> Here a new shopping mall is being built.

Ich **erzähle** dir mal was. *er.zählen*
> I will tell you something.

As you can see, the prefixes be-, ent-, er- do not separate from their stems, ever! But as before with the separable verbs, they can change the meaning of the stem verb significantly:

suchen > to search	vs	besuchen > to visit
stehen > to stand	vs	entstehen > to emerge
zählen > to count	vs	erzählen > to tell



Which verbs are inseparable?

Some of the more important inseparable prefixes are:
be-ent-er-ver-zer-ge- and miss- and I have written them
down in this particular order for a reason:

If you learn these prefixes as one new „magic“ word like you have hopefully done with the article signals, you will be able to quickly remember the inseparable prefixes without having to think at all. So imagine Hermann Potter, wizard apprentice, trying to fix our problem of prefixes separating from their stems. He creates a new spell especially for this purpose but as he's only an apprentice, he is not as powerful as he would have liked. So he only manages to fix a few prefixes for us. The ones mentioned above. If you remember his spell, you remember the most important inseparable prefixes. Here it is:

BE - ENT - ER - VER - ZER - GE - MISS

Say this spell out loud several times until you can recite it flawlessly. Be precise because as with every magic spell, a mistake can be fatal (for your correctness).

The Past Tenses

Die Vergangenheit

*Sein oder nicht sein. **Hamlet***



The Past Tense

Die Vergangenheit

There are six tenses in German of which you mainly need two -and a few words from the second past tense: The Präsens that we have already talked about in the last chapter and the Perfekt which is a form of the past.

Just for the sake of completion, here are all six in timely order:

Plusquamperfekt	Pre-past (similar to past perfect)
Perfekt/Präteritum	Past (oral/scripture)
Präsens	Now or future
Futur I	Assumptions + rather rarely: unfinished future
Futur II	Assumptions + rather rarely: finished future

The highlighted tenses are the ones you need to pass level B1 of the **CEFR**. The Perfekt is the most important one of the two past forms that I am going to explain here. I will talk about the difference between the Perfekt and the Präteritum at the end of this chapter. Let's get started:

The Perfekt - regular forms

The Perfekt is actually a compound form. That means that you always need to parts to construct it. Those are usually a form of *haben** and what is called the past participle. One example:

Ich **habe** meine Hausaufgaben **gemacht**.
haben + past participle

You should be able to use *haben* by now so let's focus on the **regular (!) past participle** or in German: das **Partizip II**.

If I take **ge.mach.t** a bit apart you might realize that *mach* is the stem of the infinitive *machen* that is squeezed in between a *ge-* and a *-t*. And that's actually it. Take a look at three other examples and then try it for yourself:

Ich <i>habe</i> nichts gesagt .	I haven't said anything.
Er <i>hat</i> nicht gefragt .	He hasn't asked.
Wir <i>haben</i> alles gehört .	We have heard everything.

Try it yourself with the following five verbs. You can find the answers in the footnote** below:

leben to live	duschen to shower	kochen to cook
fehlen to be absent	regnen to rain	

* At times you will have to use *sein* with the *past participle* to build the Perfekt but I will talk about this at the end of this chapter.

** gelebt - geduscht - gekocht - gefehlt - geregnet

A few more things

There are yet a few specialties that you will have to pay attention to. Those concern the separable and inseparable verbs and verbs ending in -ieren. Some examples:

Separable verbs

Ich habe zu viel **eingekauft**.

> I have shopped too much.

Inseparable verbs

Er hat mich gestern **besucht**.

> He has visited me yesterday.

Verbs ending in -ieren

Wir haben gestern eine Stunde lang **telefoniert**.

> We have talked on the phone for one hour yesterday.

As you can see there are three things to consider:

- 1) The ge- squeezes between the prefix (here: ein-) and the stem of the separable verb.
- 2) Inseparable prefixes do not allow you to use ge- anymore. Hence just add a -t to the end of the stem and you are done.
- 3) -ieren verbs, whyever, also do not allow the use of the ge-. Again, simply add a -t to the end of the stem et voilà.

These rules also apply to the irregular forms, that I will talk about now.

The Perfekt - irregular forms

The irregular Perfekt is not sooo far off the regular form. And there's a neat technique to learn them in the last part of this book. Take a look at these examples:

Ich habe alles **gesehen**.

> I have seen it all.

Hast du dieses Buch schon **gelesen**?

> Have you already read this book?

Wir haben gestern darüber **gesprochen**.

> We have spoken about this yesterday.

There is two differences to the regular Perfekt:

- 1) The past participles end in -en now.
- 2) Quite a few of them change the stem vowel* (gespr~~o~~chen)

In the following I will provide you with some useful tips that will make learning the irregular forms a bit easier. Those are not yet the technique that I have mentioned above.

*Unfortunately the change of the stem vowel is unpredictable which means that you will have to learn almost each individual irregular form by heart.

„Mirror“ Verbs

There is one change in the stem vowel that is found in several past participles: ei --> ie. As if it was mirrored. Take a look:

Infinitiv	Partizip II	English
1. blei ben	gebl <i>ie</i> ben	to remain
2. lei hen	gel <i>ie</i> hen	to borrow
3. rei ben	ger <i>ie</i> ben	to rub
4. sch ei den	gesch <i>ie</i> den	to separate
5. sch ei nen	gesch <i>ie</i> nen	to shine/to seem
6. schre ie ben	geschr <i>ie</i> ben	to write
7. schre ie n	geschr <i>ie</i> n	to shout
8. schw ei gen	geschw <i>ie</i> gen	to remain silent
9. ste i gen	gest <i>ie</i> gen	to mount/to climb
10. tre i ben	getr <i>ie</i> ben	to float
11. verm ei den	verm <i>ie</i> den	to avoid
12. verz ei hen	verz <i>ie</i> hen	to forgive

At times those lose the e and double the following letter:

13. bei ß en	gebiss en	to bite
14. glei t en	geglitt en	to glide
15. grei f en	gegriff en	to grasp
16. lei d en	gelitt en	to suffer
17. pfei f en	gepfiff en	to whistle
18. rei ß en	geriss en	to tear
19. rei t en	geritt en	to ride (a horse)
20. schn e iden	geschnitt en	to cut
21. strei t en	gestritt en	to argue

The „stoic“ Verbs

These verbs do not change their stem-vowel. So all you need to do is to add a ge- to the infinitive.

Infinitiv	Partizip II	English
1. backen	gebacken	to bake
2. blasen	geblasen	to blow
3. braten	gebraten	to fry
4. essen	gegessen	to eat
5. fahren	gefahren	to drive
6. fallen	gefallen	to fall
7. fangen	gefangen	to catch
8. fressen	gefressen	to eat (for animals)
9. geben	gegeben	to give
10. geraten	geraten	to get into sth.
11. geschehen	geschehen	to happen
12. graben	gegraben	to dig
13. halten	gehalten	to hold
14. kommen	gekommen	to come
15. laden	geladen	to load
16. lassen	gelassen	to let/to leave
17. laufen	gelaufen	to run
18. lesen	gelesen	to read
19. messen	gemessen	to measure
20. raten	geraten	to advice
21. rufen	gerufen	to call
22. schlafen	geschlafen	to sleep
23. tragen	getragen	to carry
24. treten	getreten	to kick

Infinitiv	Partizip II	English
25.vergessen	vergessen	to forget
26.verlassen	verlassen	to leave
27.wachsen	gewachsen	to grow
28.waschen	gewaschen	to wash

Ten for the price of one

In the higher levels of German, you will come across many similar looking verbs. While learning their meaning will remain a challenge, you won't have to bother with learning their irregular past participles anymore. Take a look at the following example:

Infinitiv	Partizip II	English
fliegen	geflogen	to fly
abfliegen	abgeflogen	to depart (by plane)
anfliegen	angeflogen	to approach (by plane)
ausfliegen	ausgeflogen	to fly out
auffliegen	aufgeflogen	to get busted
mitfliegen	mitgeflogen	to fly with
zufliegen	zugeflogen	to just come to sb.
durchfliegen	durchgeflogen	to fly through
umfliegen	umgeflogen	to fly around
vorfliegen	vorgeflogen	to fly ahead
überfliegen	überflogen	to fly over
einfliegen	eingeflogen	to fly in

As you can see all these forms follow the same pattern. So all you need to worry about is the one basic change that you then can apply to all derivations from it. This works with all* other irregular verbs. Although not every verb has so many derivations. Try to find the forms for the following verbs but don't bother to learn their meanings yet as that is stuff for much later:

Infinitiv	Partizip II	English
steigen	gestiegen	to mount/to climb
aussteigen		to get out (of metro e.g.)
nachsteigen		to chase sb.
zusteigen		to get on (train or bus)
durchsteigen		to understand (colloq.)
umsteigen		to change trains
vorsteigen		to lead (climbing)
übersteigen		to exceed
hinuntersteigen		to descent
ansteigen		to increase
aufsteigen		to rise
einsteigen		to enter (train e.g.)

That should get you started on this important topic. Now Let's take a look at one more thing regarding the Perfekt tense before dealing with the Präteritum, shall we.

Perfekt



Perfekt with sein

I initially mentioned that the Perfekt can also be built with the help of *sein* instead of *haben*. This occurs only with very specific verbs. Most of these verbs are irregular. The few exceptions are marked with a subscript ^R. Most of these verbs express a movement from a point A to a point B like the following verbs. The movement can be horizontal (*gehen*) or vertical (*steigen*).

Verbs that express a movement from A to B

Infinitive	Example	English
aufstehen	Ihr <i>seid</i> früh aufgestanden.	to get up
fahren	Er <i>ist</i> gefahren.	to drive
fallen	Wir <i>sind</i> tief gefallen.	to fall
fliegen	Sie <i>ist</i> geflogen.	to fly
gehen	Ich <i>bin</i> gegangen.	to go
kommen	Du <i>bist</i> gekommen.	to come
landen	Das Flugzeug <i>ist</i> gelandet.	to land
laufen	Wir <i>sind</i> gelaufen.	to walk
reisen ^R	Ich <i>bin</i> viel gereist.	to travel
rennen	Ihr <i>seid</i> gerannt.*	to run
springen	Es <i>ist</i> hoch gesprungen.	to jump
steigen	Wir <i>sind</i> in die Bahn gestiegen.	to climb
wachsen	<i>Bist</i> du aber gewachsen.	to grow
wandern ^R	<i>Bist</i> du früher gerne gewandert?	to hike
ziehen	Sie <i>sind</i> nach Paris gezogen.	to move

**rennen* is a so called mixed verb. See next chapter.

Then there is one other group that I call *existential verbs*. I suggest you simply learn these by heart so that you can access them quickly without having to think. Those are:

„existential“ verbs

sein	Ich bin zu Hause gewesen .	to be*
bleiben	Ich bin dort geblieben .	to stay
werden	Ich bin Vater geworden .	to become
sterben	Mein Onkel ist gestorben .	to die
aufwachen	Wann bist du aufgewacht ?	to wake up

Those 20 verbs are the most crucial. Most derivatives of these verbs use *sein* in the Perfekt as well:

Ich **bin** nach Hause **gegangen**.

Die Blume **ist eingegangen**.

Wir **sind** zusammen **ausgegangen**.

Wir **sind** der Spur **nachgegangen**.

etc.

Two faced verbs

Sometimes scholars mention that there are two possibilities for some verbs. In reality you mainly use one of these (marked with a *) The other versions are either dialects or in the rare case that you have flown a plane yourself. I strongly suggest that you ignore these for now. You can worry about them as soon as you enter level B2. Nevertheless here are a few:

**sein* is the Queen of verbs and is highly irregular.

ist/hat* gestanden	<i>ist</i> : southern German dialect
ist/hat* gesessen	<i>ist</i> : southern German dialect
ist/hat* geschwommen	<i>ist</i> : swimming from A to B <i>hat</i> : swimming around
ist*/hat geflogen	<i>ist</i> : flying in a plane as passenger <i>hat</i> : flying the plane yourself
ist*/hat gefahren	<i>ist</i> : driving to a place <i>hat</i> : when driving a specific car

Präteritum



The Präteritum - Regular forms

The Präteritum is used mainly in literature and you will only have to remember very few forms of it for now as you are most likely not going to write a novel in German any time soon. I will explain the precise differences between Perfekt and Präteritum at the end of this chapter, so don't worry about it for now.

The regular form of the Präteritum is pretty simple. Take a look at these examples and try to figure out what they have in common:

es mach**te**
es sag**te**
es koch**te**

So all you've got to do is to take the stem of the infinitive and add a **te** but hold back another second. Of course there are still the personal endings to be considered:

ich mach.**te.***
du mach.**te.st**
es mach.**te.***
wir mach.**te.n**
ihr mach.**te.t**
sie mach.**te.n**

That's mainly it for the regular forms. Maybe it's interesting to note that separable verbs behave „normally“ in the Präteritum:

Er **mach.te** das Licht **an**.

..., *als* er das Licht **an.mach.te**.

Now let's head over to the irregular forms which are way more fun than these bores.

*In the regular Präteritum the *ich* and *es*-forms do not get a personal ending. They are always (!) identical, just like the *wir* and the *sie*-forms.

The Präteritum - Irregular forms

As usual you will need to work with the stem of the verb. A few examples to give you a first idea of what to expect:

es fuhr	fahren > to drive
es sah	sehen > to see
es aß	essen > to eat

And also one complete form for the Präteritum of *fahren*:

ich	fuhr.*
du	fuhr. st
es	fuhr.*
wir	fuhr. en
ihr	fuhr. t
sie	fuhr. en

So as you can see the **personal endings** are identical to those used in the regular Präteritum. What's different is that there's no more -te- involved and that the stem-vowel is likely to change. The problem is that this change is unpredictable for us. So again you will have to learn these forms by heart.* But as soon as you have learned what the change is, the irregular Präteritum behaves pretty regular as you can hopefully see.

*By the way you will find a beautiful technique that will help you greatly to learn all necessary irregular forms of both the Perfekt and **the Präteritum tense here**.

A few rebels

At times the verb changes beyond the stem-vowel like in the following examples. Can you already guess their infinitives (solution in the footnote* below)?

es ging
es erschrak
es kam
es war**
es zog

These five verbs above are more or less all verbs of their kind. There are still a few more peculiar verbs that we will have to deal with in a few moments but those are almost systematic and therefore do not fit into this category.

*nehmen > to take; gehen > to go; erschrecken > to be frightened; kommen > to come; sein > to be; ziehen > to pull

**As I have said before: *sein* is the Queen. It does whatever it likes and is unpredictable ;) But you might see a similarity to the English form *was* here.

Mixed verbs - Both past tenses

The final group we will have to consider are the so called **mixed verbs**. They combine elements of the regular forms (the -te- in Präteritum and the -t ending of the Partizip II) with elements of the irregular forms (the vowel/stem change). Here they are:

Infinitive	Präteritum	Partizip II	English
br enn en	br a nn.te	ge.br a nn.t	to burn
k enn en	k a nn.te	ge.k a nn.t	to know*
n enn en	n a nn.te	ge.n a nn.t	to name
r enn en	r a nn.te	ge.r a nn.t	to run
br ing en	br a ch.te	ge.br a ch.t	to bring
d enk en	d a ch.te	ge.d a ch.t	to think
wissen	w u ss.te	ge.w u ss.t	to know*
+ The modal verbs			
dürfen	d u rf.te	ge.d u rf.t	may
können	k o nn.te	ge.k o nn.t	can
müssen	m u ss.te	ge.m u ss.t	must
„möchten“	w o ll.te	ge.w o ll.t	would like

sollen and *wollen* are regular in the past tenses.

*The difference between *wissen* and *kennen* is a very subtle one and is best learned with the help of examples that deliver some context. You can [find a set of such examples here](#).

Notes

A few hints to help you with memorizing these.

- The first four mixed verbs all contain **-ennen**.
- The first six verbs all change to **a** in both past tenses.
- Any changes are always identical for Perfekt and Präteritum.
- **-ing** seems to be from the same family as **-enk** as both change into **-ach**.
- The modal verbs are pretty regular. They just lose the **um-laut**.
- The past of *would like* is the same as *wanted* in German, hence *möchte* turns into *wollte*

This segment concludes the past for now. Make sure to check out **the beautiful technique here** to learn those irregular forms once and for all very quickly.

Prepositions

Präpositionen

*Auf der Mauer, auf der Lauer,
sitzt 'ne kleine Wanze.*

German nursery song

Prepositions

Präpositionen

Another German word for prepositions is *Verhältniswort* which literally means: word of relation. A relation in this context could be a position or relation to time, a cause or reason, or they simply express the way things are. A few examples:

Ich wohne *in der Lindenstraße*.

> I live in Limestone street.

location

Wir kommen *um acht Uhr*.

> We will come at eight o'clock.

time

Unter diesen Umständen kann ich nicht arbeiten. **cause**

> I can't work under these circumstances.

Basics

There are a few things that you will have to know when dealing with prepositions:

- Prepositions are always preceding a noun (1) or pronoun (2) and are never found alone or at the end of a sentence.(3)
- All prepositions require you to change the case* of the following noun usually noticable at the following pronoun (2), the article (1) or the adjective (5) that often comes with the noun.
- The Nominative is never to be found with a preposition. (6)

Examples:

1. **Ich wohne *in der Lindenstraße*.**

in is preceding the noun *Lindenstraße*.

2. **Wir bleiben *bei mir*.** > We stay at my place

bei is preceding the pronoun *mir*.

3. **Sie rufen immer zu spät *an*.** > You always call too late.

an stands alone at the end of the sentence and therefore can not be a preposition. It is a prefix in this case which belongs to the separable verb *anrufen*.

*That means they are followed either by the Accusative or the Dative. There are also Genitive prepositions but those are stuff for the higher levels. You might want to keep three of those in mind: *laut*, *während*, *wegen*.

4. **Wir bleiben bei mir.**

mir is a Dative pronoun due to *bei* which requires us to use the Dative and no other case.

5. Mein Kaffee kommt **aus fernen Ländern.**

> My coffee comes from far away countries.

6. Ich esse **mit der Löffel (m).** > I eat with the spoon.

der Löffel is Nominative which is **NEVER** to be found after any preposition!

A case for each preposition?

Generally it is very clear which case each preposition requires. You have already learned **the Dative prepositions here** and **the Accusative prepositions here**. What's left are those prepositions that unfortunately are not that decided, the **two-way prepositions**. Those are:

vor before/in front of

hinter behind

über above

unter under

neben next to

an at/on

zwischen in between

auf on (top)

in in

Those are called two-way because they either require the Accusative or the Dative. It's important to understand when to use which case. **You can learn them with help of this lovely video.**

Two-way-prepositions with Accusative

They are used with the **Accusative** when we talk about a direction like in these examples:

Wir fahren **in die Türkei.** > We are going to Turkey.

Geht ihr **ins Kino?** > Are you going to the cinema?

Ich fahre **an den Wannsee.** > I am going to lake Wannsee.

If you had to ask for the highlighted parts of the above examples, you'd have to ask with **Wohin?** > **Where (to[wards])** in German as those verbs/situations imply a movement in some direction.

Wohin fahrt ihr? Wir fahren **in die Türkei.**

Wohin geht ihr? Wir gehen **ins Kino.**

Wohin fährst du? Ich fahre **an den Wannsee.**

Certain verbs imply a direction. E.g. the following ones:

gehen >to go

fahren >to drive

fliegen >to fly

legen >to lie

stellen >to put

setzen >to sit down

kommen >to come

Two-way-prepositions with Dative

They are used with the **Dative** when we talk about a location or position like in these examples:

Wir leben **in der Türkei**. > We live in Turkey.

Seid ihr **im Kino**? > Are you in the cinema?

Ich bin gerade **am Wannsee**. > I'm just at lake Wannsee.

If you had to ask for the highlighted parts of the above examples, you'd have to ask with **Wo?** > **Where?** in German as those verbs/situations imply a position or location.

Wo lebt ihr? Wir leben **in der Türkei**.

Wo seid ihr? Wir sind **im Kino**.

Wo bist du gerade? Ich bin gerade **am Wannsee**.

Certain verbs imply a direction. E.g. the following ones:

sein >to be *bleiben* >to stay *sich befinden* >to be located

liegen >to lie *stehen* >to stand *sitzen* >to sit

wohnen >to live

Negation

Negation

„Das hab ich niemals nicht gesagt.“

> I have never ever said such a thing.

Negation

Verneinung

You might have experienced the need to negate certain requests or statements. In German you mainly do so with help of **nicht** and **kein**. Let's start with the latter:

kein

kein contains the word **ein** which already hints on when to use **kein** instead of **nicht**. Whenever you could say **ein** the negation of that same situation would be **kein**. A few examples:

Ich habe **ein** Auto. > Ich habe **kein** Auto.
 Möchtest du **einen** Tee? > Nein, ich möchte **keinen** Tee.
 Ist das **ein** Ei-Phone? > Nein, das ist **kein** Ei-Phone.

--- but:

Habt ihr xxx Kinder? > Nein, wir haben **keine** Kinder.

In the last example there was no **ein** and nevertheless we used **keine** to negate Kinder. You might remember the so called Nullartikel ([refresh your memory here](#)).

The official rule is that you use **kein** to negate nouns while you use **nicht** for everything else. So let's take a look at **nicht** now.

nicht

As mentioned before **nicht** is used for everything else BUT nouns. A few examples:

to negate adjectives: Du bist **nicht nett**. > you are not nice
 to negate verbs: Ich **schlafe nicht** gut. > I don't sleep well.
 to negate other articles: Du bist **nicht mein** Freund.
 to negate pronouns: Ich meine **nicht dich**. > I don't mean you.

Where to put nicht?

While the position of **kein** is unproblematic (it's the same as **ein** and that usually doesn't cause any problems), **nicht** can be at different positions and it takes a bit of practice to figure out the right one. As usual I have a little trick for you to help you with this matter:

The following sentence can be negated in different ways:

Ich habe dich gestern gesehen.

- 1) Ich habe dich gestern *nicht* gesehen.
- 2) Ich habe *nicht* dich gestern gesehen.
- 3) Ich habe dich *nicht* gestern gesehen.
- 4) *Nicht* ich habe dich gestern gesehen.

nicht usually stands directly in front of the word that it negates. More or less like *ein*. A way to verify whether it is on the right position is to add a sentence with *sondern* > but (only used after negative sentences):

- 1) Ich habe dich gestern *nicht* gesehen, *sondern* gehört.
>I haven't SEEN but have HEARD you, yesterday.
- 2) Ich habe *nicht* dich gestern gesehen, *sondern* ihn.
>I haven't seen YOU yesterday but HIM.
- 3) Ich habe dich *nicht* gestern gesehen, *sondern* heute.
>I haven't seen you YESTERDAY but TODAY.
- 4) *Nicht* ich habe dich gestern gesehen, *sondern* er.
>It wasn't ME who's seen you yesterday, but HIM.

One more thing

At times you will find the *nicht* at the end of a sentence like:

Ich liebe dich. > Ich liebe dich *nicht*.

In this case the *nicht* is negating the complete sentence. A few more examples:

Ich komme heute Abend *nicht*. >I won't come tonight.
Das Essen schmeckt ihm *nicht*. >He doesn't like the food.
Wir sehen uns eine Weile nicht. >We won't see e/o for a while.

Whenever you get the chance to listen to native speakers, pick one day on which you will especially focus on how people negate things. This kind of exercise will also pay off when you deal with other grammatical topics.

Imperative

Der Imperativ

Der Imperator liebte den Kategorischen Imperativ von Kant.

Imperative

Der Imperativ

At times we need to give orders or make some sort of request. German has a special form for such purposes. We can address orders to one or two persons that we are familiar with or to strangers or people that we share a formal relationship with.

Ordering friends around

To make requests to friends you need the *du*-form of the verb you are about to use. For example:

kommen: du komm.st

To create the imperative from this form, all you've got to do is to eliminate the *du* and if the person is gone, there can't be a personal ending either, so you will also have to kill the *-st*. What's left is the imperative for a person that you know well.

du *komm* st

A few more examples that should also illustrate why it is important to start with the base of the *du*-form.

ess.en:	du <i>iss</i> t*	Iss!	Eat!
les.en:	du <i>lies</i> t*	Lies!	Read!
seh.en:	du <i>sieh</i> st	Sieh!	Look!
nehm.en:	du <i>nimm</i> st	Nimm!	Take!

One specialty:

schlaf.en:	du <i>schlāf</i> st	Schlaf!	Sleep!
fahr.en:	du <i>fāhr</i> st	Fahr!	Drive!
säg.en:	du <i>säg</i> st	Säg!	Saw!

schläfst and *fährst* lose their Umlaut as there is none in their infinitive forms. While *sägen* keeps its Umlaut due to it being part of the infinitive.

mal

You will come across the word *mal* very soon and it will annoy you as it very often doesn't mean anything by itself. Your dictionary will tell you that it means: (one) time but in the following examples that wouldn't make any sense and simply is used to make your request sound friendlier:

Komm mal! >Come! **Mach mal!** >Make! **Schau mal!** >Look!

* *iss* and *lies* keep the *s* because those belong to the verb's stem (highlighted) and not to the personal ending *-st*.

Ordering several friends around

To make a request to more than just one familiar person you need to work with the *ihr*-form:

ihr kommt *ihr geht* *ihr esst*

It is even easier to create the imperative from this than before. All you've got to do is to eliminate the *ihr*:

~~*ihr*~~ *kommt* ~~*ihr*~~ *geht* ~~*ihr*~~ *esst*

Et voilà. You are done.

The formal imperative

To make a formal request you need to use the formal form as basis:

sie kommen *sie gehen* *sie essen*

Now you simply change the order of those two words and you have your formal imperative:

Kommen Sie! *Gehen Sie!* *Essen Sie!*

It doesn't get any simpler. Now practice these forms by making tons of request to anyone who crosses your path.

You can also use the *mal* here but in the formal form it will sound a bit condescending and should rather be avoided:

Kommt mal! *Geht mal!* *Esst mal!*
Kommen Sie mal! *Gehen Sie mal!* *Essen Sie mal!*

Learning Techniques

*Gib einem Mann einen Fisch und du ernährst ihn für einen Tag.
Lehre einen Mann zu fischen und du ernährst ihn für sein Le-
ben. **Konfuzius***



Learning Techniques

Lerntechniken

Now that everything important that you need to know for level A1 is covered, I would like to introduce you to some really lovely and powerful learning techniques. On the following pages you will learn how to learn vocabulary with extreme efficiency, how to get a quick grip on the Dative verbs and how to deal efficiently with the irregular forms of the two past tenses. The article techniques you have already got to know in **the first chapter**.

Vocabulary mastery

Please use your imagination and open your mind for slightly absurd ideas: Imagine...

- receiving a **letter** from Germany that contains smelly **briefs**.
- Hermione makes a **wall** disappear by using a giant **wand**.
- Clark **Gable** eats a **cable** with a **fork**.

What is this about?

Briefs is an example for a so called false friend. A foreign word that looks or sounds the same as in your mother tongue but has a different meaning. The words **briefs** and **letter** are emphasised because the German word for letter is 'Brief'. If you are not yet totally clear where this is leading to, let me explain further... Our problem is that in our memory there's no connection yet between the German word **Brief** and our understanding of the thing called **letter**. To establish a first and fast contact we would create an artificial link, the so called linkword, to connect the German word and our concept of letter:



A few more examples:

bald	bald	soon
Flasche	flush	bottle
Schrank	shrink	cabinet
gehen	gain	to go
schon	shone	already

So to learn the five German words on the left you could imagine the following situations:

- **soon** I will be **bald**
- I **flush** empty **bottles** down the toilet. One by one.
- There is a **shrink** in my **cabinet**.
- If I don't **go** now, I'll **gain** weight.
- You wake up late saying suprised: The sun **shone already**?

This technique is either called the linkword or the keyword technique. I hope the examples made it clear for you. Initially you most likely will struggle finding suitable links between the German word (sound) and the English meaning, but you will get better over time. I suggest that you go over to **memrise** and try to create a few **mems** yourself. They will also guide you step by step when doing so. This technique will improve your memory retention up to 300%* in comparison to working with just repetition. If you then focus on words that you can use right away in a context, let's say an easy reader like **this one** and if you then also use memrise to organize your vocabulary training you will even remember a lot more than that. Give it a try for 10 days and see for yourself.

>>> The superhero **grieves** over a broken **handle** >>>

*That's the result of some serious research of some university in the US in the late sixties. <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2005-15322-001>



Dative verbs

You might remember that there are about 50 verbs that require you to use the Dative in case you add an object to a sentence. As there's no way to recognize those by looking at their infinitives those verbs have to be learned by heart. This is a wonderful situation to make use of a so called mnemonic technique that was created for exactly such a purpose.

You need to remember that the following verbs require the Dative.

helfen >to help

danken >to thank

gratulieren >to congratulate

gehen >here: to feel

kalt sein >to be cold

Learning something abstract like a *Dative* is very inconvenient for our minds that constantly seek for meaning and structure or logic. So we'll have to make the *abstractness* go away. We do so by replacing the *Dative* with something more concrete, that is easy to imagine. As the word *Dative* begins with a **D** we could take any thing or person that also starts with a **D**, e.g. *dinosaur*, *dog*, *dongle*, *Dracula* etc.

Now try to make a mental picture of the following situations. Take your time. Even if it takes you one minute, if the image is well constructed will remain in your memory for the rest of your life. That should be worth a minute of your time, right?

Now imagine...

- How **D**racula helps a **d**inosaur by pulling out a thorn out of its paw.
- The **d**inosaur then thanks **D**racula with a big hug, smiling.
- You congratulate your **d**og to its **d**iploma. Or your **d**og congratulates you to yours.
- You would like to know how **D**racula is going and send him a postcard asking „Wie geht es dir?“ > How is it going?
- **D**racula is very cold. He always freezes.

Like this you work your way through the following 37 Dative verbs. At your current stage it suffices to work with the English examples. There is no need to learn all these verbs out of context. As soon as you come across one of these verbs you will remember the mental image that you have made, telling you intuitively to use the Dative. Try it. I have focussed in this list to what I consider to be most important at your stage of your German learning. There are a few more less frequent Dative verbs that you will be able to deal with easily later on your own.

Dativ



The Dative memory-sentences (English)

absagen	cancel	Dracula cancels your appointment.
antworten	answer	The diplomat just doesn't answer.
begegnen	encounter	I have come across Donald Duck.
danken	thank	I thank Dracula for my eternal life.
drohen	threat	The director threatens with dismissal.
einfallen	have an idea	Draculas has a dumb idea .
entgegenkommen	approach	A Dino is approaching me.
fehlen	miss	Dracula is missing two teeth.
folgen	follow	The dachshound follows the badger.
gefallen	like/please	The steamroller appeals to Donald.
gehen	feel	The dictator is fine.
gehören	belong	The tiara belongs to Lady Diana.
gelingen	accomplish	The design was accomplished.
genügen	be enough	The drugs didn't suffice the thief.
glauben	believe	The detective doesn't believe the thief.
gratulieren	congratulate	The director congratulated the diva.
gut tun	do good	Diarrhea doesn't do Dracula good.
helfen	help	The deodorant helped the German.
kalt/warm sein	be cold/warm	The dame was cold.
leidtun	be sorry	The despot was sorry.
sich nähern	draw closer	The thief draws closer to the depot.
nachlaufen	run after	The dog runs after the dandy.
nützen	benefit/avail	The dynamite was of no avail.
passen	suit/fit	The diadem suited her perfectly.
passieren	happen	A disaster happened to the DJ.
raten	recommend	The diplomat recommends...
schaden	do harm	Rain doesn't do a diamond harm.
schmecken	taste	Drugs just don't taste good.
stehen	stand/suit	The design suits the big man.

vertrauen	trust	I don't trust my dealer.
verzeihen	forgive	The docent forgives her ignorance.
wehtun	hurt	The dragon is hurting the dodo.
widersprechen	contradict	Never contradict your domina.
zuhören	listen	The dog listens to the diva.
zusehen	watch	I could watch the dolphins forever.
zustimmen	agree	The delegation agreed to the deal.

The Dative memory-sentences (German)

absagen	cancel	Dracula sagt dir ab.
antworten	answer	Der Diplomat antwortet einfach nicht.
begegnen	encounter	Ich bin gestern Donald Duck begegnet.
danken	thank	Ich danke Dracula für das ewige Leben.
drohen	threat	Der Direktor droht mit Entlassung.
einfallen	have an idea	Dracula fällt keine Idee ein.
entgegenkommen	approach	Mir kommt ein Dino entgegen.
fehlen	miss	Dracula fehlen zwei Zähne.
folgen	follow	Der Dackel folgt dem Dachs.
gefallen	like/please	Mir gefällt die Dampfwalze.
gehen	feel	Es geht dem Diktator gut.
gehören	belong	Das Diadem gehört Lady Diana.
gelingen	accomplish	Das Design ist dem Designer gelungen.
genügen	be enough	Dem Dieb genügt ein Diamant nicht.
glauben	believe	Der Detektiv glaubt dem Dieb nicht.
gratulieren	congratulate	Der Dirigent gratuliert der Diva.
gut tun	do good	Der Durchfall tut Dracula nicht gut.
helfen	help	Das Deo hilft dem Deutschen.
kalt/warm sein	be cold/warm	Der Dame ist kalt.
leidtun	be sorry	Es tut dem Despoten leid.
sich nähern	draw closer	Der Dieb nähert sich dem Depot.

nachlaufen	run after	Der Dackel läuft dem Dandy nach.
nützen	benefit/avail	Das Dynamit nützt dem Dieb wenig.
passen	suit/fit	Das Diadem passt ihr wie angegossen.
passieren	happen	Dem Diskjockey passiert ein Desaster.
raten	recommend	Der Diplomat rät dem Diktator,,
schaden	do harm	Ein Hammer schadet Diamanten nicht.
schmecken	taste	Drogen schmecken mir nicht.
stehen	stand/suit	Das Design steht auch Dicken.
vertrauen	trust	Ich vertraue meinem Dealer nicht.
verzeihen	forgive	Der Dichter verzeiht ihr ihre Ignoranz.
wehtun	hurt	Der Drache tut Dornröschen weh.
widersprechen	contradict	Widerspruch der Domina niemals.
zuhören	listen	Der Dackel hört der Diva zu.
zusehen	watch	Ich könnte Delfinen ewig zusehen.
zustimmen	agree	Die Delegation stimmt dem Deal zu.

The irregular verbs technique

This technique is extremely beautiful as it allows you to learn the irregular forms of the Präteritum and the Perfekt tense in less than two hours. All you've got to do is to imagine eight short stories.

Each story is about one main character or item like e.g. an INKA or a TUBA. The highlighted words of these stories are the irregular verbs which forms you are about to learn. One example from story 01:

*An **INKA** is sitting at a fire and is **frying** marshmallows while **walking** around the fire then **running**.*

frying, *walking* and *running* are the verbs that you should be able to associate with the INKA. The INKA is important because he is our keyword for the changes that those three verbs undergo in the Präteritum and the Perfekt tense.

		Präteritum	Perfekt
to fry	= braten	bri et	gebr a ten
to walk	= gehen	g i ng	geg a ngen
to run	= laufen	l i ef	gel a ufen

The changes for those three verbs (and all other highlighted verbs in that story) are always **i*** and **a** which are represented in the keyword **INKA**.

*An „i“ in a keyword could represent either an „i“ or an „ie“. That due to the difficulty to find keywords with „ie“. But those will not cause you much trouble.

		Präteritum	Perfekt
to grow	= wachsen	w u chs	gew a chsen
to carry	= tragen	tr u g	getr a gen
to load	= laden	l u d	gel a den

Those verbs are all associated with a **TUBA** representing their changes to **u** in Präteritum and to **a** in Perfekt.

Now pick a few verbs of each story and try to create their irregular past forms as I did above. You can compare your results with the list of irregular verb forms **in the appendix**.

When the technique is clear to you, head over to the stories and take your time with each of them. 20mins per story will pay off greatly in the long run. Imagine those stories as vividly as you can. Or if you have difficulty with my crazy version of them, simply make your own ones. You will find all you need for that right after the last story.

Let me tell you something...

Story 01

An **INKA** lets his feathered hat fall to the ground. See him letting it go from his hands in which he held that hat. But just before that hat hit the ground he caught it with his foot. He is sitting at a fire and is frying marshmallows while walking around the fire then running. He doesn't have a timer so he is rather guessing when to take the marshmallows out of the fire. He takes them out, holds them high over his mouth but lets them hang for a few minutes just right above his open mouth. After eating 100 marshmallows, the INKA got tired and is now sleeping. You hear him snore.

Story 02

A woman loves to play her **TUBA**. She got it when it was little and it grew through her thorough care. She washes it every day, carries it to her car, loads it onto the roof and then drives it around the city to show her the nice sites. When the TUBA doesn't sound right, she gets angry at times and hits it. One time she even dug it 3 meters into the ground out of anger.

Story 03

Plenty of **BARRELS** are lying around. A baby is sitting on top of one barrel, eating a huge steak while reading the newspaper out loud. Another baby sees that with its big eyes and comes and asks for a piece of that steak. The first baby gives the asking baby a piece of its steak. It's pretty juicy. But then something unexpected happened: The second baby kicked the barrel the eating baby was sitting on and all barrels started to roll downhill.

Story 04-1

A **POLO**-Player had a special horse with wings so he could fly with it. But it was a sensitive horse, it was always freezing so it had to wear a blanket and drink a cup of tea before each game. The Player always poured the tea into the horse's bowl as it didn't have any hands to do so. The first thing the horse always did was to smell the fresh tea with its huge nostrils, enjoy every sip of it for two minutes and then finally would booze it down like you'd expect an animal to drink. The POLO-Player would always politely offer the horse another cup of tea when it was done with the first one by lifting a huge cup with fresh tea under its nostrils. But the horse was a gentlehorse and would rather lie to the player and say that it was fine than admitting that it dearly wanted more.

Story 04-2

A **POLO**-Player is working out with his horse. They are pushing and pulling each other back and forth. Usually the Player loses this game. Then they would try several other disciplines to stay fit: weighing each other, bending iron bars, skeet shooting, melting snowmen with their tongues. Usually the water of those snowmen would flow into the canal. But they have closed the canal with a huge lock so that the water is flowing back to the player and the horse. They have to flee from the water masses.

Story 05

Goethe, THE German writer and poet, always wrote in front of a **MIRROR**. Before he wrote anything, he would take his mirror and first take a good shit, then glide over to his desk

rub his hands together for about ten minutes to warm them up and everything while watching himself in the mirror. He always held that mirror in a way that the sun would shine on it because he suffered from depression which made him tear all his papers apart and bite his nails. He never forgave himself that moment when he borrowed a horse from a friend that he would mount and then ride with pride and that horse then decided to stay with him. And Goethe had to avoid that friend since then because he didn't bring it back to him.

Story 06

A cowgirl began her career the moment she could speak. She would steal cattle with her lucky LASSO which she learned to throw like an adult at the age of three. She quickly learned to swim and won competition after competition always with her lucky lasso around her waist. She met many interesting cowboys that came to see her and sought help from her and her lucky lasso. But she couldn't help them. All she could do was to recommend that they seek professional help. But she wasn't happy. She took a lot of drugs after her boyfriend broke her heart. One day she got stung by a bee and died of an allergic reaction.

Story 07

A man lived in a SAUNA. As it was very hot in there he drank and drank and drank. Yet he never showered so soon he began to stink. But that didn't matter. He was happy. He sang operas all day, jumped around like a young horse, actually once found a real horse in a corner of his sauna, bound it to a

flock and forced it to sing a duett with him. They eventually succeeded to land a No. 1 chart hit.

Story 08

An ANACONDA once thought she could stand on her head. She had absolutely nothing to do that day and everybody she knew was on holiday. She tried running but was in too lousy condition and soon gave up. They called her RANACONDA and brought her some RANANAS every day.

Do it yourself

Here are the pattern-keywords and the verbs so that you can make your own stories:

INKA

schlafen >to sleep

fangen >to catch

laufen >to run/walk

raten >to guess/to advice

lassen >to let

braten >to fry

halten >to hold

fallen >to fall

gehen >to go

hängen >to hang

TUBA

fahren >to drive

tragen >to carry

wach wachsen >to grow

graben >to dig

laden >to load

schlagen >to strike

waschen >to

BARREL

liegen >to lie

geben >to give

treten >to kick

bitten >to ask for

geschehen >to happen

essen >to eat

sitzen >to sit

lesen >to read

sehen >to see

POLO-PLAYER

fliegen >to fly

frieren >to freeze

ziehen >to pull

gießen >to pour

schießen >to shoot

heben >to lift

schmelzen >to melt

fliehen >to flee

biegen >to bend

wiegen >to weigh

riechen >to smell

schließen >to close

saufen >to booze

fließen >to flow

bieten >to offer

genießen >to enjoy

schieben >to push

verlieren >to lose

lügen >to tell lies

„MIRROR“

schreiben >to write

verzeihen >to forgive

reiben >to rub

reißen >to tear

leihen >to lend/to borrow

meiden >to avoid

leiden >to suffer

gleiten >to glide

beißen >to bite

scheinen >to shine

steigen >to rise

bleiben >to stay

reiten >to ride

scheißen >to shit

LASSO

beginnen >to begin

sterben >to die

sprechen >to speak

treffen >to meet

schwimmen >to swim

kommen >to come

brechen >to break

stechen >to sting

werfen >to throw

empfehlen >to recommend

nehmen >to take

helfen >to help

stehlen >to steal

gewinnen >to win

SAUNA

binden >to bind

singen >to sing

trinken >to drink

gelingen >to succeed

finden >to find

sinken >to sink

zwingen >to force

springen >to jump

stinken >to stink

ANACONDA

brennen >to burn

nennen >to name

stehen >to stand

denken >to think

rennen >to run

tun >to do

kennen >to know

bringen >to bring

Appendix

Der Blinddarm

Appendices

Anhänge

On the following pages you will find the irregular verb forms so that you are able to compare and correct your work on your irregular verbs. By the way, there's a really neat app out there that helps you greatly with testing what you have learned regarding irregular verbs or conjugation in general, **Meister der Konjugation**. Just click on the link and you'll get there.

Irregular verbs - complete forms

Infinitiv	Präteritum	Partizip II	English
beginnen	begann	begonnen	to begin
bewegen	bewog	bewogen	to move
biegen	bog	gebogen	to bend
bieten	bot	geboten	to offer
binden	band	gebunden	to bind
bitten	bat	gebeten	to ask for
braten	briet	gebraten	to fry
brechen	brach	gebrochen	to break

Infinitiv	Präteritum	Partizip II	English
brennen	brannte	gebrannt	to burn
bringen	brachte	gebracht	to bring
denken	dachte	gedacht	to think
dürfen	durfte	gedurft	to be allowed
empfehlen	empfohl	empfohlen	to recommend
essen	aß	gegessen	to eat
fahren	fuhr	gefahren	to drive
fallen	fiel	gefallen	to fall
fangen	fang	gefangen	to catch
finden	fand	gefunden	to find
fliegen	flog	geflogen	to fly
fliehen	floh	geflohen	to flee
fließen	floss	geflossen	to flow
frieren	fror	gefroren	to freeze
geben	gab	gegeben	to give
gehen	ging	gegangen	to go
gelingen	gelang	gelingen	to succeed
genießen	genoss	genossen	to enjoy
geschehen	geschah	geschehen	to happen
gewinnen	gewann	gewonnen	to win
gießen	goss	gegossen	to pour
graben	grub	gegraben	to dig
halten	hielt	gehalten	to hold
hängen	hing	gehangen	to hang
heben	hob	gehoben	to lift
helfen	half	geholfen	to help
kennen	kannte	gekannt	to know
kommen	kam	gekommen	to come
können	konnte	gekonnt	to be able
laden	lud	geladen	to load

Infinitiv	Präteritum	Partizip II	English
lassen	ließ	gelassen	to let
laufen	lief	gelaufen	to run
lesen	las	gelesen	to read
liegen	lag	gelegen	to lie
lügen	log	gelogen	to tell lies
nehmen	nahm	genommen	to take
nennen	nannte	genannt	to name
raten	riet	geraten	to guess/advice
rennen	rannte	gerannt	to run
riechen	roch	gerochen	to smell
rufen	rief	gerufen	to call
saufen	soff	gesoffen	to booze
schieben	schob	geschoben	to push
schießen	schoß	geschossen	to shoot
schlafen	schief	geschlafen	to sleep
schlagen	schlug	geschlagen	to strike
schließen	schloss	geschlossen	to close
schmelzen	schmolz	geschmolzen	to melt
schwimmen	schwamm	geschwommen	to swim
sehen	sah	gesehen	to see
singen	sang	gesungen	to sing
sinken	sank	gesunken	to sink
sitzen	saß	gesessen	to sit
sollen	sollte	gesollt	should
sprechen	sprach	gesprochen	to speak
springen	sprang	gesprungen	to jump
stechen	stach	gestochen	to sting
stehen	stand	gestanden	to stand
stehlen	stahl	gestohlen	to steal
stinken	stank	gestunken	to stink

Infinitiv	Präteritum	Partizip II	English
stoßen	stieß	gestoßen	to push
tragen	trug	getragen	to carry
treffen	traf	getroffen	to meet
treten	trat	getreten	to kick
trinken	trank	getrunken	to drink
tun	tat	getan	to do
verlieren	verlor	verloren	to lose
wachsen	wuchs	gewachsen	to grow
waschen	wusch	gewaschen	to wash
werden	wurde	(ge)worden	to become
werfen	warf	geworfen	throw
wiegen	wog	gewogen	to weigh
wissen	wusste	gewusst	to know
wollen	wollte	gewollt	to want
ziehen	zog	gezogen	to pull
zwingen	zwang	gezwungen	to force

Wissen

Kennen

wissen vs **kennen**

Ich **weiß**, wo du wohnst.
I know where you live

Weißt du schon das Neueste?
Have you heard the latest news?

Wer **weiß** das schon?
Who would know such a thing?

Ich **weiß** nicht, wann ich zurückkomme.
I don't know when I'll be back.

Weiß jemand davon?
Does somebody know about this?

Wissen ist Macht.
Knowledge is power.

Weißt du, wann Markus Geburtstag hat?
Do you know when it is Markus' birthday?

Ich **weiß** von nichts.
I don't know anything about it.

Ich **weiß**, dass ich nichts **weiß**.
I know that I know nothing.

Ich **kenne** niemanden mit diesem Namen.
I don't know anyone by this name.

Kennst du den?
Do you know this joke?

Wir **kennen** uns aus der Schule.
We know each other from school.

So gut **kennen** wir uns auch wieder nicht.
We don't know each other THAT well.

Ich **kenne** alle Hauptstädte Europas.
I know all capitals of Europe.

Kennst du jemanden, der sich mit Computern auskennt?
Do you know somebody who is good with computers?

Wir **kennen** uns schon.
We've already met. / We know each other already.

Ich **kenne/weiß** deine Telefonnummer nicht?
I don't know your number.

Accusative

The Accusative is the second of four cases. Mostly it's a set of endings that you'll find at the end of articles, pronouns and adjectives and a set of different personal pronouns. It is the most used case after the Nominative and used for so called direct objects.

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Zugehörige Begriffe hierher ziehen

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Begriff suchen

Article

German has various articles. Those are little senseless words that tells a German about the gender, the number and the case of a noun. Articles are only to be found in front of nouns. If there's no noun, it's no article, no matter if it looks like one.

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Cases

German has four cases:

I. Nominativ

II. Accusativ

III. Dativ

IV. Genitiv

Those cases give us a clue about a word's function in a sentence. In the example:

Einen Hamburger isst meine Oma. The „einen“ is the only thing telling me that it's actually the grandma eating the hamburger and not the other way around as it is the Accusative article of Hamburger.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 2 - Which Article to use?

CEFR

The Common European Framework of Reference. Best explained by wikipedia here:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_European_Framework_of_Reference_for_Languages

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 6 - The Past Tense

Conjugation

C. means that verbs change their endings according to the person that it belongs to.
German say: *Ich singe*. but if you sang they'd have to say: *du singst*.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - Regular Verbs

Conjunction

Those words are used to combine two or more sentences with each other. As for A1 I have not yet included them yet.

Those are *aber*, *denn*, *und*, *sondern*, *oder* for so called main clauses and *weil*, *wenn*, *ob*, *dass*, *als* etc. for so called side clauses

More about those in the later levels.

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Side clause

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 3 - The Genitive

Dative

The third of the four German cases. A set of article-endings and different personal pronouns. Often used to talk about locations or receivers of some sort. Dative objects are also called indirect objects as they rarely are directly influenced by the verb.

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Begriff suchen

Definite articles

Those are *der, das, die, den, dem, des*. They are called definite because they make clear that the thing or person they accompany is known to us.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 2 - Which Article to use?

Feminine

This is a grammatical gender, which goes beyond biological gender. A lamp is e.g. grammatically feminine for no, really absolutely no reason.

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Finite verb

That's a verb that does not change anymore. In contrast to an infinitive which I can still take apart and put any personal ending to its end that I need.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - Regular Verbs

Gender

Genders in German are purely grammatical and go far beyond biological gender.

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Genitive

The fourth of the four German cases. A set of article-endings but no personal pronouns (at least not used ones anymore). Usually helping us to express relations between two nouns.

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Indefinite articles

In contrast to definite articles these are used to talk about things that are not clearly defined. If you see *a car* that means that it is not a specific car while *the car* would mean that it is crystal clear which car you are talking about.

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Kapitel 2 - Which Article to use?

Infinitive

The basic form of verbs or later on adjectives. Dictionaries usually only provide this form of a verb, recognizable by its pretty consistent ending -en. On rare occasions you can also find the endings -eln (klingeln > to ring) and -ern (feiern > to celebrate). But those are negligible.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - Regular Verbs

Irregular verbs

They are deriving from the regular conjugation pattern. Mostly by changing the stem of a verb. And almost always (there are five exception for now) only changing the stem vowel (there is only one in each verb). Those changes follow no logical pattern, so you will have to learn them by heart.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - Regular Verbs

Konjunktiv II

A case with which we express wishes and possibilities. All you need to know about this mode for now is the word: möchten > I would like.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - The Modal Verbs

Masculine

This is a grammatical gender, which goes beyond biological gender. A table is e.g. grammatically masculine for no, really absolutely no reason.

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Mems

Another word for keyword or linkword in the splendid vocabulary app [memrise.com](https://www.memrise.com).

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 10 - Learning Techniques

Mixed verbs

Irregular verbs combining stem-changes with regular endings. There are only a few of those and they are quickly learned.

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Zugehörige Begriffe hierher ziehen

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 6 - The Past Tense

Modal verbs

Verbs that are a bit special, mainly due to their personal endings for *ich* and *er/es/sie*.
Modal verbs are among the few verbs that can have a second verb in the same sentence like in English.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - Regular Verbs

Neuter

This is a grammatical gender, which goes beyond biological gender. A girl in German is grammatically neuter. And unfortunately things in German can be of any grammatical gender unlike in English where things are always neuter.

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Kapitel 2 - What is an Article?

Nominative

The first of the four German cases. A set of article endings and personal pronouns. Used for subjects and on both sides of *sein*, *bleiben*, *werden*.

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Subject

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Noun

„noun“ in latin means nomen which again means name. Nouns are names of things (table) or persons (Michael) or concepts (freedom). They are easily identified by trying to put a *the* in front of their English pendant. If that works, you‘ve got a noun in front of you: *house* is a noun because you could put a the in front of it: *the house*.

Nouns are always written with a CAPITAL letter in German. Don‘t forget that. It’s of utmost importance to them.

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Preposition

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Begriff suchen

Object

A sentence very often consists of certain parts. There almost always is a subject (those very few exceptions will be explained in the higher levels) and also very often an object. Usually the subject is doing something to or with the object.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 3 - The Accusative

Partizip II

The past participle is used with *haben* or *sein* to create the Perfekt, the most important past tense in German. Later on you will also find it being used as an adjective and for the Passive-mode.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 6 - The Past Tense

Präfix

A prefix is fixed to the front of a verb (or noun, but we didn't talk about that here). Those can be separable (ein.kaufen) or inseparable (besuchen). They very often look like prepositions.

Verwandte Glossarbegriffe

Preposition

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - Separable Verbs

Präsens

One of the two most important tenses in German. Unlike in English we do not have a progressive form. German ***are*** never ***doing*** anything, they simply ***do*** them. We use the present tense to talk about things that happen at the actual moment as well as in the future. While there is a future tense in German (Futur I and II), we can ignore that one until B2.

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - Regular Verbs

Preposition

A preposition is always positioned in front (!) of a noun. There might be adjectives or adverbs squeezing in between those two but they are always (!) followed rather sooner than later by a noun.

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Noun, Präfix

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 3 - The Accusative

Kapitel 3 - The Dative

Pronouns

Those are usually used to refer to things or persons. Instead of saying „*The table is big. The table was expensive.*“, you use it e.g.: „*The table is big. It was expensive.*“ *Pronouns are replacing nouns and therefore are never found in front of nouns.*

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 3 - The Nominative

Side clause

This will be our topic in the next books. Side clauses provide us with additional information and they are usually initiated by so called side-clause conjunctions. They also have a different sentence order than what you are used to until now.

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Conjunction

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - Separable Verbs

Stem

Like a tree, the stem of a verb is usually consistent (unless it is an irregular one). All verbs -and also quite a few other words- consist of at least two parts: a stem + an ending. One example: *geh.en* with *geh-* being the stem and *-en* being the ending.

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Zugehörige Begriffe hierher ziehen

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 5 - Regular Verbs

Subject

The subject is the title for the person or thing performing the action in a sentence. In the sentence *The dog barks*. It is the dog doing the barking, therefore it is the subject. You can find the subject by asking *Who did it?* The subject has to stand always in the Nominative.

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Nominative

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 3 - The Nominative

Two-way prepositions

Those are indecisive bastards as they can be followed by an Accusative (pro)noun or a Dative (pro)noun.

Verwandte Glossarbegriffe

Zugehörige Begriffe hierher ziehen

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 7 - Prepositions

Umlaut

The category under which fall the following letters of the German alphabet:

ä

ö

ü

If you can't find those on your keyboard you can transliterate those the following way:

ä = a: or ae

ö = o: or oe

ü = u: or ue

And not an Umlaut but also rare on non-German keyboards:

ß = B (as it will be in the middle or at the end of a word it will be clear that this is not a capital „b“ but an ß)

Verwandte Glossarbegriffe

Zugehörige Begriffe hierher ziehen

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 6 - The Past Tense

Zero article

As all nouns by nature have a grammatical gender and therefore an article to show us this gender but as at the same time this article at times simple is not used we call that non-appearing article a zero article or in German: Nullartikel. One example (the xxx are marking the zero article):

Ich liebe xxx Autos.

I love xxx cars.

Verwandte Glossarbegriffe

Zugehörige Begriffe hierher ziehen

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Begriff suchen

Kapitel 2 - How to use the Articles?