

GERMAN GRAMMAR

NOUNS / die NOMEN

Nouns describe people, places, things, animals, events, and ideas.

- Each noun has a **number** (singular/plural) and a **case**. A noun's grammatical function (subject, direct object, indirect object, predicate nominative) determines its case.
- All German nouns are **capitalized** and have one of three grammatical **genders**:
 - Masculine (m):** *der Hund* (the dog)
 - Feminine (f):** *die Katze* (the cat)
 - Neuter (n):** *das Buch* (the book)
- Changes in the inflection of nouns, pronouns, articles, and adjectives to reflect case, number, and gender are referred to as **declension**.

NUMBER

Singular nouns refer to one thing: *das Buch* (the book), whereas **plural nouns** refer to more than one: *die Bücher* (the books). German nouns are pluralized in several ways:

- No change in spelling** (changes in articles, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs signal plural):
 - Der Wagen ist da.* (The car is there.)
 - Die Wagen sind da.* (The cars are there.)
- Vowel change** (umlaut added to stem vowel):
 - die Mutter* (the mother) → *die Mütter* (the mothers)
- Adding -e, -n, -en, or -er**:
 - der Tisch* (the table) → *die Tische* (the tables)
 - die Straße* (the street) → *die Straßen* (the streets)
 - die Frau* (the woman) → *die Frauen* (the women)
 - das Kind* (the child) → *die Kinder* (the children)
- Vowel change and adding -e or -er**:
 - der Arzt* (the doctor) → *die Ärzte* (the doctors)
 - das Buch* (the book) → *die Bücher* (the books)
- Adding -s**:
 - das Büro* (the office) → *die Büros* (the offices)

GENDER

BIOLOGICAL GENDER

- In nouns that refer to occupation, nationality, religious or political orientation, and the like, **biological gender** generally is respected:
 - der Mann* (the man); *die Frau* (the woman)
 - der Amerikaner* (the [male] American); *die Amerikanerin* (the [female] American).
- A **child** is referred to in the **neuter**: *das Kind* (the child).
 - Specific terms are used to distinguish between a male and a female child: *der Junge* (the boy) and *das Mädchen* (the girl).
 - Pronoun references to a female child respect grammatical, *not* biological gender: *Das Mädchen hat seinen Hut verloren.* (The girl lost its [i.e., her] hat.)

OCCUPATIONS AND NATIONALITIES

- The singular form of most **occupations** and **nationalities** reflect distinctions in biological gender, usually by changing the article and adding the feminine ending **-in**:
 - der Professor* (the [male] professor)
 - die Professorin* (the [female] professor)
- In some cases, a **vowel change** also occurs:
 - der Arzt* (the [male] doctor)
 - die Ärztin* (the [female] doctor)

- In other cases, **distinct terms** are used:
 - der Krankenpfleger* (the [male] nurse)
 - die Krankenschwester* (the [female] nurse)
- Traditionally, German has retained the generic masculine plural for professions and nationalities:
 - die Journalisten* (the journalists)
 - die Amerikaner* (the Americans)
- Sometimes, however, more inclusive forms are used:
 - die Amerikanerinnen* (the [male and female] Americans)
- German nationality** is irregular: *der Deutsche* (the [male] German); *ein Deutscher* (a [male] German); *die Deutsche* (the [female] German); *die Deutschen* (the [male and female] Germans); *Deutsche* (Germans).

THE GENERIC MASCULINE

- No distinction is made between male and female human beings: *der Mensch* (the human being [akin to "man" in English])
- When referring to humans collectively, however, the noun is grammatically feminine: *die Menschheit* (mankind).
- It is important to distinguish between the **indefinite pronoun man** (one [as in people in general]) and the agent noun *der Mann* (the man):
 - Man sagt das so.* (One says it that way.)
 - Der Mann sagt das so.* (That's the way that [particular] man says it.)
- Der Mann* and *die Frau* can also mean husband or wife:
 - Das ist mein Mann.* (That is my husband.)
 - Das ist meine Frau.* (That is my wife.)

REGULAR ENDINGS

- Some **regular endings** are gendered in certain ways:
- The suffix **-ismus** is **masculine**: *der Feminismus*/feminism.
 - Agent nouns ending in **-er** are **masculine**: *der Lehrer* (the [male] teacher); those ending in **-in** are **feminine**: *die Lehrerin* (the [female] teacher).
 - ung, -heit, -keit, -schaft, -ion, -tät, and -ei** endings are **feminine** and pluralized by adding **-en**: *die Lösung, -en* (the solution/s); *die Wahrheit, -en* (the truth/s); *die Wirklichkeit, -en* (reality/ies); *die Freundschaft, -en* (the friendship/s); *die Diskussion, -en* (the discussion/s); *die Universität, -en* (the university/ies); *die Bäckerei, -en* (the bakery/ies).
 - unft** endings are **feminine** and pluralized with a stem vowel change and adding an **-e**: *die Unterkunft, Unterkünfte*/lodging, accommodations.
 - ik** endings are **feminine** and often have no plural: *die Logik* (logic), but when they do, they form the plural with **-en**: *die Technik, -en* (technology/ies [or technique/s]).
 - chen** and **-lein** are diminutive suffixes usually combined with umlauts added to the stem vowel. They take the neuter: *die Katze* (the cat); *das Kätzchen* (the [kitty] cat); *die Frau* (the woman); *das Fräulein* (the [little] Miss, girl). Traditionally, *Fräulein* has been the term of address to distinguish between married and unmarried women: *Fräulein Smith* (Miss Smith), but it is now common to use *Frau Smith* (Mrs. Smith [abbreviated *Fr. Smith*]) regardless of marital status.
 - Infinitive verbs used as nouns are neuter and have no plural: *das Schreiben* (writing).

CASE

A noun's case is determined by its function. The **four cases** in German, and some guidelines for usage, are:

NOMINATIVE (NOM)

Articles in the nominative are *der* (m), *die* (f), *das* (n), *die* (pl).

Use the **nominative** for:

- Subjects:** The person, place, or thing performing the action: *Der Hund läuft.* (The dog runs.)
- Predicate nominatives:** Nouns that don't do anything but refer to the subject of the sentence: *Der Hund ist ein Schäferhund.* (The dog is a German shepherd.) *Das ist die Frau.* (That is the woman.)
- Nouns of address:** *Meine Damen und Herren!* (Ladies and gentlemen!)

ACCUSATIVE (ACC)

Articles in the accusative are *den* (m), *die* (f), *das* (n), *die* (pl).

Use the **accusative** for:

- Direct objects:** The person or thing acted upon, known, or owned by the subject: *Ich sehe den Hund.* (I see the dog.)
- Nouns following **accusative prepositions**: *Ich bin gegen den Krieg.* (I am against the war.)
- Expressing **temporal relationships**: *Ich gehe jeden Tag ins Kino.* (I go to the movies every day.)
- The expression **es gibt** (there is/are): *Es gibt einen Brief auf dem Tisch.* (There is a letter lying on the table.)

DATIVE (DAT)

Articles in the dative are *dem* (m), *der* (f), *dem* (n), *den* (pl).

Use the **dative** for:

- Indirect objects:** The person/thing for whom the action is performed or to whom it is directed: *Ich gebe dem Hund das Spielzeug.* (I give the dog the toy.)
- Nouns following **dative prepositions**: *Ich fahre mit dem Zug.* (I am going by train.)
- Dative verbs:** Common dative verbs include *antworten* (to answer); *danken* (to thank); *gefallen* (to please); *gehören* (to belong to); *helfen* (to help); *glauben* (to believe [someone]). Dative objects usually are people. Hence, *glauben*, when referring to an inanimate object, applies the accusative—*ich glaube das*. (I believe that.)—but applies the dative when referring to a person—*ich glaube dir*. (I believe you.)
- Indicating **personal involvement or reaction**: *Ist es Ihnen zu warm, Fr. Smith?* (Is it too warm for you, Ms. Smith?); *Nein, es ist mir zu kalt.* (No, it's too cold for me.)

GENITIVE (GEN)

Articles in the genitive are *des, -es, -s, -en* (m); *der* (f); *des, -es, -s* (n); *der, -en* (pl). Use the **genitive** for:

- Possession:** *die Augen des Kindes* (the child's eyes).
- Relationships** between two nouns usually **denoted in English by the preposition "of"**: *die Farbe deiner Augen* (The color of your eyes).
- Nouns following **genitive prepositions**: *Mexiko befindet sich jenseits der Grenze.* (Mexico is situated beyond the border.)

PRONOUNS / die PRONOMEN

Pronouns stand in for nouns and change case according to their grammatical function. They must agree in gender and number with the nouns to which they refer (called **antecedents**).

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

- Personal pronouns differ depending on whether they are used for **formal** or **informal address**:
 - Sie-form** (formal)
 - du-form** (informal singular)
 - ihr-form** (informal plural)
- To distinguish between these forms, our examples use:
 - Frank* (informal singular) and *Hans und Helga* (Hans and Helga; informal plural) for the **du-** and **ihr-** forms
 - Fr. Smith* (Ms. Smith; formal singular) and *meine Herren* (gentlemen; formal plural) for the **Sie-** forms

Nominative personal pronouns

ich (I)	Ich sehe den Hund. (I see the dog.)
du (you) [inf. sg.]	Du siehst den Hund, Frank . (You see the dog, Frank .)
er (he)	Er sieht den Hund. (He sees the dog.)
sie (she)	Sie sieht den Hund. (She sees the dog.)
es (it)	Es liegt auf dem Tisch. (It is lying on the table.)
Sie (you) [form. sg.]	Sehen Sie das Buch, Fr. Smith ? (Do you see the book, Ms. Smith ?)
wir (we)	Wir sehen die Katze. (We see the cat.)
ihr (you) [inf. pl.]	Ihr kennt die Leute, Hans und Helga . (You know the people, Hans and Helga .)
sie (they)	Sie kennen uns. (They know us.)
Sie (you) [form. pl.]	Sehen Sie das Buch, meine Herren ? (Do you see the book, gentlemen ?)

Accusative personal pronouns

mich (me)	Siehst du mich ? (Do you see me ?)
dich (you)	Ich sehe dich , Frank . (I see you , Frank .)
ihn (him)	Sehen Sie ihn , meine Herren ? (Do you see him , gentlemen ?)
sie (her)	Sehen Sie sie , Fr. Smith ? (Do you see her , Ms. Smith ?)
es (it)	Siehst du es , Frank ? (Do you see it , Frank ?)
uns (us)	Sehen Sie uns , Fr. Smith ? (Do you see us , Ms. Smith ?)
euch (you) [inf. pl.]	Ich sehe euch , Hans und Helga . (I see you , Hans and Helga .)
sie (them)	Sehen Sie sie , Fr. Smith ? (Do you see them , Ms. Smith ?)
Sie (you) [form.]	Ich sehe Sie nicht, meine Herren . (I don't see you , gentlemen .)



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PRONOUNS (continued)

Dative personal pronouns

mir (me)	Schicken Sie mir das Buch, Fr. Smith. (Send me the book, Ms. Smith.)
dir (you) [inf. sg.]	Ich schicke dir den Brief, Frank. (I'll send you the letter, Frank.)
ihm (him)	Ich schicke ihm den Brief. (I'll send him the letter.)
ihr (her)	Schickst du ihr den Brief, Frank? (Will you send her the letter, Frank?)
ihm (it)	Sie schrieb das Buch, gab ihm aber keinen Titel. (She wrote the book but didn't give it a title.)
uns (us)	Schicken Sie uns den Brief, Fr. Smith. (Send us the letter, Ms. Smith.)
euch (you) [inf. pl.]	Wir schicken euch das Buch, Hans und Helga . (We'll send you the book, Hans and Helga .)
ihnen (them)	Ich schicke ihnen die Bücher. (I'll send them the books.)
ihnen (them) [form. pl.]	Ich schicke Ihnen die Bücher, meine Herren . (I'll send you the books, gentlemen .)

REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Reflexive pronouns **reflect back** on other nouns and are either **accusative** or **dative**. Some verbs always take the dative reflexive; others take the accusative.

Accusative	Dative	Meaning
mich	mir	myself
dich	dir	yourself
sich	sich	himself, herself, or itself
uns	uns	ourselves
euch	euch	yourselves (inf. pl.)
sich	sich	themselves
sich	sich	yourselves (form.)

ARTICLES / die ARTIKEL

Articles are placed before nouns to indicate specific or unspecified persons, places, things, animals, events, and ideas, and they change case according to their grammatical function.

DEFINITE ARTICLES

Definite articles refer to **specific nouns** and are declined just like **der-words** (see below).

- Definite articles:
 - der** = masculine: **der Hund** (the dog)
 - die** = feminine: **die Katze** (the cat)
 - das** = neuter: **das Buch** (the book)
 - die** = plural: **die Leute** (the people)

Declension of definite articles and der-words

	Masc.	Fem.	Neu.	Pl.
NOM	der	die	das	die
ACC	den	die	das	die
DAT	dem	der	dem	den, -n*
GEN	des, -s, -es†	der	des, -es†	der

Notes:

- † Some masculine and neuter nouns add an **-s** or **-es** to the noun to reflect genitive declension: **des Mannes, des Lehrers, des Fensters, des Kindes**.
- In the dative plural, all nouns require an **-n** ending, unless the plural ends in **-n** or **-s**: **den Vätern**.
- Der-words:** Words like **dies-** (this), **jen-** (that), **jed-** (each), **derselbe-** (the same one), **welch-** (which), and **all-** (all) are called **der-words** because they are declined like definite articles.
 - Jen-** is declined in the dative as follows: **jenem Hund** (m), **jener Katze** (f), **jenem Buch** (n), **jenen Leuten** (pl).
 - Derselbe** is declined in the accusative as follows: **denselben Hund** (m), **dieselbe Katze** (f), **dasselbe Buch** (n), **dieselbe Leute** (pl).

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Possessive pronouns are used to **indicate possession or ownership**.

mein (my)	Hast du mein Buch, Frank? (Do you have my book, Frank?)
dein (your) [inf. sg.]	Nein, Frank, dein Buch habe ich nicht. (No, Frank, I don't have your book.)
sein (his)	Ich habe seine Bücher. (I have his books.)
ihr (her)	Das ist ihr Buch. (That is her book.)
sein (its)	Was ist sein Titel? (What is its title?)
ihr (your) [form. sg.]	Haben Sie Ihr Buch, Fr. Smith? (Do you have your book, Ms. Smith?)
unser (our)	Das sind unsere Bücher. (Those are our books.)
euer (your) [inf. pl.]	Habt ihr eure Bücher, Hans und Helga? (Do you have your books, Hans and Helga?) Note: In cases where <i>euer</i> has endings, the <i>e</i> before the <i>r</i> is dropped, and <i>euer</i> becomes <i>eur-</i> + ending.
ihr (their) [inf. pl.]	Sie haben ihre Bücher. (They have their books.)
Ihr (your) [form. pl.]	Haben Sie Ihre Bücher, meine Herren? (Do you have your books, gentlemen?)

INDEFINITE ARTICLES

Indefinite articles refer to **unspecified nouns** and precede singular nouns:

- Indefinite articles:
 - ein** = masculine: **ein Hund** (a dog)
 - eine** = feminine: **eine Katze** (a cat)
 - ein** = neuter: **ein Buch** (a book)
- Indefinite articles are declined just like **ein-words**, so **mein** is provided as an example of the plural:

Declension of definite articles and der-words

	Masc.	Fem.	Neu.	Pl.
NOM	ein	eine	ein	meine
ACC	einen	eine	ein	meine
DAT	einem	einer	einem	meinen, -n*
GEN	eines, -es†	einer	eines, -es†	meinen

Notes:

- † Some masculine and neuter nouns also add **-s** or **-es** to reflect genitive declension: **eines Mannes, eines Kindes, eines Fensters**.
- Many nouns also require an **-n** ending in the dative plural: **deinen Kindern**.
- Ein-words:** The word **kein** (not a, not any) and possessive pronouns are called **ein-words** and are declined like **ein**.
 - Kein** is declined in the accusative as follows: **keinen Hund** (m), **keine Katze** (f), **kein Buch** (n), **keine Leute** (pl).

USAGE OF DEFINITE ARTICLES

Use **definite articles** with:

- Abstract nouns that represent the whole:
 - Das Leben ist schwer.** (Life is hard.)
- Proper names following an adjective:
 - Die schöne Frau Smith ist da.** (Beautiful Ms. Smith is here.)

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

Interrogative pronouns **introduce questions**: **was/what? wer/who? wen or wem/whom? wessen/whose?**

NOM	Was liegt auf dem Tisch? (What is lying on the table?) Wer liest das Buch? (Who is reading the book?)
ACC	Wen sehen Sie, Fr. Smith? (Whom do you see, Ms. Smith?)
DAT	Wem gebe ich das Buch? (Whom do I give the book?)
GEN	Wessen Buch ist es? (Whose book is it?)

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Relative pronouns **relate back** to other nouns or stand in for them to introduce relative clauses—they join two statements about the same noun (the antecedent).

- Relative pronouns agree in gender and number with their antecedents, but their case is determined by their function in the relative clause.
- The relative pronoun is never omitted in German: **Das ist der Mann, den ich kenne.** The antecedent, **der Mann** (the man), is nominative in the main clause. In the relative clause, the relative pronoun, **den** (whom), is accusative because it is the direct object of **kennen** (to know).
- If the relative pronoun is the object of a preposition, the preposition precedes the relative pronoun: **Das ist die Frau, mit der ich wohne.** (This is the woman with whom I live.)
- A comma sets off the relative pronoun: **... die Frau, mit der ...**
- Because relative clauses are dependent clauses, they take the transposed word order.

Declension of relative pronouns

	Masc.	Fem.	Neu.	Pl.
NOM	der	die	das	die
ACC	den	die	das	die
DAT	dem	der	dem	denen
GEN	dessen	deren	dessen	deren

Colloquial or familiar situations:

- Den Frank habe ich gestern gesehen.** (I saw Frank yesterday.)
- Names of buildings, streets, geographical spaces:
 - Ich wohne in der Goethestraße.** (I live on Goethe Street.)
- Temporal expressions like days of the week, months, seasons, mealtimes:
 - Wir gehen nach dem Frühstück.** (We're going after breakfast.)
- Institutions like universities, prisons, schools, churches:
 - Er geht ins Gefängnis.** (He's going to jail.)
- Note:** definite articles are implied in the following contractions:
 - an + dem = am**
 - in + dem = im**
 - von + dem = vom**
 - bei + dem = beim**
 - zu + dem = zum**
 - Zu + der** [f., DAT] = **zur**
 - an + das** [n., ACC] = **ans**
 - in + das** [n., ACC] = **ins**

USAGE OF INDEFINITE ARTICLES

Guidelines for using **indefinite articles**:

- Once a noun has been referred to with the indefinite article, subsequent references use the definite article:
 - Eine Frau hat das Buch geschrieben. Die Frau heißt Ingeborg Bachmann.** (A woman wrote the book. The woman's name is Ingeborg Bachmann.)
- The indefinite article usually is omitted when referring to people by profession, religion, nationality, and the like:
 - Ich bin Berliner.** (I am a citizen of Berlin.)

ADJECTIVES / die ADJEKTIVE

There are two types of **descriptive adjectives**: predicate and attributive.

- **Predicate adjectives** follow linking verbs like *sein* (to be), *werden* (to become), *bleiben* (to remain); they modify the subject and take no ending: *Die Frau ist schlau* / The woman is clever.
- **Attributive adjectives** precede the noun or pronoun they modify and take special adjective endings determined by the gender, number, case, and article of the nouns they modify: *die schlaue Frau* (the clever woman).

ADJECTIVE ENDINGS

Adjectives preceded by definite articles and der-words				
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
NOM	dieser lange Brief	diese schöne Katze	dieses alte Buch	diese jungen Leute
ACC	diesen langen Brief	diese schöne Katze	dieses alte Buch	diese jungen Leute
DAT	diesem langen Brief	dieser schönen Katze	diesem alten Buch	diesen jungen Leuten
GEN	dieses langen Briefes	dieser schönen Katze	dieses alten Buches	dieser jungen Leute

Adjectives preceded by indefinite articles and ein-words				
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
NOM	ein langer Brief	eine schöne Katze	ein altes Buch	keine jungen Leute
ACC	einen langen Brief	eine schöne Katze	ein altes Buch	keine jungen Leute
DAT	einem langen Brief	einer schönen Katze	einem alten Buch	keinen jungen Leuten
GEN	eines langen Briefes	einer schönen Katze	eines alten Buches	keiner jungen Leute

Adjectives preceded by neither article				
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
NOM	langer Brief	schöne Katze	altes Buch	junge Leute
ACC	langen Brief	schöne Katze	altes Buch	junge Leute
DAT	langem Brief	schöner Katze	altem Buch	jungen Leuten
GEN	langen Briefes	schöner Katze	alten Buches	junger Leute

PREPOSITIONS / die PRÄPOSITIONEN

Prepositions establish relationships of position, time, direction, or manner

In German, certain prepositions are always followed by dative, others by accusative, and some by either dative or accusative, depending on whether **destination (ACC)** or **location (DAT)** is signaled. Yet another group of prepositions is followed by genitive.

Accusative prepositions

bis	until	Warte bis Donnerstag, Frank. (Wait until Thursday, Frank.)
	by	Es muss bis Oktober fertig sein. (It has to be finished by October.)
	as far as	Ich fahre nur bis Berlin. (I'm going only as far as Berlin.)
durch	through	Ich fahre durch die Stadt. (I'm driving through the city.)
für	for	Ich mache es für ihn. (I'm doing it for him.)
gegen	against	Ich bin gegen den Krieg. (I am against the war.)
	around (time)	Ich komme gegen vier. (I'm coming around four.)
ohne	without	Ich gehe nicht ohne den Hund. (I'm not going without the dog.)
um	around (place)	Ich fahre um den Block. (I'm driving around the block.)
	at (time)	Frank kommt um sechs. (Frank is coming at six.)

Dative prepositions

aus	out of	Ich sehe aus dem Fenster. (I'm looking out the window.)
	from	Er kommt aus der Schweiz. (He comes from Switzerland.)
außer	except for	Außer ihr waren alle da. (They were all there except for her.)
	besides, in addition	Außer diesem Modell haben wir dieses. (In addition to this model, we have this one.)
bei	with, at the home of	Wir wohnen bei seiner Mutter. (We live with/at the home of his mother.)
	at	Er arbeitet bei der Firma. (He works at that company.)
mit	with	Ich arbeite mit ihr. (I work with her.)
nach	to	Ich fahre nach Amerika. (I'm going to America.)
	after	Nach der Schule habe ich Musikunterricht. (I have music lessons after school.)
seit	since (time)	Seit dem Herbst arbeite ich dort. (I've been working there since fall.)
	for	Dort arbeite ich seit einem Monat. (I've been working there for one month.)
von	from	Die Blumen habe ich von dir, Frank. (I got the flowers from you, Frank.)
	of	Er ist ein Freund von Ihnen, Frau Smith. (He is a friend of yours, Ms. Smith.)
zu	to (people, locations)	Ich gehe zu meinem Freund. (I'm going to my friend's.)

- **Two-way prepositions** take **accusative** to signal **destination**: *wohin?* (where to?); they take **dative** to signal **location**: *wo?* (where?).

ACCUSATIVE		DATIVE	
Wohin?	Where to?	Wo?	Where?
an	to, toward	an	at, beside
Frank geht ans Fenster.	Frank is going toward the window.	Frank ist am Fenster.	Frank is standing at the window.
auf	onto, to	auf	on, at
Frank legt den Brief auf den Tisch.	Frank places the letter on the table.	Das Buch liegt auf dem Tisch.	The book is lying on the table.
Frank geht auf die Post.	Frank is going to the post office.	Frank ist auf der Post.	Frank is at the post office.
hinter	behind	hinter	behind
Wir gehen hinter die Mauer.	We're going behind the wall.	Wir sitzen hinter der Mauer.	We're sitting behind the wall.

in	into	in	in
Wir fahren in die Stadt.	We're driving into the city.	Wir sind in der Stadt.	We are in the city.
neben	beside, next to	neben	beside, next to
Ich stelle die Flasche neben das Glas.	I'm placing the bottle beside the glass.	Die Flasche steht neben dem Glas.	The bottle is standing next to the glass.
über	over, across	über	above, over
Ich gehe über die Brücke.	I'm going across the bridge.	Die Brücke steht über der Straße.	The bridge is located above the street.
unter	under	unter	under, beneath
Der Hund läuft unter den Tisch.	The dog runs under the table.	Der Hund liegt unter dem Tisch.	The dog is lying beneath the table.
vor	in front of	vor	in front of
Stell es vor die Tür.	Put it in front of the door.	Es steht vor der Tür.	It is in front of the door.
zwischen	between	zwischen	between
Er geht zwischen die Mauer und den Zaun.	He's walking between the wall and the fence.	Er steht zwischen der Mauer und dem Zaun.	He's standing between the wall and the fence.

Idiomatic uses of prepositions: *in*, *auf*, *nach*, and *zu* can mean either "to" or "at" when expressing destination/location. Some guidelines for idiomatic usage:

ACCUSATIVE	DATIVE
use in for a building or enclosed space	
Ich gehe in die Apotheke. I'm going to the pharmacy.	Ich bin in der Apotheke. I am in (at) the pharmacy.
Ich gehe ins Theater. I'm going to the theater.	Ich bin im Theater. I am at the theater.
use auf instead of in for public or official buildings and open spaces	
Ich gehe auf die Post. I'm going to the post office.	Ich bin auf der Post. I am at the post office.
use in for countries that have a definite article	
Ich fliege in die USA. I'm flying to the USA.	Ich bin in den USA. I am in the USA. Note: <i>die USA</i> is plural (United States of America), but the abbreviated form <i>Amerika</i> is not, and has no article.

Use **nach** for countries or cities that have no article. With the exception of *die Antarktis* (Antarctica), the continents—*Afrika* (Africa), *Asien* (Asia), *Australien* (Australia), *Europa* (Europe), *Nordamerika* (North America), and *Südamerika* (South America)—do not carry articles, nor do most countries or cities.

Idioms: **zu Hause** (at home) and **nach Hause** (going or coming home).

Ich bin zu Hause. I'm at home.	Ich gehe nach Hause. I'm going home.
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Genitive prepositions

statt	instead of	Ich möchte statt des weissen Weins den roten.	I would like red wine instead of white.
anstatt		Ich trage den Rock anstatt der Hose.	I'm wearing the skirt instead of the pants.
trotz	in spite of	Trotz des Regens gehen wir spazieren.	We're taking a walk in spite of the rain.
während	during	Während des Semesters habe ich keine Zeit.	I don't have time during the semester.
wegen	on account of	Wegen des Wetters kommt er nicht.	He's not coming on account of the weather.

CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE



WORD ORDER / WORTSTELLUNG

Word order in German is determined by the position of the conjugated verb.

In both **standard** and **inverted** word order, the conjugated verb is always in the second position, but in *dependent clauses*, the conjugated verb is moved to the last position. This does not mean the conjugated verb is always the second word—it is the second *grammatical unit*.

STANDARD WORD ORDER

1. subject; 2. conjugated verb; 3. other grammatical units, according to the guidelines outlined below. (Note that hyphens have been added to sample sentences in order to distinguish the different parts of speech.)

- **Subject - verb**
 - Die Sonne - scheint. (The sun is shining.)
- **Subject - verb - predicate adjective**
 - Der Brief - ist - fertig. (The letter is finished.)
- **Subject - verb - direct object**
 - Ich - schreibe - den Brief. (I'm writing the letter.)
- **Subject - verb - adverb - predicate adverb**
 - Die Frau, der ich den Brief schreiben wollte, - ist - heute - nicht da. (The woman to whom I wanted to write the letter is not here today.)

- **Note:** In the relative clause *der ich den Brief schreiben wollte*, the indirect object precedes the direct object and the verb is in last position.
- **Subject - verb - adverb of time - adverb of manner - prepositional phrase indicating place**
 - Er - geht - jetzt - schnell - nach Hause. (He is going to hurry home now.)
- **Note:** For adverbs and adverbial phrases, the order is always:
 1. **Adverbs of time** (above, *jetzt*): Answer the question *wann?* (when?): above,
 2. **Adverbs of manner** (above, *schnell*): Answer the question *wie?* (how?)
 3. **Adverbs of place** (above, *nach Hause*): Answer the question *wo(hin)?* (where [to]?)

INVERTED WORD ORDER

1. anything other than the subject or conjunction; 2. conjugated verb; 3. subject; 4. everything else. Any number of grammatical units may occupy the first position, but the **verb remains in second position**. Do not confuse inverted word order with the transposed word order used for relative and dependent clauses.

- **Interrogative - verb - subject - direct object - proper name as form of address**
 - Wann - schreiben - Sie - den Brief, - Frau Smith? (When are you going to write the letter, Ms. Smith?)
- **Note:** Interrogatives always require inverted word order.
- **Adverbial phrase - verb - subject - direct object**
 - Heute abend - schreibe - ich - den Brief. (I'm writing the letter this evening.)
- **Direct object - verb - subject - adverbial phrase**
 - Den Brief - schreibe - ich - heute abend. (I'm writing the letter this evening.)
- **Note:** positioning of direct objects and subjects is variable; the position of the verb is not—it remains in second position.

TRANSPOSED WORD ORDER

Transposed word order is the exception to the rule of verb in second position. In dependent clauses, the conjugated verb is moved to the end of the clause and is in **last position**. Dependent clauses usually are introduced by relative pronouns or subordinating conjunctions.

CONJUNCTIONS / die KONJUNKTIONEN

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Coordinating conjunctions combine words, phrases, and clauses into equal relationships.

- **Common coordinating conjunctions** include **und** (and); **oder** (or); **aber** (but); **sondern** (but rather, instead); and **denn** (for, because).
- Because coordinating conjunctions do not count as the first unit of a statement, they **do not affect word order**. **Aber**, **sondern**, and **denn** are always preceded by a comma; **und** and **oder** are preceded by a comma only when necessary to avoid ambiguity.

UND / AND

- Ich schreibe einen Brief. Er liest das Buch. (I am writing a letter. He is reading a book.)
- Ich schreibe den Brief **und** er liest das Buch. (I am writing a letter and he is reading a book.)

ODER / OR

- Ich schreibe den Brief. Ich lese das Buch. (I'll write the letter. I'll read the book.)
- Ich schreibe den Brief **oder** ich lese das Buch. (I'll write the letter or I'll read the book.)

SONDERN / BUT RATHER, INSTEAD

- Ich möchte den Kuchen nicht. Ich möchte das Brot. (I don't want the cake. I want the bread.)
- Ich möchte nicht den Kuchen, **sondern** das Brot. (I don't want the cake, rather the bread.)

DENN / SINCE, BECAUSE

- Ich schreibe den Brief nicht. Ich lese das Buch. (I won't write the letter. I'm reading the book.)
- Ich schreibe den Brief nicht, **denn** ich lese das Buch. (I won't write the letter since I'm reading the book.)

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Subordinating conjunctions combine clauses into unequal relationships.

- Words on one side of the conjunction become **subordinate** to those on the other. The main clause is independent; the subordinate clause (introduced by the conjunction) is dependent.
- **Common subordinating conjunctions** include **bis** (until); **da** (since, because); **dass** (that); **ob** (whether, if); **weil** (because); **obgleich** (even though, in spite of the fact); **obwohl** (although); **als** (when); **wenn** (if, whenever); **damit** (so that); and **während** (while).
- Subordinating conjunctions are preceded by a comma when the dependent clause follows the independent clause. When the order is reversed, the comma follows the dependent clause. The relationship of subordination is always marked by transposed word order in the dependent clause.

BIS / UNTIL

- Ich schreibe den Brief nicht. Ich habe das Buch nicht gelesen. (I won't write the letter. I haven't read the book.)
- Ich schreibe den Brief nicht, **bis** ich das Buch gelesen habe. (I won't write the letter until I have read the book.)
- **Note:** Word order of the independent clause remains unaffected, but in the dependent clause, the verb is in last position. The dependent clause follows the independent clause, so a comma precedes the subordinating conjunction **bis** (until). When the clauses are reversed—**Bis ich das Buch gelesen habe, schreibe ich den Brief nicht**. (Until I have read the book, I won't write the letter.)—the dependent clause, with verb last, becomes the first element of the sentence. The verb in the independent clause precedes the subject, and the comma is placed at the end of the dependent clause.

DA / SINCE, BECAUSE

- Ich schreibe den Brief nicht. Ich habe das Buch nicht gelesen. (I won't write the letter. I haven't read the book.)
- Ich schreibe den Brief nicht, **da** ich das Buch noch nicht gelesen habe. (I won't write the letter since I haven't yet read the book.)

DASS / THAT

- Ich wusste es nicht. Er hat das Buch geschrieben. (I didn't know. He wrote the book.)
- Ich wusste nicht, **dass** er das Buch geschrieben hat. (I didn't know that he wrote the book.)

OB / WHETHER, IF

- Ich weiß es nicht. Er hat den Brief gelesen. (I don't know. He has read the letter.)
- Ich weiß nicht, **ob** er den Brief gelesen hat. (I don't know whether he has read the letter.)

WEIL / BECAUSE

- Ich schrieb den Brief nicht. Ich musste das Buch lesen. (I didn't write the letter. I had to read the book.)
- Ich schrieb den Brief nicht, **weil** ich das Buch lesen musste. (I didn't write the letter because I had to read the book.)

OBWOHL / ALTHOUGH

- Ich schrieb ihm den Brief. Er wollte ihn nicht lesen. (I wrote him the letter. He didn't want to read it.)
- Ich schrieb ihm den Brief, **obwohl** er ihn nicht lesen wollte. (I wrote him the letter although he didn't want to read it.)

ALS / WHEN (PAST TENSE)

- Ich war jung. Ich schrieb viele Briefe. (I was young. I wrote many letters.)
- **Als** ich jung war, schrieb ich viele Briefe. (When I was young, I wrote many letters.)
- **Note:** **Als** always refers to specific events in the past tense, as in "back when." Be careful not to confuse **als** with **wenn**.

WENN / IF, WHENEVER

- Ich habe die Zeit. Ich schreibe den Brief. (I have the time. I'll write the letter.)
- **Wenn** ich die Zeit habe, schreibe ich den Brief. (If I have the time, I'll write the letter.)
- **Note:** **Wenn** can mean either "if" or "whenever." If the meaning is not clear, ask whether the word **immer** (always) can be added. If it can, then the meaning of **wenn** is whenever: **Immer wenn sie das sagt, wird er rot**. (Whenever she says that, he turns red.). If **immer** cannot be added, then the meaning of **wenn** is "if": **Wenn sie das sagt, dann wird er rot**. (If she says that, he will turn red.).

DAMIT / SO THAT

- Ich schreibe ihm den Brief. Er weiß, was ich denke. (I'll write him the letter. He knows what I think.)
- Ich schreibe ihm den Brief, **damit** er weiß, was ich denke. (I'll write him the letter so that he knows what I think.)

WÄHREND / WHILE

- Ich schrieb einen Brief. Er las ein Buch. (I wrote a letter. He read a book.)
- **Während** ich einen Brief schrieb, las er ein Buch. (While I was writing a letter, he read a book.)

CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

Correlative conjunctions consist of two parts and place possibilities in one part of the sentence in relationship to possibilities in the other.

ENTWEDER...ODER / EITHER...OR

- Ich schreibe den Brief. Ich lese das Buch. (I will write the letter. I will read the book.)
- **Entweder** schreibe ich den Brief, **oder** ich lese das Buch. (Either I will write the letter or I will read the book.)

NICHT NUR...SONDERN AUCH / NOT ONLY...BUT ALSO

- Ich schreibe den Brief. Ich lese das Buch. (I will write the letter. I will read the book.)
- Ich schreibe **nicht nur** den Brief, **sondern** ich lese **auch** das Buch. (I will not only write the letter but also read the book.)

WEDER...NOCH / NEITHER...NOR

- Ich schreibe den Brief. Ich lese das Buch. (I will write the letter. I will read the book.)
- Ich schreibe **weder** den Brief, **noch** lese ich das Buch. (I will neither write the letter nor read the book.)

VERBS / die VERBEN

Verbs express activity, action, occurrence, or condition.

- Verbs must agree with their subjects both in **person** (first, second, or third) and in **number** (singular or plural).
- Verbs also reflect the time or **tense** (present, past, future) and **mood** (indicative, imperative, subjunctive) of the action. Changes made to verbs to reflect these factors are referred to as **conjugation**.
- Verbs can be **transitive** or **intransitive**. Transitive verbs take direct objects; intransitive verbs do not. Some verbs can function as both. Compound tenses of transitive verbs are conjugated with **haben** (to have); intransitive verbs that express motion or a change in condition are conjugated with **sein** (to be).
- The basic form of the verb is the infinitive, marked in English by "to"; a verb's principal part is its **stem**. When you learn each verb, memorize the **infinitive** (and **stem**), **simple past** (imperfect), and **past participle**, as below:

Infinitive	Stem	Simple past	Past participle
lernen to learn	lern-	lernle	gelernt
sein to be	sei-	war	gewesen
haben to have	hab-	hatte	gehabt

VERB TENSES

Verb tenses indicate when an action takes place: present, past, or future.

- Present tense** is used for:
 - Actions taking place in the present: *Ich **schreibe** den Brief.* (I'm writing the letter.); *Ich **schreibe** jetzt diesen Brief.* (I'm writing the letter now.)
 - Habitual or ongoing actions: *Ich **schreibe** immer solche Briefe.* (I always write letters like that.)
 - General truths: *Die Sonne **geht** jeden Tag **auf**.* (The sun rises every day.)
 - Future meaning when the future is implied or explicitly stated: *Morgen **schreibe** ich den Brief.* (I will write the letter tomorrow.)
 - The German present tense *Ich **gehe*** is the same as the English present (I go), progressive (I am going), and emphatic (I do go) forms.
- Simple past tense** expresses past events: *Ich **schrieb** den Brief.* (I wrote the letter.)
 - It has the same meaning as the perfect tense but is used more often in written than in spoken German.
 - In spoken German, simple past often is used for two simultaneous past events: *Ich **schrieb** einen Brief, während er ein Buch **las**.* (I wrote a letter while he read a book.) or for a chain of events: *Sie **kam**, sie **sah**, und sie **ging**.* (She came, she saw, and she left.)
- Perfect tense** predominates in conversational German for expressing past events: *Ich **habe** den Brief **geschrieben**.* (I wrote the letter.)
 - It is a compound tense formed using the present tense of the auxiliary verbs **haben** or **sein** with the past participle of the main verb.
 - Most verbs form the perfect tense using **haben**. Verbs that are intransitive and express motion or a change in condition use **sein**: *Ich **bin** **gegangen**.* (I [have] left.); *Ich **bin** **gewachsen**.* (I have grown.)
 - Some verbs may be transitive or intransitive and conjugated with **haben** or **sein** depending on usage: *Ich **bin** zum Flughafen **gefahren**.* (I drove [went] to the airport.) but *Ich **habe** meinen Bruder zum Flughafen **gefahren**.* (I drove my brother to the airport.)

- Past perfect tense** corresponds in meaning and usage to the past perfect in English. It is formed using the simple past of the auxiliary verbs **haben** or **sein** with the past participle of the main verb: *Ich **hatte** den Brief **geschrieben**.* (I had written the letter.)
- Future tense** corresponds in meaning and usage to the future tense in English. It is formed using the present tense of **werden** plus the infinitive of the main verb: *Morgen **werde** ich den Brief **schreiben**.* (I will write the letter tomorrow.)
- Future perfect tense** corresponds in meaning and usage to the future perfect tense in English. It is formed using the present tense of **werden** plus the past participle of the main verb and the infinitive of **haben** or **sein**: *Bis morgen **werde** ich den Brief **geschrieben haben**.* (I will have written the letter by tomorrow.)

VERB CONJUGATION

Note: in the examples given, designations of transitive (*tr.*) and intransitive (*int.*) apply only to the specific examples, not to all verbs of the same type or class.

- Weak verbs** have the present tense endings -e, -st, -t, -en, -t, -en. Their simple past tense is formed by adding -t, plus the endings -e, -est, -te, -en, -et, -en. Their past participle is formed by adding the prefix **ge-** and the suffix -t or -et (when the stem ends in t as in *arbeit-*).

Conjugation of weak verbs

hören (to hear [tr. with haben])

	Present	Simple past	Past participle
ich	höre	hörte	gehört
du	hörst	hörtest	
er/sie/es	hört	hörte	
Sie	hören	hörten	
wir	hören	hörten	
ihr	hört	hörtet	
sie	hören	hörten	

- Irregular weak verbs:** some weak verbs undergo a vowel change in the simple past and past participle but otherwise follow the rules of the weak conjugation.

Conjugation of irregular weak verbs

rennen (to run [int. with sein])

	Present	SP	PP
ich	renne	rannte	gerannt
du	rennst	ranntest	
er/sie/es	rennt	rannte	
Sie	rennen	rannten	
wir	rennen	rannten	
ihr	rennt	ranntet	
sie	rennen	rannten	

- Irregular strong verbs** take the same endings as weak verbs in the present tense but are unpredictable in other tenses. Their participles end in -en or -n, and they usually undergo a vowel change in the simple past, the participle, and sometimes the third person singular of the present tense. The following classifications can help:

Class I: ei-ie-ie

bleiben (to stay, remain [int. with sein])

	Present	SP	PP
ich	bleibe	blieb	geblieben
du	bleibst	bliebst	
er/sie/es	bleibt	blieb	
Sie	bleiben	blieben	
wir	bleiben	blieben	
ihr	bleibt	bliebt	
sie	bleiben	blieben	

- Common class 1 verbs (ei-ie-ie):** *gedehen, heißen, leihen, meiden, preisen, reiben, scheiden, scheinen, schreiben, schweigen, steigen, treiben, verzeihen*

Class Ia: ei-i-i

schneiden (to cut [tr. with haben])

	Present	SP	PP
ich	schneide	schnitt	geschnitten
du	schneidest	schnittst	
er/sie/es	schneidet	schnitt	
Sie	schneiden	schnitten	
wir	schneiden	schnitten	
ihr	schneidet	schnittet	
sie	schneiden	schnitten	

Common class Ia verbs (ei-i-i): *beißen, gleichen, gleiten, greifen, leiden, pfeifen, reißen, reiten, schleichen, schleifen, schreien, streichen, streiten, weichen*

Class II: ie-o-o

ziehen (to pull, tug [tr. with haben])

	Present	SP	PP
ich	ziehe	zog	gezogen
du	ziehst	zogst	
er/sie/es	zieht	zog	
Sie	ziehen	zogen	
wir	ziehen	zogen	
ihr	zieht	zogt	
sie	ziehen	zogen	

Common class II verbs (ie-o-o): *biegen, fliegen, fliehen, fließen, frieren, gießen, kriechen, schießen, verlieren, wiegen*

Class III: i-a-u

singen / to sing (tr. with haben)

	Present	SP	PP
ich	singe	sang	gesungen
du	singst	sangst	
er/sie/es	singt	sang	
Sie	singen	sangen	
wir	singen	sangen	
ihr	singt	sangt	
sie	singen	sangen	

Common class III verbs (i-a-u): *binden, dringen, finden, schwinden, schwingen, sinken, sinnen, springen, trinken, winden, zwingen*

Class IV: e-a-o

sprechen (to speak [tr. with haben])

	Present	SP	PP
ich	spreche	sprach	gesprächen
du	sprichst	sprachst	
er/sie/es	spricht	sprach	
Sie	sprechen	sprachen	
wir	sprechen	sprachen	
ihr	spricht	spracht	
sie	sprechen	sprachen	

Common class IV verbs (e-a-o): *befehlen, bergen, bersten, brechen, erschrecken, fechten, helfen, nehmen, stechen, stehlen, sterben, treffen, verderben, werfen*

Note: Often, there are irregularities in second and third person singular in this class.

Class V: e-a-e

lesen (to read [tr. with haben])

	Present	SP	PP
ich	lese	las	gelesen
du	liest	last	
er/sie/es	liest	las	
Sie	lesen	lasen	
wir	lesen	lasen	
ihr	liest	last	
sie	lesen	lasen	

Common class V verbs (e-a-e): *essen, fressen, geben, genesen, geschehen, sehen, treten*

Class VI: a-u-a

wachsen (to grow [intr. with sein])

	Present	SP	PP
ich	wachse	wuchs	gewachsen
du	wächst	wuchstest	
er/sie/es	wächst	wuchs	
Sie	wachsen	wuchsen	
wir	wachsen	wuchsen	
ihr	wächst	wuchst	
sie	wachsen	wuchsen	

Common class VI verbs (a-u-a): *fahren, graben, schaffen, tragen, waschen*

Class VII: a-ie-au

laufen (to run [intr. with sein])

	Present	SP	PP
ich	laufe	lief	gelaufen
du	läufst	liefst	
er/sie/es	läuft	lief	
Sie	laufen	liefen	
wir	laufen	liefen	
ihr	läuft	liefet	
sie	laufen	liefen	

Common class VII verbs (a-ie-au): *fangen, blasen, braten, fallen, fangen, halten, raten*

AUXILIARY VERBS

Auxiliary (helping) verbs help form past or future tenses and subjunctive or passive voice constructions. They can also function as main verbs, but their conjugation is the same. The most important are **haben** (to have), **sein** (to be), and **werden** (to become).

Auxiliary verbs: Present tense

	haben	sein	werden
ich	habe	bin	werde
du	hast	bist	wirst
er/sie/es	hat	ist	wird
Sie	haben	sind	werden
wir	haben	sind	werden
ihr	habt	seid	werdet
sie	haben	sind	werden

Auxiliary verbs: Simple past

	haben	sein	werden
ich	hatte	war	wurde
du	hattest	warst	wurdest
er/sie/es	hatte	war	wurde
Sie	hatten	waren	wurden
wir	hatten	waren	wurden
ihr	hattet	wart	wurdet
sie	hatten	waren	wurden

Auxiliary verbs: Past participle

	haben	sein	werden
gehabt		gewesen	geworden

- Modal auxiliaries** indicate the subject's relation to the action performed by the main verb—that is, whether the action should, must, could, would, may, or may not be done. Their conjugation is irregular; they are usually used with the infinitive of the main verb—*Ich **soll** jetzt **gehen**.* (I should go now.)—and are conjugated with **haben**—*Ich **habe** das nicht **gewollt**.* (That wasn't what I wanted.)

Modal auxiliaries

dürfen (to be allowed, permitted to)

	Present	SP	PP
ich	darf	durfte	gedurft
du	darfst	durftest	
er/sie/es	darf	durfte	
Sie	dürfen	durften	
wir	dürfen	durften	
ihr	dürft	durftet	
sie	dürfen	durften	



können (to be able [can/could])			
	Present	SP	PP
ich	kann	konnte	gekonnt
du	kannst	konnest	
er/sie/es	kann	konnte	
Sie	können	könnten	
wir	können	könnten	
ihr	könnt	könntet	
sie	können	könnten	

müssen (to have to [must])			
	Present	SP	PP
ich	muss	musste	gemusst
du	musst	musstest	
er/sie/es	muss	musste	
Sie	müssen	mussten	
wir	müssen	mussten	
ihr	müsst	musstet	
sie	müssen	mussten	

wollen (to want to [intend])			
	Present	SP	PP
ich	will	wollte	gewollt
du	willst	wolltest	
er/sie/es	will	wollte	
Sie	wollen	wollten	
wir	wollen	wollten	
ihr	wollt	wolltet	
sie	wollen	wollten	

sollen (to be supposed to [should])			
	Present	SP	PP
ich	soll	sollte	gesollt
du	sollst	solltest	
er/sie/es	soll	sollte	
Sie	sollen	sollten	
wir	sollen	sollten	
ihr	sollt	solltet	
sie	sollen	sollten	

mögen (to like [something])			
	Present	SP	PP
ich	mag	mochte	gemocht
du	magst	mochtest	
er/sie/es	mag	mochte	
Sie	mögen	mochten	
wir	mögen	mochten	
ihr	mögt	mochtet	
sie	mögen	mochten	

SEPARABLE PREFIX VERBS

Many German verbs change meaning by adding prefixes, which often are prepositions like *ab-*, *an-*, *auf-*, *aus-*, *bei-*, *ein-*, *mit-*, *vor-*, or *zu-*. In the present tense and imperative, the prefix is separated from the infinitive stem.

Example: *aufstehen* (to get up)

Present indicative:

Ich **stehe** jeden morgen um sechs Uhr **auf**.
(I get up at six every morning.)

Simple past/Perfect indicative:

Gestern **stand** ich um fünf Uhr **auf**.
Wann bist du gestern **aufgestanden**?
(I got up at five yesterday. When did you get up?)

Present imperative (form. sg.):

Stehen Sie bitte **auf**, Frau Smith! (Please get up [stand up], Ms. Smith!)

INSEPARABLE PREFIX VERBS

Inseparable prefix verbs cannot be separated from their prefixes. Common inseparable prefixes include *be-*, *emp-*, *ent-*, *er-*, *ge-*, *ver-*, and *zer-*.

Example: *empfangen* (to receive, greet)

Present tense indicative:

Ich **empfange** täglich Gäste. (I greet the guests daily.)

Simple past/Perfect indicative:

Gestern **empfieng** ich viele Gäste. Haben Sie auch welche **empfangen**, Frau Smith? (Yesterday I greeted many guests. Did you greet some too, Ms. Smith?)

Present tense imperative (form. sg.):

Empfangen Sie bitte Ihre Gäste, Frau Smith! (Please greet your guests, Ms. Smith!)

REFLEXIVE VERBS

Direct objects of **reflexive verbs** are identical to their subjects: they reflect back on themselves. Reflexive verbs are more frequent in German than in English; some require the dative reflexive pronoun, while others require the accusative. Any transitive verb can be used reflexively or non-reflexively. One example is *verletzen* (to hurt):

• Non-reflexive:

• Ich habe **ihn/sie/dich** verletzt. (I hurt him/her/you.)

• Reflexive:

• Ich habe **mich** verletzt. (I hurt myself.)
• Hast du **dich** verletzt, Frank? (Did you hurt yourself, Frank?)
• Ja, er hat **sich** verletzt. (Yes, he hurt himself.)

• Common verbs that require the dative reflexive include:

• *sich etwas ansehen* (to have a look at something): Ich werde mir das Haus ansehen. (I will have a look at the house.)
• *sich etwas leisten können* (to be able to afford something): Ich kann mir das nicht leisten. (I can't afford that.)
• *sich etwas vorstellen* (to imagine something): Ich kann mir das nicht vorstellen. (I can't imagine that.)

• Common verbs that are reflexive in German but not in English:

• *sich anziehen* (to get dressed)
• *sich setzen* (to sit down)
• *sich waschen* (to wash up [wash oneself]). Ich wasche mir die Haare. (I'm washing my hair.) **Note:** Hair usually is referred to in the plural: *die Haare* (the hairs).
• **Note:** Possessives generally are not used for personal body parts: Ich putze mir **die** Zähne. (I'm brushing my teeth.)

• Common verbs that are not reflexive in English but require the accusative reflexive in German include:

• *sich befinden* (to be located)
• *sich beeilen* (to hurry)
• *sich erholen* (to recover)
• *sich erkälten* (to catch cold)
• *sich freuen* (to be happy)
• *sich fühlen* (to feel)
• *sich verlieben* (to fall in love)
• *sich verspäten* (to be late)

VERB MOODS

Mood is a characteristic of verbs that indicates a speaker's attitude toward what he or she is saying. Verbs in German are conjugated differently according their mode of expression in one of three moods:

INDICATIVE

The most common mood; used for facts or actual situations.

IMPERATIVE

Used for commands, requests, suggestions, or instructions. Three imperative forms for each verb correspond to forms of address (*Sie-*, *du-*, and *ihr-* forms).

• *Sie-* and *ihr-* form imperatives are the same as the present indicative:

• **Kommen Sie mit, Fr. Smith!** (Come along, Ms. Smith!)
• **Kommt mit, Hans und Helga!** (Come along, Hans und Helga!)

• **Note:** *Sie-* form places the pronoun *Sie* before the verb. The *du-* and *ihr-* forms omit the pronouns *ihr* and *du*.

• The *du-* form is derived from the present indicative but drops the *-st* ending and

usually is identical to the verb stem:

- **Komm mit, Frank!** (Come along, Frank!)
- Verbs with *e-i(e)* vowel changes use the changed stem for the *du-* form:
 - **Gib ihm das Buch, Frank!** (Give him the book, Frank!)
- Verbs with umlaut stem changes do not use the changed stem in the imperative:
 - **Lauf, Frank!** (Run, Frank!)
- Verb stems ending in *-d*, *-t*, or *-ig* add an *-e* to the stem:
 - **Warte auf mich, Frank!** (Wait for me, Frank!)

SUBJUNCTIVE

Used for conjectures, hypothetical conditions, suppositions, uncertainties, wishes, and indirect speech. German has two subjunctive forms: **general** and **special**.

• **General subjunctive** is based on the simple past; it is used to speak about unreal and hypothetical events or situations and to express wishes.

• For **weak verbs**, present tense general subjunctive is identical to the simple past, as in these contrary-to-fact wishes introduced by the *wenn*-clause (**Note:** transposed word order in *wenn*-clauses):

- **Wenn ich nur in Berlin wohnte.** (If only I lived in Berlin.)
- **Wenn du nur in Berlin wohntest, Frank.** (If only you lived in Berlin, Frank.)
- **Wenn er/sie/es nur in Berlin wohnte.** (If only he/she/it lived in Berlin.)
- **Wenn Sie nur in Berlin wohntest, Fr. Smith.** (If only you lived in Berlin, Ms. Smith.)
- **Wenn wir nur in Berlin wohntest.** (If only we lived in Berlin.)
- **Wenn ihr nur in Berlin wohntet, Hans und Helga.** (If only you lived in Berlin, Hans and Helga.)
- **Wenn sie nur in Berlin wohntest.** (If only they lived in Berlin.)

• For **strong verbs**, present tense general subjunctive is based on modified forms of the simple past:

- 1) begin with the simple past stem:

gehen—ging	to go—went
laufen—lief	to run—ran
sein—war	to be—was
- 2) add an umlaut wherever possible (*wär-*)
- 3) then add the following endings:

ich ginge/liefe/wäre (I would go/run/be)
du gingest/liefest/wärest (you would go/run/be)
er/sie/es ginge/liefe/wäre (he/she/it would go/run/be)
wir gingen/liefen/wären (we would go/run/be)
ihr ginget/liefet/wäret (you would go/run/be)
sie gingen/liefen/wären (they would go/run/be)

• For **haben**, **sein**, **werden**, and **wissen**, add an umlaut to the simple past indicative to form the general subjunctive in present tense:

haben (to have)		
	Simple past	General subjunctive
ich	hatte	hätte
du	hättest	hättest
er/sie/es	hatte	hätte
Sie	hätten	hätten
wir	hätten	hätten
ihr	hättet	hättet
sie	hätten	hätten

sein (to be)		
	Simple past	General subjunctive
ich	war	wäre
du	wärest	wärest
er/sie/es	war	wäre
Sie	wären	wären
wir	wären	wären
ihr	wäret	wäret
sie	wären	wären

werden (to become)		
	Simple past	General subjunctive
ich	wurde	würde
du	würdest	würdest
er/sie/es	wurde	würde
Sie	würden	würden
wir	würden	würden
ihr	würdet	würdet
sie	würden	würden

wissen / to know		
	Simple past	General subjunctive
ich	wusste	wüsste
du	wusstest	wüsstest
er/sie/es	wusste	wüsste
Sie	wüssten	wüssten
wir	wüssten	wüssten
ihr	wüsstet	wüsstet
sie	wüssten	wüssten

• **Past tense general subjunctive** is a compound tense that resembles the past perfect indicative, except that the subjunctive simple past of *haben* and *sein* is combined with the past participle:

Indicative past perfect	Past tense general subjunctive
Ich habe das Buch geschrieben. I wrote the book.	Ich hätte das Buch geschrieben. I would have written the book.
Ich habe das Buch gehabt. I had the book.	Ich hätte das Buch gehabt. I would have had the book.
Ich bin nach Hause gefahren. I went home.	Ich wäre nach Hause gefahren. I would have gone home.
Ich bin zu Hause gewesen. I was at home.	Ich wäre zu Hause gewesen. I would have been at home.

• **Würde construction:** uses the conjugated forms of *würden* with the infinitive:

• **Wenn Sie nur da sein würden, würde ich auch kommen.** (If only you were going to be there, then I would come, too.)

• **Special subjunctive:** is based on the infinitive stem conjugated with the same endings as the general subjunctive (*-e*, *-est*, *-e*, *-en*, *-et*, *-en*), and is used primarily to relate indirect discourse:

• **Sie sagte, er sei nicht gesund.** (She said he's not healthy.)

• **Note:** indirect speech can also be introduced by a *dass*-clause:

• **Sie sagte, dass er nicht gesund sei.** (She said that he is not healthy.); *dass*-clauses require transposed word order).

• There are only three tenses for the special subjunctive:

• Present: **Sie sagte, er sei nicht gesund.** (She said he is not healthy.)
• Future: **Sie sagt, sie werde kommen.** (She says she will come.)
• Past: **Er sagt, er habe das getan.** (He says he did it.)

• **Sein** is the only verb with its own set of forms for the special subjunctive:

• **ich sei; du seist; er/sie/es sei; wir seien; ihr seiet; sie, Sie seien**

• When the indicative and special subjunctive are identical, the general subjunctive is used to avoid confusion.