

Deutsche Grammatik

How German Sentences Work

One idea at a time • A1–A2

Anju Mishra

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Surabhi Verlag



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Anju Mishra.

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All German and English text in this volume is original, written freshly for this book and graded for learners at levels A1 and A2 of the Common European Framework. The German follows the current *Amtliches Regelwerk* of the Rat für deutsche Rechtschreibung (2024).

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About the author



Anju Mishra came to German the way most of her readers do: as an adult, mid-career, with a life already in motion. After five years in the United States she moved to Germany, where a small daughter with German homework became the best reason imaginable to master the language properly. She did, all the way to C1, and along the way discovered that German is not a mountain of exceptions but a system of patterns. An MBA in finance taught her to look for that structure; teaching learners from around the world taught her how to share it. She lives in Germany with her husband and daughter, who remains her favourite reason to get every *der*, *die* and *das* right.

How to use this book

German grammar has a reputation it does not deserve. It is not a pile of exceptions to be memorised. It is a small number of ideas, each of which explains a great deal, and this book introduces them one at a time, in the order that makes each one easy. Nothing here is presented before you have a reason to want it.

The road runs in four stages:

1. Chapters 1–7 put the verb in its place, build the bracket that holds every German sentence together, and close by joining sentences two different ways. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are the same bracket three times, which is why the past tense arrives so early.

2. Chapters 8–12 settle the noun: gender, plurals, possessives, numbers and dates, and the two little stand-in words.

3. Chapters 13–19 take the case system, the part of German that frightens people, and turn it into one table.

4. Chapters 20–22 tidy the middle of the sentence and add the past and comparison, so you can tell a story and weigh one thing against another.

The foot of every page names the strand a chapter belongs to, so you can follow one thread, *The Four Cases* or *Time*, straight through the book if you would rather read that way.

How to read a chapter:

1. Read the German scene first. The highlighted forms are what the chapter teaches; the English mirror below resolves anything unclear. Never look up a word before you have read the scene once.

2. Work through the explanation, and where the chapter has one, the green **paradigm card**. The card is that chapter in one picture, and it is worth more than any list you could copy out. A few late chapters teach a pattern rather than a set of forms, and those have no card to learn.

3. Read the examples aloud. Every German sentence in this book carries its English underneath, so you are never guessing.

4. Read the amber **Watch out** panel. It collects the mistakes learners actually make, with the correction beside each.

5. Do the **Übungen**. Answers are at the back. The last exercise is always yours: write, speak, produce.

Every chapter carries a level chip, A1 *or* A2*, so you can stop wherever your goal is. The chips mark difficulty, not order: two early chapters are A2 because the book teaches each thing where it is needed rather than by level. Work in short visits rather than long ones. Grammar settles overnight, not in an afternoon.*

The videos. The lessons of this series also live on YouTube: vocabulary drills, stories read aloud by German voices, and dialogue practice, all free. Find them on the channel **AllesKlarMitAnju**, and all books and courses at **AllesKlarMitAnju.com**.

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Contents

1	**Das Verb und Position zwei** One verb, one home	1
2	**Fragen und Nein** Asking, and saying no	9
3	**Die Modalverben** The bracket, for the first time	18
4	**Trennbare Verben** The verb that splits in two	26
5	**Das Perfekt** The bracket, a third time	35
6	**Der Imperativ** Sentences that start with the verb	48
7	**Verbinden und Nebensatz** Joining, and the verb's last home	55
8	**Der, die, das** Every noun wears a hat	67
9	**Der Plural** Five ways to say more than one	76
10	**Mein, dein, unser** Whose is it?	85

11 **Zahlen, Uhrzeit, Datum** 94
Counting, the clock, the date

12 **Man und es** 106
The two little stand-ins

13 **Nominativ und Akkusativ** 115
The doer and the target

14 **Die Pronomen im Akkusativ** 122
Me, you, him: the short words

15 **Der Dativ** 129
The case of the receiver

16 **Wen oder wem?** 142
Choosing between the two

17 **Präpositionen mit Dativ** 151
Seven words, one case

18 **Präpositionen mit Akkusativ** 160
Five words, one case

19 **Wechselpräpositionen** 167
The nine that switch sides

20 **Präteritum: war und hatte** 178
The past of being and having

21 **Das Mittelfeld** 186
Inside the bracket

22 **Komparativ und Superlativ** 195
Better, best, and how to say so

Answers 205

THE SENTENCE • CHAPTER 1

Das Verb und Position zwei

One verb, one home

A1

German is built around one law, and you can learn it on the first page of this book: in an ordinary statement, the conjugated verb lives in position two. Everything else in Part One, questions, modal verbs, separable verbs, even the past tense, is a variation on this single idea. (Statements are where the law is strictest. Questions and commands put the verb first, and one kind of clause sends it to the very end, but each of those is a deliberate departure from position two, and each gets its own chapter.) But first the verb itself needs its endings. Meet Lena, who will keep you company for the whole book:

DEUTSCH

Ich **heiße** Lena und **wohne** in Köln. Tom **wohnt** nebenan. Wir **gehen** zusammen zur Schule.

Am Morgen **trinke** ich Kakao. Tom **trinkt** immer Tee. „Tee **ist** gesund", **sagt** er. „Und du **trinkst** zu viel Kakao!"

Nach der Schule **spielen** wir Fußball. Tom **spielt** gut. Ich **bin** besser.

Am Abend **habe** ich Hausaufgaben. Mama **hilft** mir manchmal.

ENGLISH

My name is Lena and I live in Cologne. Tom lives next door. We go to school together.

In the morning I drink cocoa. Tom always drinks tea. "Tea is healthy," he says. "And you drink too much cocoa!"

After school we play football. Tom plays well. I am better.

In the evening I have homework. Mum sometimes helps me.

The endings

A German verb in the dictionary ends in -en: wohnen, trinken, spielen. That form is called the infinitive, and it is a verb without an owner. Take the -en off and you hold the stem, wohn-, and the stem takes a small ending that tells everyone who is acting:

Ich **wohne** in Köln.
I live in Cologne.

Trinkst du Tee?
Do you drink tea?

Tom **spielt** gut Fußball.
Tom plays football well.

Die Endungen • wohnen, to live

ich	wohn**e**	wir	wohn**en**
du	wohn**st**	ihr	wohn**t**
er/sie/es	wohn**t**	sie/Sie	wohn**en**
the signal	**-e, -st, -t**		**-en, -t, -en**

Two adjustments, both of them just the mouth being sensible. When the stem ends in -t or -d, an -e- slips in so you can say the word: du arbeitest, er arbeitet, ihr wartet. A small group does the same for the same reason, atmen, öffnen, rechnen, zeichnen: du atmest, er öffnet. And when the stem already ends in an s-sound, the du-form drops the -s of -st and keeps only -t: du heißt, du tanzt, du reist.

Wir **lernen** zusammen.

We study together.

Ihr **wartet** schon lange.

You have been waiting a long time.

Meine Eltern **arbeiten** viel.

My parents work a lot.

A handful of very common verbs change their stem vowel for du and er/sie/es: fahren, du fährst, essen, du isst, lesen, du liest, sprechen, du sprichst, sehen, du siehst. The endings stay exactly the same. Meet these verbs one at a time as they come; there is no need to memorise a list today.

Die zwei Unregelmäßigen • haben and sein

	HABEN	SEIN
ich	**habe**	**bin**
du	**hast**	**bist**
er/sie/es	**hat**	**ist**
wir	**haben**	**sind**
ihr	**habt**	**seid**
sie/Sie	**haben**	**sind**

Haben and sein

Two verbs refuse to follow the pattern, and of course they are the two you will use most. Haben, to have, and sein, to be, deserve a card of their own. Learn them cold now, because later chapters build the past tense on exactly these forms:

Ich **bin** vierzehn Jahre alt.

I am fourteen years old.

Bist du müde?

Are you tired?

Tom **ist** mein bester Freund.

Tom is my best friend.

Wir **haben** heute keine Schule.

We have no school today.

Habt ihr Hunger?

Are you hungry?

Meine Eltern **sind** nett.

My parents are nice.

Position two, the iron rule

Now the law itself. In an English sentence the subject comes first, out of habit. In a German sentence the verb comes second, out of law. The first position is a single free seat: the subject can sit there, but so can the time, the place, or anything you want to emphasise. Whatever takes the front seat, the verb does not move, and the subject simply slides in behind it:

Ich spiele heute Fußball. — subject in front

I am playing football today.

Heute spiele ich Fußball. — time in front, verb stays second

Today I am playing football.

Fußball spiele ich heute. — emphasis in front, verb stays second

Football is what I am playing today.

One seat, one idea. Heute fills the front seat alone, so ich must wait behind the verb. English speakers want to write *Today I play*, with two ideas before

the verb, and that is the single most common beginner mistake in German. Count to the verb in every sentence you write this week: one, two.

Am Montag **beginnt** die Schule um acht.

On Monday school starts at eight.

Um sieben **trinken** wir Kakao.

At seven we drink cocoa.

Nach der Schule **spielen** Tom und ich Fußball.

After school Tom and I play football.

Manchmal **hilft** Mama.

Sometimes Mum helps.

In Köln **wohnen** viele Menschen.

Many people live in Cologne.

Watch out

× ***Heute ich spiele Fußball.***

✓ ***Heute spiele ich Fußball.*** Today I am playing football.

Position two belongs to the verb. If heute takes the front seat, the subject moves behind the verb.

× ***Ich bin heiße Lena.***

✓ ***Ich heiße Lena.*** My name is Lena.

Heißen is a full verb and needs no bin. One clause, one conjugated verb.

Watch out (continued)

× *Er arbeitest in Berlin.*

✓ *Er arbeitet in Berlin.* He works in Berlin.

-st belongs to du alone. Er takes -t: er arbeitet.

× *Ich trinken Tee.*

✓ *Ich trinke Tee.* I drink tea.

-en is the ending for wir and sie. Ich takes -e.

That is the foundation. Endings tell you who acts, position two tells you where the action stands, and the front seat is yours to play with. The next chapter shows what happens when the verb leaves home: to ask a question, German simply moves it to position one.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Put in the ending.

1. Ich wohn_____ in Hamburg.
2. Du spiel_____ sehr gut.
3. Tom trink_____ keinen Kaffee.
4. Wir lern_____ Deutsch.
5. Ihr wart_____ auf den Bus.
6. Meine Eltern arbeit_____ in Köln.

Exercise 2. Haben or sein? Put in the right form.

1. Ich _____ vierzehn Jahre alt.
2. _____ du Geschwister?
3. Tom _____ mein Nachbar.
4. Wir _____ heute keine Zeit.

Übungen (continued)

5. _____ ihr müde?

6. Lena und Tom _____ Hunger.

Exercise 3. Begin with the underlined idea and build the sentence again.

Beispiel: Ich spiele heute Fußball. → Heute spiele ich Fußball.

1. Wir trinken um sieben Kakao.
2. Die Schule beginnt am Montag um acht.
3. Ich lerne am Abend Deutsch.
4. Tom spielt nach der Schule Fußball.

Exercise 4. Each sentence has one mistake in the verb form or the word order. Correct it; the subject stays the same.

1. Heute wir lernen Deutsch.
2. Du wohnt in Berlin.
3. Ich bin heiße Tom.
4. Am Morgen ich trinke Tee.

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Introduce yourself in five sentences: name, age, town, family, one thing you do every day. Start at least two sentences with something other than ich.

THE SENTENCE • CHAPTER 2

Fragen und Nein

Asking, and saying no

A1

Chapter 1 gave you the law: the verb lives in position two. This chapter shows the two most useful things German does with that law. To ask a question, it moves the verb one seat forward. To say no, it drops one of two small words into the sentence. Questions and negation, one short chapter, and you can already have an argument in German:

DEUTSCH

Das Telefon klingelt laut durch das ganze Haus. „Hallo, Lena! **Hast** du heute Zeit?“

„Nein, heute **nicht**. Oma ist da, und wir backen einen Apfelkuchen.“

„**Was** backt ihr? Apfelkuchen? Ich esse **keinen** Apfelkuchen.“

„**Warum** denn nicht?“

„Äpfel sind Obst. Obst ist gesund. Und gesund schmeckt **nicht**.“

Lena lacht. „**Trinkst** du auch **keinen** Kakao?“

„**Doch**! Kakao ist super.“

„Dann komm morgen. Es gibt Kakao, und du isst **keinen** Kuchen.“

ENGLISH

The telephone rings loudly through the whole house. “Hello, Lena! Do you have time today?”

“No, not today. Grandma is here, and we are baking an apple cake.”

“What are you baking? Apple cake? I don’t eat apple cake.”

“Why ever not?”

“Apples are fruit. Fruit is healthy. And healthy doesn’t taste good.”

Lena laughs. “Don’t you drink cocoa either?”

“Yes I do! Cocoa is great.”

“Then come tomorrow. There will be cocoa, and you won’t eat any cake.”

Questions without a question word

English builds questions with an extra word: *do* you drink tea? German has no *do* and needs none. It simply moves the verb from position two to position one, and the sentence becomes a question:

Du trinkst Tee. statement: verb second

You drink tea.

Trinkst du Tee? question: verb first

Do you drink tea?

Hast du heute Zeit? haben works the same way

Do you have time today?

Wohnst du in Köln?

Do you live in Cologne?

Spielt Tom Fußball?

Does Tom play football?

Seid ihr müde?

Are you tired?

Haben Sie Kinder?

Do you have children?

Ist das dein Bruder?

Is that your brother?

Questions with a question word

When you want information rather than a yes or a no, a question word takes the front seat, and the verb returns to its beloved position two. The law of chapter 1 holds even here:

Die W-Wörter • the question words

wer	who	**wann**	when
was	what	**warum**	why
wo	where	**wie**	how
woher	where from	**wohin**	where to

Wo wohnst du?

Where do you live?

Was backt ihr?

What are you baking?

Wann beginnt die Schule?

When does school start?

Warum trinkst du keinen Kaffee?

Why don't you drink coffee?

Wie heißt deine Katze?

What is your cat called?

Woher kommst du?

Where are you from?

Wer kommt heute Abend?

Who is coming this evening?

The last one repays a second look. Wer is not only the question word here, it is also the subject, so there is no separate subject to come after the verb. Position one is filled, position two holds the verb, and the sentence is complete. The law never bends; it simply has less to hold.

Nicht or kein?

One word of reassurance before this section, because it is about to use der, die and das without having explained them. All three simply mean *the*. German has three words where English has one, and chapter 8 is entirely about why. Until then, read whichever one appears as *the* and lose no sleep over it.

German has two words for negation, and the choice between them is mercifully mechanical. **Kein** negates a noun that has ein or no article at all; it simply replaces the ein and takes its endings: kein Problem, keine Zeit, and before a masculine object keinen, as in keinen Hunger. **Nicht** negates everything else: verbs, adjectives, and nouns that keep their definite article or a possessive like mein.

Ich esse **keinen** Kuchen.
I don't eat cake.

Wir haben **keine** Zeit.
We have no time.

Tom hat **kein** Fahrrad.
Tom does not have a bicycle.

Ich wohne **nicht** in Berlin.
I don't live in Berlin.

Der Tee ist **nicht** heiß.
The tea is not hot.

Das ist **nicht** mein Hund.
That is not my dog.

A rough rule of thumb for nicht's position: it stands directly before the thing it denies (nicht heiß, nicht in Berlin), and at the end when it denies the whole sentence (Ich komme nicht).

Doch, the little victory

German keeps a third answer word that English lost centuries ago. Ja answers a plain question. But when someone asks a negative question and you want to contradict it, the answer is doch:

Trinkst du Kakao? — Ja!
Do you drink cocoa? — Yes!

Trinkst du keinen Kakao? — Doch!
Don't you drink cocoa? — Yes, I do!

Kommst du nicht mit? — Doch, ich komme.
Aren't you coming along? — Yes, I am coming.

One syllable flips the whole question on its head. Learners who master doch early sound German years before their grammar catches up.

Watch out

× *Wo du wohnst?*

✓ *Wo wohnst du?* Where do you live?

After a question word the verb comes immediately, in position two. The subject waits behind it.

× *Ich habe nicht Zeit.*

✓ *Ich habe keine Zeit.* I have no time.

Zeit stands without an article, so its negation is kein, with the right ending: keine Zeit.

× *Das ist nicht ein Problem.*

✓ *Das ist kein Problem.* That is not a problem.

Nicht ein collapses into kein. Wherever you want to say *not a*, say kein.

× *Isst du keinen Fisch? — Ja, ich esse Fisch!*

✓ *Isst du keinen Fisch? — Doch, ich esse Fisch!* Don't you eat fish? — Yes, I do eat fish!

To contradict a negative question, German needs doch. A plain ja leaves everyone confused.

You can now state, ask and deny, which is most of what language does all day. The next chapter adds wanting, needing and being allowed to, and with the modal verbs the sentence grows its most famous feature: the bracket.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Turn the statement into a yes/no question.

Beispiel: Du wohnst in Köln. → Wohnst du in Köln?

1. Tom spielt Fußball.
2. Ihr habt heute Zeit.
3. Das ist dein Fahrrad.
4. Du trinkst Kaffee.
5. Sie sind müde. (Sie = polite you)

Exercise 2. Put in the question word: wer, was, wo, wann, wie or warum.

1. _____ heißt du?
2. _____ wohnt ihr?
3. _____ beginnt der Film?
4. _____ ist dein Lieblingsessen?
5. _____ kommt heute zu Besuch?
6. _____ isst du keinen Apfelkuchen?

Exercise 3. Nicht or kein? Mind the ending of kein.

1. Ich habe _____ Hunger.
2. Wir wohnen _____ in Hamburg.
3. Tom hat _____ Schwester.
4. Der Kaffee ist _____ gut.
5. Lena isst _____ Fleisch.
6. Das ist _____ meine Tasche.

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 4. Ja, nein or doch?

1. Bist du müde? — _____, sehr müde.
2. Hast du keine Geschwister? — _____, ich habe einen Bruder.
3. Trinkst du keinen Tee? — _____, ich trinke nur Wasser.
4. Kommst du nicht mit? — _____, natürlich komme ich mit!

Exercise 5. Your turn.

You meet a new classmate. Write five questions for them: two yes/no questions and three with different W-words.

THE SENTENCE • CHAPTER 3

Die Modalverben

The bracket, for the first time

A1

So far every sentence has had one verb. But most of what we say all day is not just doing; it is wanting to do, having to do, being allowed to do. German handles all of this with six little helper verbs, the modals, and in return it asks for one new piece of word order. That piece is the most German thing in this whole book, so watch the bold pairs closely:

DEUTSCH

Lena **will** am Samstag ins Kino **gehen**. Aber sie **darf** noch nicht. Sie **muss** zuerst ihre Hausaufgaben **machen**.

„**Kannst** du mir **helfen**?“, fragt sie Tom am Telefon.

„Klar, ich **kann** gut Mathe. Aber ich **muss** um sechs zu Hause **sein**. Mama sagt, ich **soll** den Tisch **decken**.“

Um fünf ist alles fertig. „Wir **können** jetzt **gehen**! **Möchtest** du Popcorn?“

„Ja, klar! Aber im Kino **dürfen** wir nicht laut **sprechen**“, sagt Tom. „Der Film **soll** sehr lustig **sein**.“

ENGLISH

Lena wants to go to the cinema on Saturday. But she is not allowed to yet. First she has to do her homework.

“Can you help me?” she asks Tom on the phone.

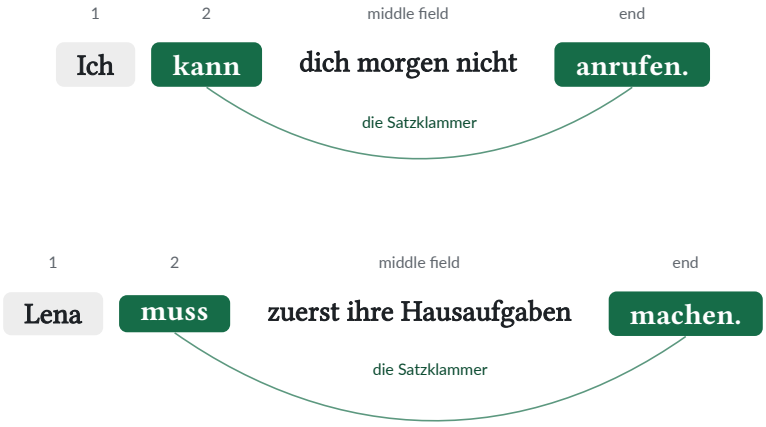
“Sure, I’m good at maths. But I have to be home at six. Mum says I am supposed to lay the table.”

At five everything is finished. “We can go now! Would you like popcorn?”

“Yes, of course! But we are not allowed to talk loudly in the cinema,” says Tom. “The film is supposed to be very funny.”

Two verbs, one shape

A modal sentence contains two verbs, and German gives each one a fixed home. The modal is conjugated, so it takes position two, the verb’s lawful seat. Its partner stays in the infinitive, the dictionary form, and moves to the very end of the sentence:



Look at what the sentence has become: two verb parts, one at position two and one at the end, holding everything else between them like two hands. German has a name for this shape, die Satzklammer, the sentence bracket, and you will meet it again and again in this book. Get used to reading the bracket now: when you hear kann, your ear should already be waiting for the infinitive at the end.

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

I can't come today.

Tom **muss** um sechs zu Hause **sein**.

Tom has to be home at six.

Wir **wollen** am Samstag ins Kino **gehen**.

We want to go to the cinema on Saturday.

Darf ich hier **sitzen**?

May I sit here?

Du **sollst** deiner Oma **helfen**.

You are supposed to help your grandma.

Möchtet ihr etwas **trinken**?

Would you like something to drink?

The six modals

Each modal adds one flavour of meaning to the sentence, and each is worth knowing precisely, because two of them are famous false friends of English. One word on the sixth column. German's sixth modal is really mögen, which on its own means *to like*: Ich mag Kuchen. The form in the card is möchten, *would like*, which is a polite version of mögen rather than a separate verb. It is the form you will actually need in a bakery, so it earns the place here.

Two warnings about meaning, both aimed straight at English speakers. First, German will means *wants to*, never *will*: Ich will schlafen is *I want to sleep*, not a promise about the future. Second, möchte is the polite little sibling of wollen. In a café, ich will einen Kaffee sounds like a toddler; ich möchte einen Kaffee sounds like a customer.

Not allowed, or not necessary?

Negation splits the modals in a way English hides. English *must not* forbids, but German muss nicht merely releases: it means *don't have to*. To forbid, German uses darf nicht:

Die Modalverben • all six, all persons

	KÖNNEN	MÜSSEN	WOLLEN	DÜRFEN	SOLLEN	MÖCHTEN
ich	**kann**	**muss**	**will**	**darf**	**soll**	**möchte**
du	kannst	musst	willst	darfst	sollst	möchtest
er/sie/es	**kann**	**muss**	**will**	**darf**	**soll**	**möchte**
wir	können	müssen	wollen	dürfen	sollen	möchten
ihr	könnt	müsst	wollt	dürft	sollt	möchtet
sie/Sie	können	müssen	wollen	dürfen	sollen	möchten
	can	must	want to	may	supposed to	would like

The surprise sits in the bold rows: ich and er share one form. For the five true modals it carries no ending at all, ich kann, er kann, so if you catch yourself writing er kannt, come back to this card. Möchte keeps its -e in both, because it is not really a present tense at all.

Du **musst nicht** kommen.

You don't have to come.

Du **darfst nicht** kommen.

You are not allowed to come.

Ihr **müsst** morgen **nicht** früh aufstehen.

You don't have to get up early tomorrow.

Man **darf** hier **nicht** rauchen.

Smoking is not allowed here.

Read the first pair twice; it is the same English shape with opposite German meanings, and mixing them up can make you forbid a guest to visit when you meant to say the visit is optional.

Watch out

× ***Er will zu kommen.***
✓ ***Er will kommen.*** He wants to come.
English needs *to* before the infinitive; German modals take the bare infinitive, with no zu.

× ***Ich kann schwimmen gut.***
✓ ***Ich kann gut schwimmen.*** I can swim well.
The infinitive closes the bracket. Everything else, including gut, lives inside it.

× ***Er kannt nicht kommen.***
✓ ***Er kann nicht kommen.*** He can't come.
Modals take no -t for er: ich kann, er kann. The two forms are identical.

× ***Du musst hier nicht rauchen.*** (meant as a ban)
✓ ***Du darfst hier nicht rauchen.*** You are not allowed to smoke here.
Muss nicht means *don't have to.* A ban needs darf nicht.

The bracket you learned today is not a rule about modals. It is the skeleton of the German sentence, and the next two chapters will show it twice more: first with verbs that split in half, then with the past tense itself. Once you see all three, you will read German sentences the way Germans do, holding the beginning in one hand and waiting calmly for the end.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Put in the right form of the modal in brackets.

1. Ich _____ gut schwimmen. (können)
2. _____ du mir helfen? (können)
3. Tom _____ um sechs zu Hause sein. (müssen)
4. Man _____ hier nicht laut sprechen. (dürfen)
5. Ihr _____ leise sein. (sollen)
6. Oma _____ einen Tee. (möchten)

Exercise 2. Which modal fits: können, müssen, dürfen or wollen?

1. Lena hat keine Zeit. Sie _____ Hausaufgaben machen.
2. Tom ist gut in Mathe. Er _____ Lena helfen.
3. Es ist verboten: Im Kino _____ man nicht telefonieren.
4. Ich _____ am Samstag unbedingt ins Kino gehen. Der Film ist super!

Exercise 3. Build the sentence. Mind the bracket.

Beispiel: ich / heute / nicht / kommen / können → Ich kann heute nicht kommen.

1. wir / am Samstag / ins Kino / gehen / wollen
2. du / mir / bitte / helfen / können / ?
3. Tom / um sechs / zu Hause / sein / müssen
4. man / hier / nicht / rauchen / dürfen

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 4. **Darf nicht or muss nicht? Put the two words into the two gaps.**

1. Hier ist eine Schule. Autos _____ hier _____ schnell fahren.
2. Morgen ist Sonntag. Ich _____ _____ früh aufstehen.
3. Das Museum ist gratis. Du _____ _____ bezahlen.
4. Der Film ist ab 16. Wir _____ ihn _____ sehen.

Exercise 5. **Your turn.**

Write five sentences about your week: one thing you can do, one you must do, one you want to do, one you are not allowed to do, and one you don't have to do.

THE SENTENCE • CHAPTER 4

Trennbare Verben

The verb that splits in two

A1

Sooner or later every learner has this small crisis. You look up a verb and the dictionary says aufstehen, to get up. Then you meet it in a sentence and it has broken into two pieces: Lena steht um sieben auf. Nobody warned you that German verbs can split. This chapter is the warning, and the good news is that the two pieces always land in the same two places. Watch the bold pairs:

DEUTSCH

Am Samstag **steht** Lena früh **auf**. Sie **macht** das Fenster **auf** und **ruft** Tom **an**.

„Ich **kaufe** heute auf dem Markt **ein**. **Kommst** du **mit**?“

„Ja, gern. **Holst** du mich **ab**?“

„Klar. Der Markt **macht** um neun **auf**. Ich **hole** dich um halb neun **ab**.“

Um halb neun **fahren** die beiden **los**. Sie **kaufen** Obst, Brot und Käse **ein**. Danach **lädt** Tom Lena zum Kaffee **ein**.

Am Abend **sieht** Lena ein bisschen **fern**. Um zehn **schläft** sie **ein**.

ENGLISH

On Saturday Lena gets up early. She opens the window and rings Tom.

"I am doing the shopping at the market today. Are you coming along?"

"Yes, I'd love to. Will you pick me up?"

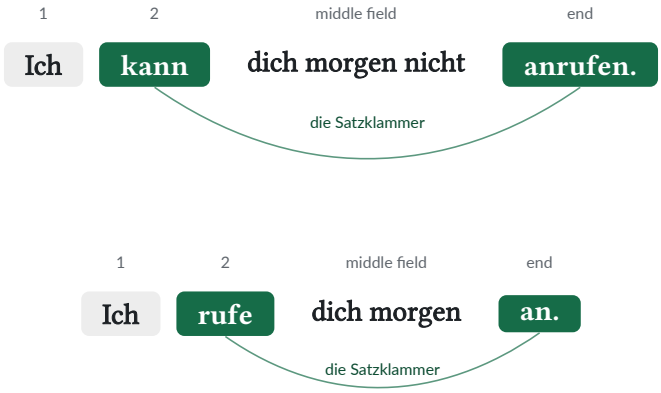
"Of course. The market opens at nine. I will pick you up at half past eight."

At half past eight the two set off. They buy fruit, bread and cheese. Afterwards Tom invites Lena for a coffee.

In the evening Lena watches a bit of television. At ten she falls asleep.

The bracket, a second time

In chapter 3 the modal verb claimed position two and sent its partner to the very end of the sentence. Keep that picture in mind and look at what a separable verb does:



The shape is identical. The conjugated part sits in position two, a piece that belongs to it waits at the very end, and everything else is held between them. With a modal, the two pieces are two words. With a separable verb, they are two halves of one word. The stem conjugates in position two, and the prefix flies to the end. The prefix behaves exactly like the modal's infinitive, only smaller.

Lena **steht** um sieben **auf**.

Lena gets up at seven.

Der Zug **fährt** um acht **ab**.

The train leaves at eight.

Wir **kaufen** am Samstag **ein**.

We do the shopping on Saturday.

Ich **rufe** dich heute Abend **an**.

I will ring you this evening.

Machst du bitte die Tür **zu**?

Will you close the door, please?

Der Film **fängt** um acht **an**.

The film starts at eight.

Notice the last two examples. In questions the rule does not bend: the prefix still waits at the very end, behind everything else. Wherever the sentence goes, its last word is the prefix.

The prefixes and their flavours

Why does German do this? Because the prefix is not decoration; it is the half that carries the meaning. Machen on its own is just *to make or do*. Give it a prefix and it becomes a new verb: aufmachen, to open, zumachen, to close, mitmachen, to join in. One stem, a handful of prefixes, a whole family of verbs. Learn the flavour of each prefix once and new verbs start explaining themselves:

This also explains something charming about German. Because the prefix comes last, the full meaning of the sentence arrives only with the final word. Ich mache das Fenster … could still end in auf or zu. Germans genuinely listen to the end of each other's sentences. Now you know why.

Die Präfixe • the flavours to know

PREFIX	FLAVOUR	EXAMPLE
ab-	off, away	**abfahren** • to depart
an-	at, on	**anrufen** • to ring
auf-	up, open	**aufstehen** • to get up
aus-	out	**ausgehen** • to go out
ein-	in, into	**einkaufen** • to shop
mit-	along	**mitkommen** • to come along
vor-	ahead, aloud	**vorlesen** • to read aloud
zu-	shut	**zumachen** • to close
zurück-	back	**zurückkommen** • to come back
weg-	away	**wegfahren** • to go away

The prefixes that never let go

Not every prefix separates. A small set of unstressed prefixes, be-, ver-, er-, ent-, emp-, ge-, miss- and zer-, are glued to their verb and never break off, no matter what the sentence does:

Ich **verstehe** dich gut.

I understand you well.

Er **bezahlt** die Rechnung.

He pays the bill.

Sie **erzählt** eine Geschichte.

She tells a story.

Wir **besuchen** am Sonntag unsere Oma.

We are visiting our grandma on Sunday.

Ich **bekomme** ein Paket.

I am getting a parcel.

Your ear can tell the two kinds apart before your head can. Separable prefixes carry the stress: AUFstehen, ANrufen, EINkaufen. The glued prefixes never do: verSTEhen, beZAHlen, erZÄHlen. Say a new verb out loud, listen to where the weight falls, and you will place its prefix correctly almost every time. Hold on to this distinction; the next chapter pays it off in full.

When the verb becomes whole again

One question remains. What happens when a separable verb meets a modal, which also wants to send something to the end? Then the verb simply becomes whole again. The modal takes position two, the entire infinitive goes to the end, and the prefix rejoins its stem there:

Ich stehe um sechs auf. — main sentence: the prefix breaks off

I get up at six.

Ich muss um sechs aufstehen. — with a modal: one word again, at the end

I have to get up at six.

Willst du heute Abend fernsehen? question: prefix still last

Do you want to watch television tonight?

The bracket can only close once. If the modal closes it with an infinitive, the prefix travels inside that infinitive, and nothing is left over:

Ich muss morgen früh **aufstehen**.

I have to get up early tomorrow.

Kannst du bitte das Fenster **aufmachen**?

Can you open the window, please?

Wir wollen auf dem Markt **einkaufen**.

We want to shop at the market.

Tom möchte heute nicht **ausgehen**.

Tom does not want to go out today.

Darf ich **mitkommen**?

May I come along?

Watch out

× *Ich aufstehe um sieben.*

✓ *Ich stehe um sieben auf.* I get up at seven.

In a main sentence the prefix must break off: stem in position two, prefix at the end.

× *Der Zug fährt ab um acht.*

✓ *Der Zug fährt um acht ab.* The train leaves at eight.

The prefix goes to the *very* end, behind the time, the place and everything else.

Watch out (continued)

× *Ich muss früh auf stehen.*

✓ *Ich muss früh aufstehen.* I have to get up early.

After a modal the verb is one word again. Never write the rejoined verb as two words.

× *Er ruft an seine Mutter.*

✓ *Er ruft seine Mutter an.* He rings his mother.

The an of anrufen is a prefix, not a preposition. It takes no noun of its own and waits at the end.

From now on, never learn a verb without its behaviour. Your notebook should say aufstehen (steht … auf) and verstehen (versteht), so that every new verb arrives with its sentence shape attached. The next chapter makes this habit pay twice: there the Perfekt slips its ge- exactly into the seam where the separable verbs break.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Build the sentence. Split the verb if it separates.

Beispiel: (aufstehen) ich / um sieben → Ich stehe um sieben auf.

1. (aufmachen) Lena / das Fenster
2. (anrufen) er / seine Oma
3. (einkaufen) wir / am Samstag
4. (fernsehen) die Kinder / am Abend
5. (zumachen) du / bitte / die Tür / ?

Exercise 2. Separable or glued? Sort the verbs into two lists.

aufstehen verstehen einkaufen bezahlen mitkommen erzählen abfahren besuchen

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 3. Rewrite the sentence with the modal in brackets.

Beispiel: Ich stehe früh auf. (müssen) → Ich muss früh aufstehen.

1. Ich kaufe heute ein. (wollen)
2. Tom kommt mit. (dürfen)
3. Wir machen das Fenster auf. (können)
4. Lena sieht am Abend fern. (möchten)

Exercise 4. Build the sentence. Start with the first word given.

1. wann / du / aufstehen / ?
2. wann / der Film / anfangen / ?
3. der Zug / um acht / abfahren
4. ich / dich / morgen / anrufen

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Describe your Saturday in five sentences. Use five different separable verbs from this chapter and put every prefix in its right place.



THE SENTENCE • CHAPTER 5

Das Perfekt

The bracket, a third time

A1

You now have everything you need to talk about yesterday. That may be a surprise, because the Perfekt is a past tense and this is still the part of the book about word order. But in German the Perfekt is a word-order phenomenon before it is anything else, and you have already met its shape twice. Read the story first and watch the pairs of bold words hold every sentence like a pair of hands:

DEUTSCH

Gestern **hat** Lena lange **geschlafen**. Um zehn **ist** sie **aufgestanden**, **hat gefrühstückt** und **hat** Tom **angerufen**.

„Was **hast** du gestern **gemacht**?“, **hat** sie **gefragt**.

„Ich **habe gearbeitet**“, **hat** Tom **gesagt**. „Und du?“

„Ich **bin** an den See **gefahren**. Ich **habe** dort **gelesen** und ein Eis **gegessen**. Dann **ist** ein Hund **gekommen** und **hat** mein Brot **gefressen**.“

Tom **hat gelacht**. „Und dann?“

„Dann **bin** ich nach Hause **gegangen**. Ich **habe** eine Pizza **bestellt** und **bin** um neun **eingeschlafen**.“

ENGLISH

Yesterday Lena slept for a long time. At ten she got up, had breakfast and rang Tom.

“What did you do yesterday?” she asked.

“I worked,” said Tom. “And you?”

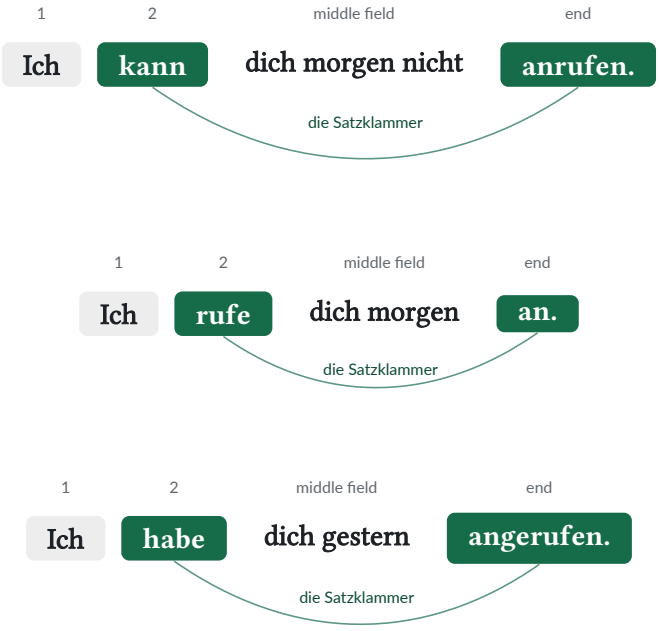
“I went to the lake. I read there and ate an ice cream. Then a dog came along and ate my bread.”

Tom laughed. “And then?”

“Then I went home. I ordered a pizza and fell asleep at nine.”

The pattern you already know

In chapter 3 the modal verb took position two and sent its partner to the end of the sentence. In chapter 4 the separable prefix broke off and went to the same place. Look at what the Perfekt does:



Three different grammar topics, one shape. The conjugated verb sits in position two, something belonging to it waits at the very end, and the whole rest of the sentence is held between them. German calls this the Satzklammer, the sentence bracket, and once you can see it you have seen the organising idea of the entire language. The Perfekt is simply the third thing that uses it.

So the recipe is short. Take a helping verb, haben or sein, and put it in position two, where the conjugated verb always goes. Take the past participle, the Partizip II, and put it at the very end. Everything else goes in between. The helping verb carries the person, which is why it is the only part that changes for ich, du, er. The participle carries the meaning, which is why it never changes at all: ich habe gemacht, du hast gemacht, wir haben gemacht.

Die Helfer • haben and sein in the present

	HABEN	SEIN
ich	**habe**	**bin**
du	**hast**	**bist**
er/sie/es	**hat**	**ist**
wir	**haben**	**sind**
ihr	**habt**	**seid**
sie/Sie	**haben**	**sind**

These are simply the present-tense forms you learned in chapter 1. The Perfekt asks nothing new of them.

The two helpers are worth knowing cold, because every Perfekt sentence you will ever say starts with one of them:

The rest of the chapter answers the only two questions the Perfekt ever asks. How do I build the participle? And which helper do I take? Both have short answers.

Building the Partizip II

The basic participle is built from three parts: the prefix ge- at the front, the verb's stem in the middle, and an ending at the back. Which ending you get depends on which of two families the verb belongs to.

Most German verbs are **weak**: the large, predictable family. A weak verb keeps its stem completely unchanged and takes the ending -t, so if you know the infinitive you already know the participle:

kaufen ge + kauf + t → **gekauft**

Ich habe ein Eis **gekauft**.
I bought an ice cream.

Wir haben zwei Stunden Fußball **gespielt**.
We played football for two hours.

Sie hat gestern viel **gelernt**.
She learned a lot yesterday.

Tom hat laut **gelacht**.
Tom laughed loudly.

Ich habe an der Haltestelle **gewartet**.
I waited at the bus stop.

Wir haben lange in Köln **gewohnt**.
We lived in Cologne for a long time.

When the stem already ends in -t or -d, an extra -e- slips in so the word stays pronounceable: arbeiten gives gearbeitet, warten gives gewartet, and reden gives geredet.

The second family is the **strong** verbs: small, and worth memorising. A strong verb takes -en instead of -t, and most strong verbs change their stem vowel on the way:

trinken ge + trunk + en → **getrunken**

Ich habe ein Buch **gelesen**.

I read a book.

Er hat einen Brief **geschrieben**.

He wrote a letter.

Wir haben Kaffee **getrunken**.

We drank coffee.

Sie hat den Schlüssel **gefunden**.

She found the key.

Hast du mit ihm **gesprochen**?

Did you speak to him?

Ich habe zu viel **gegessen**.

I ate too much.

There are perhaps two hundred strong verbs in the language, and you will meet about sixty. They include the most common verbs of all, so the effort pays back immediately. Here are the ones worth knowing cold from day one:

A small third group borrows from both families: a strong-looking vowel change, but the weak -t ending. Only a handful of these mixed verbs matter at this level, so learn them as a short list and be done with it: denken → gedacht, bringen → gebracht, kennen → gekannt, wissen → gewusst, rennen → gerannt.

Ich habe oft an dich **gedacht**.

I often thought of you.

Partizip II • strong participles to know cold

lesen → **gelesen**	read	nehmen → **genommen**	taken
schreiben → **geschrieben**	written	sprechen → **gesprochen**	spoken
trinken → **getrunken**	drunk	helfen → **geholfen**	helped
finden → **gefunden**	found	essen → **gegessen**	eaten
sehen → **gesehen**	seen	schlafen → **geschlafen**	slept
geben → **gegeben**	given	gehen → **gegangen**	gone

Sie hat uns einen Kuchen **gebracht**.

She brought us a cake.

Wir haben ihn gut **gekannt**.

We knew him well.

Das habe ich nicht **gewusst**.

I did not know that.

Der Hund ist zum Tor **gerannt**.

The dog ran to the gate.

Where the ge- goes, and where it disappears

This is where chapter 4 pays off. You already know that some prefixes break off the verb and some never do, and that single distinction decides what happens to the ge-.

With a **separable** verb the prefix stays attached in the participle, and the ge- slots in behind it, right at the seam where the verb normally breaks:

aufstehen auf + ge + stand + en → **aufgestanden**

Ich bin um sechs **aufgestanden**.

I got up at six.

Sie hat mich gestern **angerufen**.

She rang me yesterday.

Wir haben auf dem Markt **eingekauft**.

We did the shopping at the market.

Der Zug ist pünktlich **angekommen**.

The train arrived on time.

Ich habe die Tür **zugemacht**.

I closed the door.

With an **inseparable** verb, one beginning with be-, ver-, er-, ent-, emp-, ge-, miss- or zer-, the ge- disappears entirely. The intuition: these prefixes are glued to their verb so tightly that there is no seam for the ge- to slip into.

Wir haben unsere Oma **besucht**.

We visited our grandma.

Er hat die Frage nicht **verstanden**.

He did not understand the question.

Sie hat mir eine Geschichte **erzählt**.

She told me a story.

Ich habe ein Paket **bekommen**.

I received a parcel.

Wer hat das Fenster **zerbrochen**?

Who broke the window?

One last group drops the ge- for a different reason. Verbs built with the borrowed ending -ieren, studieren, telefonieren, passieren, never take it. They simply end in -t. The test is whether -ieren is an ending glued onto a foreign root, not merely whether the word looks as though it ends that way: frieren and verlieren are old German verbs that happen to rhyme, and they behave normally, gefroren and verloren.

Sie hat in München Medizin **studiert**.

She studied medicine in Munich.

Ich habe eine Stunde mit meiner Mutter **telefoniert**.

I was on the phone to my mother for an hour.

Was ist hier **passiert**?

What happened here?

That last example already whispers the chapter's final question: ist passiert, not hat passiert. Time to answer it.

Haben or sein?

Most verbs take haben, and when in doubt, haben is the safe guess. A verb takes sein only when its subject travels or transforms. Two pictures

cover almost every case. First, **movement from A to B**: going, driving, flying, coming, the subject ends up somewhere else. Second, **change of state**: falling asleep, waking up, becoming something, the subject ends up someone else. Notice that in both pictures nothing is being done to anything. The subject itself makes the journey, and sein marks exactly that.

That last observation is the sharper half of the rule, so keep it. Sein needs the subject to be the one travelling, with no object in the sentence. Give the same verb an object and it is doing something to that object instead, so it goes back to haben: Ich **bin** nach Köln gefahren, but Ich **habe** das Auto gefahren. Travel alone, sein; take something with you, haben.

Ich **bin** nach Hause **gegangen**.
I went home.

Wir **sind** nach Italien **geflogen**.
We flew to Italy.

Der Bus **ist** schon **abgefahren**.
The bus has already left.

Sie **ist** erst um Mitternacht **eingeschlafen**.
She did not fall asleep until midnight.

Es **ist** kalt **geworden**.
It has turned cold.

Three verbs join the sein family by membership rather than by meaning, and they are best learned as a tiny club: sein itself (ich bin gewesen), bleiben (ich bin geblieben) and passieren (es ist passiert). Staying put is the

opposite of travelling, yet bleiben takes sein anyway. Do not look for logic here. Just pay the membership fee once.

Watch out

× *Ich habe nach Hause gegangen.*
✓ *Ich bin nach Hause gegangen.* I went home.
Movement from A to B takes sein. English uses *have* everywhere, so this is the mistake English speakers make longest.

× *Er hat gekauft ein neues Handy.*
✓ *Er hat ein neues Handy gekauft.* He bought a new phone.
The participle goes to the very end, and everything else lives inside the bracket. English word order is the false friend here.

× *Ich habe die Frage nicht geverstanden.*
✓ *Ich habe die Frage nicht verstanden.* I did not understand the question.
verstehen is inseparable, so there is no seam for ge-: the participle is bare verstanden.

× *Sie hat Deutsch an der Uni gestudiert.*
✓ *Sie hat Deutsch an der Uni studiert.* She studied German at university.
Verbs in -ieren never take ge-: studiert, telefoniert, passiert.

One habit will carry you further than any rule in this chapter: never learn a German verb alone again. Learn fahren, ist gefahren and lesen, hat gelesen as single breaths, the way you learned *go, went, gone.* Do that, and the Perfekt will never cost you a moment's thought in conversation. That matters, because spoken German tells almost all of its past in the Perfekt.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Haben or sein? Put in the right helper.

1. Wir _____ eine Pizza gegessen.
2. Lena _____ um acht aufgestanden.
3. _____ du gut geschlafen?
4. Der Zug _____ pünktlich angekommen.
5. Ich _____ zwei Stunden gewartet.
6. Die Kinder _____ zu Hause geblieben.

Exercise 2. Build the participle.

Beispiel: kaufen → gekauft.

1. arbeiten _____
2. lesen _____
3. anrufen _____
4. verstehen _____
5. studieren _____
6. einschlafen _____

Exercise 3. Put the sentence into the Perfekt.

Beispiel: Ich mache meine Hausaufgaben. → Ich habe meine Hausaufgaben gemacht.

1. Tom fährt nach Berlin.
2. Wir sehen einen Film.
3. Lena steht um sieben auf.
4. Er bestellt eine Suppe.
5. Ich schreibe meiner Oma eine Karte.

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 4. **Build the sentence. Start with the first word given.**

1. gestern / ich / kaufen / ein Buch
2. um zehn / er / einschlafen
3. am Samstag / wir / besuchen / unsere Freunde
4. wann / du / ankommen / ?

Exercise 5. **Your turn.**

What did you do yesterday? Write six sentences in the Perfekt about your day, from getting up to falling asleep. Use sein at least twice and one separable verb.

THE SENTENCE • CHAPTER 6

Der Imperativ

Sentences that start with the verb

A1

You already moved the verb to position one to ask a question. Move it there without asking anything, and you are giving an instruction. That is the whole imperative: verb first, and for one form, a small surgery on the ending. Oma, who gives more instructions than anyone else in this book, will demonstrate:

DEUTSCH

Oma ruft aus der Küche: „**Komm**, Lena! Wir backen Brot. **Wasch** deine Hände und **hol** das Mehl."

„**Gib** mir bitte die Butter. Danke! Jetzt **warte** einen Moment. Der Ofen ist noch nicht heiß."

Es klingelt. Tom und sein Vater stehen vor der Tür. „**Kommt** rein!", ruft Oma. „Das Brot ist gleich fertig."

„**Probieren Sie** mal, Herr Weber!"

„Mmh, wunderbar!“

„**Sei** nicht so ungeduldig, Tom! Du bekommst auch ein Stück.“

ENGLISH

Grandma calls from the kitchen: “Come here, Lena! We are baking bread. Wash your hands and fetch the flour.”

“Give me the butter, please. Thank you! Now wait a moment. The oven is not hot yet.”

The doorbell rings. Tom and his father are standing at the door. “Come in!” calls Grandma. “The bread is nearly ready.”

“Do try some, Herr Weber!”

“Mmm, wonderful!”

“Don’t be so impatient, Tom! You’ll get a piece too.”

The du-form: cut the ending

The imperative for one person you know well is the barest verb in German: take the du-form and cut away both the du and the -st. Du kommst becomes Komm!, du holst becomes Hol!, du wartest becomes Warte!, keeping its comfortable -e. That -e comes back wherever chapter 1 needed it, so du öffnest gives Öffne! and du atmest gives Atme!. And where the du-form had only -t to begin with, that -t goes too: du liest gives Lies!, du tanzt gives Tanz!.

One frequent verb has to be learned rather than cut. Haben gives Hab keine Angst!, built on the stem hab- that du hast has worn away. Sein leaves the system altogether, and the card below has its forms.

The vowel-changers from chapter 1 split into two camps here. The e-changers keep their change: du gibst → Gib!, du liest → Lies!, du isst → Iss!, du sprichst → Sprich!. (In liest and isst only the -t drops, because the s belongs to the stem.) The umlaut verbs drop their change: du fährst → Fahr!, du schläfst → Schlaf!. If the dot came with the ending, the dot leaves with the ending.

Komm bitte in die Küche!

Please come into the kitchen!

Wasch deine Hände!

Wash your hands!

Gib mir bitte die Butter!

Give me the butter, please!

Warte einen Moment!

Wait a moment!

Fahr langsam!

Drive slowly!

Lies die Aufgabe noch einmal!

Read the task once more!

Der Imperativ • all four forms

TO	RECIPE	EXAMPLE
du	stem, no -st	**Komm! Gib! Warte!**
ihr	ihr-form, drop ihr	**Kommt! Gebt! Wartet!**
Sie	verb + Sie	**Kommen Sie! Geben Sie!**
wir	verb + wir	**Gehen wir! Backen wir!**
sein	irregular	**Sei! Seid! Seien Sie! Seien wir!**

The wir-form is English *let's*: Gehen wir! Let's go!

The other three forms

Good news: the du-form was the only one that needed surgery. The other three are verbs you already own, with the pronoun either dropped or flipped:

Kommt rein, ihr zwei!

Come in, you two!

Macht bitte die Bücher auf!

Open your books, please!

Probieren Sie mal, Herr Weber!

Do try some, Herr Weber!

Entschuldigen Sie, wo ist der Bahnhof?

Excuse me, where is the station?

Gehen wir nach Hause!

Let's go home!

Sei bitte leise!

Please be quiet!

Notice Macht die Bücher auf! The separable prefix from chapter 4 obeys the imperative too: the verb jumps to the front, and the prefix still waits at the very end. Mach die Tür zu! Steh auf! Ruf mich an! The bracket survives even in a two-word command.

Softening the blow

A bare imperative can sound like a drill sergeant, so German cushions it with three little words. Bitte makes it polite. Mal makes it casual, more an invitation than an order. Doch adds warmth or gentle impatience. They stack:

Mach **bitte** das Fenster zu.

Please close the window.

Komm **doch mal** vorbei!

Do drop by some time!

Probier **mal**!

Have a taste!

Setzen Sie sich **doch bitte**.

Do please sit down.

Watch out

× *Gehst nach Hause!*

✓ *Geh nach Hause!* Go home!

The du-imperative cuts the -st completely: geh, komm, mach.

× *Fähr langsam!*

✓ *Fahr langsam!* Drive slowly!

The umlaut belonged to du fährst and leaves with it. Only the e-changers keep their change: Gib! Lies! Iss!

× *Gebst mir das Buch!*

✓ *Gib mir das Buch!* Give me the book!

Geben changes e to i and drops the ending: du gibst → Gib!

× *Sein Sie bitte leise!*

✓ *Seien Sie bitte leise!* Please be quiet!

Sein has its own imperative: Sei! Seid! Seien Sie!

You now command the sentence's front row: verb second for statements, verb first for questions and commands. The next chapter completes the picture with the one place the verb has not yet been: the very end.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Make the du-imperative.

Beispiel: kommen → Komm!

1. holen 2. warten 3. geben 4. fahren 5. lesen 6. schlafen

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 2. Say it to the group (ihr) and to a stranger (Sie).

Beispiel: kommen → Kommt! / Kommen Sie!

1. warten
2. leise sein
3. das Fenster zumachen
4. langsam sprechen

Exercise 3. Rewrite as a polite request with bitte or mal.

1. Gib mir das Salz!
2. Machen Sie die Tür zu!
3. Wartet!
4. Hilf mir!

Exercise 4. Separable verbs: put the command together.

Beispiel: (aufstehen, du) → Steh auf!

1. (aufmachen, du) _____ das Fenster _____!
2. (mitkommen, ihr) _____ bitte _____!
3. (anrufen, du) _____ mich morgen _____!
4. (zumachen, Sie) _____ Sie bitte die Tür _____!

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Write your favourite simple recipe in five imperative steps (du-form). Use at least one separable verb and one bitte or mal.

THE SENTENCE • CHAPTER 7

Verbinden und Nebensatz

Joining, and the verb's last home

A2

The verb has lived in position two, and it has visited position one. This chapter shows its third and final home. But it opens with the opposite lesson, because the two only make sense side by side. German joins sentences in two ways. Five small words glue two sentences together and leave both exactly as they were. Four others fold one sentence into the other, and inside that folded clause the verb walks all the way to the end. Learn which is which and you have finished the geography of the German sentence; there is nowhere else for the verb to go.

DEUTSCH

Montagmorgen. Tom kommt zu spät zur Schule und schleicht leise ins Klassenzimmer. Es hilft nichts.

„Warum kommst du zu spät?", fragt die Lehrerin.

„Ich komme zu spät, **weil der Bus nicht gekommen ist**."

„Und warum ist der Bus nicht gekommen?“

„Ich glaube, **dass der Fahrer krank ist**. Ich bin gelaufen, **aber** der Weg ist weit **und** es hat geregnet.“

„Kommst du morgen pünktlich **oder** wieder zu spät?“

Die Lehrerin lacht. „**Wenn du morgen wieder zu spät kommst**, rufe ich deine Eltern an.“

„Ich verstehe“, sagt Tom. „Aber ich weiß nicht, **ob der Bus morgen kommt**.“

Lena flüstert: „Er lügt nicht, **denn** der Bus kommt heute nicht, **sondern** erst morgen.“

ENGLISH

Monday morning. Tom is late for school and creeps quietly into the classroom. It does no good.

“Why are you late?” asks the teacher.

“I’m late because the bus didn’t come.”

“And why didn’t the bus come?”

“I think that the driver is ill. I walked, but the way is long, and it rained.”

“Will you come on time tomorrow, or late again?”

The teacher laughs. “If you are late again tomorrow, I will ring your parents.”

“I understand,” says Tom. “But I don’t know whether the bus will come tomorrow.”

Lena whispers: “He isn’t lying, because the bus isn’t coming today, but only tomorrow.”

Five joiners that change nothing

Start with the easy half. Five little words, und, aber, oder, denn and sondern, glue two full sentences into one and leave each of them untouched. Watch what happens to the second sentence when denn arrives: nothing at all.

Ich bleibe zu Hause. Es regnet. — two plain sentences

I am staying at home. It is raining.

Ich bleibe zu Hause, denn es regnet. — denn joins; regnet still stands second

I am staying at home, because it is raining.

Count the positions in the second half. Es is one, regnet is two, exactly as chapter 1 laid down. The joiner itself is not counted. It stands in front of the sentence in a place of its own, outside the counting, and from there it cannot disturb anything. That single fact is the whole of this section.

Two of the five need a word of warning, and both are traps built specially for English speakers. Sondern is not a second word for *but*. It only ever appears after a negative, and its job is to correct: first you deny something, then you say what is true instead. If the first half has no nicht or kein in it, the word you want is aber.

Tom ist müde, **aber** er kommt mit.

Tom is tired, but he is coming along.

Das ist kein Hund, **sondern** ein Wolf.

That is not a dog, but a wolf.

Die fünf Verbinder • they join, and nothing moves

WORD	MEANS	EXAMPLE
und	and	Lena liest und Bello schläft.
oder	or	Kommst du mit oder bleibst du?
aber	but	Tom ist müde, aber er kommt mit.
denn	because, for	Ich bleibe hier, denn es regnet.
sondern	but rather	Das ist kein Hund, sondern ein Wolf.

Aber, denn and sondern always take a comma. Before und and oder joining two main clauses the comma is optional, and this book leaves it out.

Wir fahren nicht heute, **sondern** morgen.

We are going not today, but tomorrow.

Lena liest ein Buch **und** Bello schläft unter dem Tisch.

Lena is reading a book and Bello is sleeping under the table.

Kommst du mit **oder** bleibst du zu Hause?

Are you coming along or are you staying at home?

One small convenience: when both halves share the same subject, und lets you drop it the second time, exactly as English does. Ich trinke Tee und esse Kuchen, and nobody wonders who is eating.

Four of these joiners also work in pairs, one word early in the sentence announcing the other. They cost nothing extra, because the word order is still the ordinary one, and they make even a simple sentence sound assembled rather than improvised:

Entweder kommst du mit, **oder** du bleibst hier.

Either you come along, or you stay here.

Ich trinke **weder** Kaffee **noch** Tee.

I drink neither coffee nor tea.

Lena spricht **sowohl** Deutsch **als auch** Englisch.

Lena speaks both German and English.

Der Film war **zwar** lang, **aber** sehr gut.

The film was long, admittedly, but very good.

Weder … noch carries the negative inside itself, so never add nicht or kein to it. And zwar … aber is the German way of conceding a point before making your own, which is why you will hear it in every argument and read it in every review.

The verb walks to the end

Take two plain sentences and join them with weil, because. The first sentence stays as it is. The second becomes a Nebensatz, a subordinate clause: a comma opens it, and its verb leaves position two and walks to the very end:

Ich bleibe zu Hause. Es regnet. — two plain sentences

I am staying at home. It is raining.

Ich bleibe zu Hause, weil es regnet. — weil sends the verb to the end

I am staying at home because it is raining.

Ich bleibe zu Hause, weil ich müde bin. bin last, behind everything

I am staying at home because I am tired.

The comma is not decoration; German requires one between a Nebensatz and its main clause, which means it comes before the clause when the clause follows, and after it when the clause comes first. And the verb is not drifting; it goes to the end, behind the objects, behind the adverbs, behind everything.

Ich lerne Deutsch, **weil** meine Oma aus Köln **kommt**.

I am learning German because my grandma comes from Cologne.

Tom isst keinen Apfelkuchen, **weil** er kein Obst **mag**.

Tom doesn't eat apple cake because he doesn't like fruit.

Ich glaube, **dass** du recht **hast**.

I think that you are right.

Lena sagt, **dass** der Film super **ist**.

Lena says that the film is great.

Ich weiß nicht, **ob** der Bus morgen **kommt**.

I don't know whether the bus will come tomorrow.

Wir bleiben zu Hause, **wenn** es **regnet**.

We stay at home when it rains.

The four door-openers are worth a small card. Each opens a Nebensatz, and every Nebensatz ends in its verb:

Die Türöffner • four words that move the verb

weil	because	..., weil es regnet.
dass	that	..., dass du recht hast.
wenn	when, if	..., wenn es regnet.
ob	whether	..., ob der Bus kommt.

Compare the five joiners above. Those sit outside the sentence and touch nothing. These four stand inside it and pull the verb to the end.

Denn and weil: one reason, two machines

You now own two words for *because*, and they mean the same thing. Everything that separates them is machinery. Denn is a joiner, so it stays outside and the verb keeps position two. Weil is a door-opener, so it steps inside and drags the verb to the end. Say the same excuse twice and hear the difference:

Ich bleibe zu Hause, denn es regnet. — denn joins from outside: verb second

I am staying at home, because it is raining.

Ich bleibe zu Hause, weil es regnet. — weil folds it in: verb last

I am staying at home because it is raining.

Both sentences are correct and both are used. One practical difference is worth storing away: a weil-clause can move to the front of the sentence, as the next section will show, but a denn-clause never can. Denn only joins

two halves, so it can only ever stand between them. In everyday speech weil does most of the work, and it is the one to reach for when in doubt.

When the Nebensatz goes first

A Nebensatz can take the front seat of the main sentence, and then something beautiful happens. The whole clause counts as position one, so the main verb must come immediately after the comma. Two verbs meet across it, back to back:

Wir bleiben zu Hause, wenn es regnet. — Nebensatz behind

We stay at home when it rains.

Wenn es regnet, bleiben wir zu Hause. — Nebensatz in front: verb, comma, verb

When it rains, we stay at home.

Wenn du morgen wieder zu spät **kommst**, **rufe** ich deine Eltern an.

If you are late again tomorrow, I will ring your parents.

Weil der Bus nicht **kommt**, **gehen** wir zu Fuß.

Because the bus is not coming, we are walking.

Wenn das Wetter schön **ist**, **fahren** wir zum See.

If the weather is nice, we will go to the lake.

Old friends inside the Nebensatz

What happens to everything you learned in this part when it enters a Nebensatz? It lines up at the end, in good order. A separable verb becomes one word again, because stem and prefix meet at the same spot. In the Perfekt, the participle keeps its place and the little helper stands dead last. A modal does the same:

Ich bin müde, weil ich immer früh **aufstehe**.
I am tired because I always get up early.

Ich komme zu spät, weil der Bus nicht **gekommen ist**.
I am late because the bus didn't come.

Lena freut sich, dass Tom **mitkommen kann**.
Lena is glad that Tom can come along.

Ich weiß nicht, ob ich morgen **kommen kann**.
I don't know whether I can come tomorrow.

Read the second example aloud: weil der Bus nicht gekommen ist. Participle, then helper, both at the end, the bracket folded shut. Sentences like this are the graduation exam of Part One, and you just passed it.

Watch out

× *Ich bleibe zu Hause, denn ich müde bin.*

✓ *Ich bleibe zu Hause, denn ich bin müde.* I am staying at home, because I am tired.

Denn is a joiner, not a door-opener. It sits outside the sentence and moves nothing, so the verb keeps position two. Weil is the one that sends it to the end.

× *Das ist kein Hund, aber ein Wolf.*

✓ *Das ist kein Hund, sondern ein Wolf.* That is not a dog, but a wolf.

English has one *but*; German has two. When a nicht or a kein is being corrected, the word is sondern.

× *Ich bleibe zu Hause, weil ich bin müde.*

✓ *Ich bleibe zu Hause, weil ich müde bin.* I am staying at home because I am tired.

You will hear this in Germany every day, and in casual speech it passes. In writing, in an exam and in anything careful it does not: after weil, the verb goes to the end. Learn it that way and choose the other consciously, if ever.

× *Ich glaube dass du recht hast.*

✓ *Ich glaube, dass du recht hast.* I think that you are right.

The comma before a Nebensatz is compulsory, not stylistic.

× *Wenn es regnet, wir bleiben zu Hause.*

✓ *Wenn es regnet, bleiben wir zu Hause.* When it rains, we stay at home.

A fronted Nebensatz fills position one, so the main verb comes straight after the comma: verb, comma, verb.

Watch out (continued)

× *Ich bin müde, weil ich stehe immer früh auf.*

✓ *Ich bin müde, weil ich immer früh aufstehe.* I am tired because I always get up early.

Inside a Nebensatz the separable verb reunites into one word at the end: aufstehe.

The sentence is complete. You can state, ask, command, bracket, join and fold. Everything that follows in this book, the cases, the tenses, the prepositions, happens inside the shapes you now own.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Join the two sentences with the word in brackets. Nothing moves.

Beispiel: Ich bleibe zu Hause. Es regnet. (denn) → Ich bleibe zu Hause, denn es regnet.

1. Tom ist müde. Er kommt mit. (aber)
2. Das ist kein Hund. Das ist ein Wolf. (sondern)
3. Lena liest ein Buch. Bello schläft. (und)
4. Kommst du mit? Bleibst du zu Hause? (oder)
5. Wir gehen zu Fuß. Der Bus kommt nicht. (denn)

Exercise 2. Join the sentences with weil.

Beispiel: Ich bleibe zu Hause. Es regnet. → Ich bleibe zu Hause, weil es regnet.

1. Lena lernt viel. Sie hat morgen einen Test.
2. Tom isst keinen Apfelkuchen. Er mag kein Obst.

Übungen (continued)

3. Wir gehen zu Fuß. Der Bus kommt nicht.
4. Ich trinke Tee. Kaffee schmeckt mir nicht.

Exercise 3. Join the sentences with dass or ob.

Beispiel: Ich glaube: Du hast recht. → Ich glaube, dass du recht hast.

1. Lena sagt: Der Film ist super.
2. Ich weiß nicht: Kommt der Bus morgen?
3. Tom glaubt: Der Fahrer ist krank.
4. Wir wissen nicht: Ist das Café heute offen?

Exercise 4. Put the wenn-clause first.

Beispiel: Wir bleiben zu Hause, wenn es regnet. → Wenn es regnet, bleiben wir zu Hause.

1. Ich rufe dich an, wenn ich fertig bin.
2. Wir fahren zum See, wenn das Wetter schön ist.
3. Tom freut sich, wenn Oma Brot backt.

Exercise 5. Finish the sentence. Mind the verb at the end.

1. Ich bin müde, weil ich _____ (immer früh aufstehen).
2. Ich komme zu spät, weil der Zug nicht _____ (gekommen sein).
3. Lena freut sich, dass Tom _____ (mitkommen können).
4. Ich weiß nicht, ob ich morgen _____ (Zeit haben).

Exercise 6. Your turn.

Write four honest excuses with weil: two for being late, one with a separable verb, one in the Perfekt.

THE NOUN • CHAPTER 8

Der, die, das

Every noun wears a hat

A1

Two things about German nouns are visible at a glance. First, every noun is capitalised, always, even in the middle of a sentence. Second, every noun brings a little word with it, der, die or das, and that little word is not decoration. It is part of the noun, like a hat the noun never takes off. From today, never learn Tisch. Learn der Tisch, in one breath, as if it were a single word. Watch the hats in Lena's room:

DEUTSCH

Tom besucht Lena am Nachmittag. „Komm, ich zeige dir mein Zimmer", sagt sie und macht **die Tür** auf. „Das ist **der Schreibtisch**, und das hier ist **die Lampe**. Sie ist neu."

„Und **der Stuhl**?", fragt Tom.

„**Der Stuhl** ist von Oma. Er ist alt, aber ich mag ihn."

Das Fenster ist offen, und **die Sonne** scheint. Auf dem Bett schläft **die Katze** Minka. „Und **das Bett**?“

„**Das Bett** ist zu klein. Ich will ein neues Bett.“ Da bellt **der Hund** Bello vor der Tür. „Bello, du bist kein Zimmer-Fan!“, lacht Lena.

ENGLISH

Tom visits Lena in the afternoon. “Come on, I’ll show you my room,” she says and opens the door. “This is the desk, and this here is the lamp. It is new.”

“And the chair?” asks Tom.

“The chair is from Grandma. It is old, but I like it.”

The window is open, and the sun is shining. The cat Minka is asleep on the bed. “And the bed?”

“The bed is too small. I want a new bed.” Just then the dog Bello barks outside the door. “Bello, you are not a fan of my room!” laughs Lena.

Three genders, one honest warning

English has one word for *the*. German has three, because every noun belongs to one of three genders: masculine takes der, feminine takes die, and neuter takes das. Now the honest warning. This gender is grammatical, not biological. A table is not male and a lamp is not female. The article tells you nothing about the thing, only which hat the word wears. The proof is the most famous noun in any German course: das Mädchen, the girl, is grammatically neuter, even though every girl is obviously a girl.

Die drei Artikel • the three hats

GENDER	ARTICLE	EXAMPLE
maskulin	der	**der Tisch** • the table
feminin	die	**die Lampe** • the lamp
neutrum	das	**das Bett** • the bed

The second half of the warning follows at once. Never guess a gender from English or from what the thing is. In English poems the moon is a lady, but in German the moon is der Mond and the sun is die Sonne. The gender lives in the German word.

Der Tisch ist alt.

The table is old.

Die Lampe ist neu.

The lamp is new.

Das Bett ist zu klein.

The bed is too small.

Das Mädchen wohnt in Köln.

The girl lives in Cologne.

Der Mond scheint, und **die** Sonne schläft.

The moon is shining, and the sun is asleep.

Verlässliche Signale • endings that give the gender away

SIGNAL	ARTICLE	EXAMPLE
-ung	die	**die Zeitung** • the newspaper
-heit, -keit	die	**die Freiheit** • freedom
-tion, -sion	die	**die Information** • the information
-e (mostly)	die	**die Blume** • the flower
-chen, -lein	das	**das Mädchen** • the girl
-er (people)	der	**der Lehrer** • the teacher
days, months, seasons	der	**der Montag** • Monday
-o (loanwords, often)	das	**das Auto** • the car

The signals you can trust

Is it all memory, then? Not quite. German quietly marks many nouns with an ending that gives the gender away, and a handful of these signals are reliable enough to build on. Where honesty demands it, the card says *mostly*, and a signal that works nine times out of ten is still a wonderful thing to own.

One row solves an old riddle. -chen and -lein are shrinking endings, added to a word to make it little, and a word so shrunk is always neuter. That is the whole mystery of das Mädchen: the ending outranks the meaning. Mind the word *added*, though. Der Kuchen was never a small Ku, so its -chen is not the shrinking ending at all, merely the last letters of the word.

Ask whether you can hear a smaller thing inside: das Brötchen is a little Brot, das Häuschen a little Haus. And the der of days, months and seasons hands you dozens of words in one stroke: der Montag, der Mai, der Sommer, der Winter.

Die Zeitung liegt auf dem Tisch.

The newspaper is lying on the table.

Das Brötchen schmeckt gut.

The roll tastes good.

Der Bäcker macht um sieben auf.

The baker opens at seven.

Der Sommer kommt bald.

Summer is coming soon.

Die Wohnung ist groß.

The flat is big.

One breath: the habit that pays for years

Why make such a fuss over three little words? Because the article is the hardest-working word in the language. Later, in the part on the four cases, you will see that when a sentence shows who does what to whom, it is mostly the article that changes shape, while the noun sits still. Know the hat and those chapters will feel easy. Guess it and every later rule wobbles. So build the habit now:

Tisch — what the dictionary headword shows

table

der Tisch — what you learn: noun and article, one breath

the table

der Tisch, die Tische — what your notebook will say after the next chapter

the table, the tables

The third line is a small promise. The next chapter adds the plural, and from then on every noun in your notebook has three parts. Say them together, out loud. Your mouth remembers what your eyes forget.

Der Hund heißt Bello.

The dog is called Bello.

Die Katze schläft gern.

The cat likes sleeping.

Der Schreibtisch steht am Fenster.

The desk stands by the window.

Die Tür ist offen.

The door is open.

Das Fenster ist zu.

The window is closed.

Watch out

× *Die Mädchen ist nett.*
✓ *Das Mädchen ist nett.* The girl is nice.
Gender is grammatical, not biological. The ending -chen always means das, even for a girl.

× *Der Lampe ist neu.*
✓ *Die Lampe ist neu.* The lamp is new.
Nouns in -e are mostly feminine. Die Lampe, like die Blume and die Katze.

× *das fenster ist offen.*
✓ *Das Fenster ist offen.* The window is open.
Every German noun is capitalised, everywhere in the sentence. A lowercase noun is always a mistake.

× *Die Mond scheint.*
✓ *Der Mond scheint.* The moon is shining.
Never guess from English or from poetry. The moon is der Mond, and the sun is die Sonne.

One last piece of comfort. Germans get this right only because they never learned a noun without its hat, and from today neither will you. When a gender refuses to stick, write the word on a sticky note, article first, and put it on the object itself.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. **Sort the twelve nouns into three lists: der, die, das. The signal card decides every one.**

Zeitung Mädchen Lehrer Sommer Auto Blume Wohnung Brötchen Montag Freiheit Radio Bäcker

Exercise 2. **Lena's room. Put in der, die or das. Every noun appears in the story at the start of this chapter.**

1. _____ Schreibtisch ist alt.
2. _____ Lampe ist neu.
3. _____ Bett ist zu klein.
4. _____ Stuhl ist von Oma.
5. _____ Fenster ist offen.
6. _____ Tür ist zu.

Exercise 3. **Fix the capital letters. Each sentence hides one lowercase noun.**

1. Die katze schläft auf dem Bett.
2. Der hund bellt vor der Tür.
3. Die sonne scheint heute nicht.
4. Das fenster ist offen.

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 4. **Memory pairs. Write each noun with its article, from memory. All eight appear in this chapter.**

Hund Katze Sonne Mond Tisch Tür Fenster Stuhl

Exercise 5. **Your turn.**

Look around the room you are sitting in. Choose six objects, find each one in a dictionary, and write it down with its article, in one breath. Then pick three of them and write one short sentence about each.

THE NOUN • CHAPTER 9

Der Plural

Five ways to say more than one

A1

English has one of the easiest plurals in the world. You add *-s* and you are done: one apple, two apples. German, you will not be surprised to hear, has other plans. Its nouns form the plural in five different ways, and no single rule tells you which noun joins which family. Before you sigh, here is the consolation prize, and it is a big one: in the plural, every noun takes die. The article table you met in chapter 8 shrinks to a single word. Watch the plurals pile up on Oma's shopping list:

DEUTSCH

Am Samstag geht Lena mit Oma auf den Markt. Oma hat eine Liste: sechs **Eier**, vier **Tomaten**, zwei **Brote** und drei **Äpfel**.

„Brauchen wir auch **Bananen**?", fragt Lena.

„Ja, und sechs **Brötchen**. Morgen kommen die **Kinder** von nebenan."

Sie kaufen noch **Kartoffeln** und **Zwiebeln**. Am Käsestand sitzen zwei **Hunde**. „Wie Bello!“, lacht Lena.

Zu Hause packt Oma alles aus. Auf dem Tisch liegen jetzt **Eier**, **Tomaten**, **Brote**, **Äpfel** und **Bananen**.

„So viele **Sachen**!“, sagt Lena. „Und morgen backe ich Kuchen“, sagt Oma.

ENGLISH

On Saturday Lena goes to the market with Grandma. Grandma has a list: six eggs, four tomatoes, two loaves of bread and three apples.

“Do we need bananas too?” asks Lena.

“Yes, and six bread rolls. The children from next door are coming tomorrow.”

They also buy potatoes and onions. Two dogs are sitting by the cheese stall. “Like Bello!” laughs Lena.

At home Grandma unpacks everything. On the table there are now eggs, tomatoes, loaves, apples and bananas.

“So many things!” says Lena. “And tomorrow I am baking a cake,” says Grandma.

The five families

Every German noun belongs to one of five plural families. Some add -e, some add -er, some add -n or -en, a modern few add -s, and one family adds nothing at all. Three of the families like to put an umlaut on the stem

Die fünf Familien • the five plural endings

FAMILY	SINGULAR	PLURAL
-e, often ¨	das Brot	**die Brote**
	der Stuhl	**die Stühle**
-er, often ¨	das Kind	**die Kinder**
	das Buch	**die Bücher**
-n / -en	die Lampe	**die Lampen**
	die Frau	**die Frauen**
-s	das Auto	**die Autos**
	das Handy	**die Handys**
no ending, often ¨	der Apfel	**die Äpfel**
	der Vater	**die Väter**

vowel as well, so a becomes ä, o becomes ö and u becomes ü. Here are all five on one card, each with two members you already know:

Read the card out loud once, in pairs: das Brot, die Brote; das Kind, die Kinder; die Lampe, die Lampen. Your ear will do more of this work than any rule, because the pairs settle into a rhythm long before your head has sorted the families.

Oma kauft zwei **Brote** und sechs **Brötchen**.

Grandma buys two loaves and six bread rolls.

Die **Kinder** spielen mit Bello im Garten.

The children are playing with Bello in the garden.

Lena liest gern **Bücher**.

Lena likes reading books.

Drei **Äpfel** liegen auf dem Tisch.

Three apples are lying on the table.

Die **Lampen** im Wohnzimmer sind neu.

The lamps in the living room are new.

Zwei **Autos** stehen vor dem Haus.

Two cars are standing in front of the house.

Helpful tendencies, honest warnings

If no rule decides the family, is it all just memory? Not quite. There are strong tendencies, and three of them are worth carrying with you. First, feminine nouns overwhelmingly take -n or -en: die Tomate, die Tomaten; die Banane, die Bananen; die Frau, die Frauen. If a noun is feminine, guess this family and you will usually be right. Second, nouns ending in -chen, like das Brötchen, never change at all. One Brötchen, six Brötchen, only the article and the number tell you how many. Third, young words and words borrowed from other languages simply take -s, which is German's own ending for newcomers: die Autos, die Handys, die Hotels. Do not expect the English plural to travel with the word, because German says die Handys and die Hobbys, not *handies* or *hobbies*.

Die **Tomaten** und die **Bananen** sind frisch.

The tomatoes and the bananas are fresh.

Die **Frauen** auf dem Markt kennen Oma gut.

The women at the market know Grandma well.

Ein Brötchen, sechs **Brötchen**: das Wort bleibt gleich.

One roll, six rolls: the word stays the same.

Onkel Peter findet die **Handys** heute alle gleich.

Uncle Peter thinks the mobile phones are all the same these days.

Wir kaufen **Kartoffeln** und **Zwiebeln**.

We buy potatoes and onions.

But tendencies are not guarantees, so here is the honest advice, and it should sound familiar. Chapter 8 told you never to learn a noun without its article. Now the habit grows by one word: learn the noun, its article and its plural as a single package. Your notebook should say der Apfel, die Äpfel and das Kind, die Kinder, exactly as a dictionary does. Ten seconds at the start saves you a guess every time the noun returns.

One article to rule them all

Now for the promised reward. In the singular you juggle three articles. In the plural the juggling stops, because gender simply disappears: masculine, feminine and neuter nouns all take die.

And what about ein? Think about what it means. Ein is the word for *one*, so it cannot survive in the plural any more than English *a* can. You do not say *a apples* in English, and German does not say ein Äpfel. Where English drops *a* and says simply *apples*, German drops ein in exactly the same way.

Der Artikel im Plural • the table shrinks

GENDER	SINGULAR	PLURAL
masculine	der Tisch	**die Tische**
feminine	die Lampe	**die Lampen**
neuter	das Kind	**die Kinder**

Its negative partner kein, which you first met in chapter 2, does have a plural, and it grows the ending -e:

Da ist ein Apfel. — singular: ein + noun

There is an apple.

Da sind zwei Äpfel. — more than one: no article, just the number

There are two apples.

Da sind keine Äpfel. — zero: kein grows an -e

There are no apples.

Die Kinder sind heute laut.

The children are loud today.

Die Äpfel aus dem Garten sind rot.

The apples from the garden are red.

Die Hunde am Käsestand sind klein.

The dogs by the cheese stall are small.

Wir haben **keine** Eier mehr.

We have no eggs left.

Oma braucht heute **keine** Tomaten.

Grandma does not need any tomatoes today.

Watch out

× *Die Kinders spielen im Garten.*
✓ *Die Kinder spielen im Garten.* The children are playing in the garden.
The English *-s* is a false friend. Kind belongs to the -er family, and Kinder is already plural.

× *Oma kauft zwei Brot.*
✓ *Oma kauft zwei Brote.* Grandma buys two loaves of bread.
A number is not enough. The noun itself must change into its plural form: ein Brot, zwei Brote.

× *Die Apfels sind rot.*
✓ *Die Äpfel sind rot.* The apples are red.
Apfel adds no ending at all. Its whole plural lives in the umlaut: der Apfel, die Äpfel.

× *Das Autos sind schnell.*
✓ *Die Autos sind schnell.* The cars are fast.
The -s plural is right, but the article must change too. In the plural every noun takes die, whatever its singular article was.

One more thing before the exercises. This little word die is about to become your anchor. When the cases arrive later in this book, the plural keeps behaving as one single group, never as three genders. It does change shape once, in the dative, where die becomes den and the noun collects an extra -n unless it already ends in -n or -s: mit den Kindern, but mit den Frauen and mit den Autos. Chapter 15 hands you that in one line, and it is the only alteration the plural ever asks of you. Everything you invest in plurals now,

you will spend only once. From today, no new noun enters your notebook without its article and its plural.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. **Write the plural with die, as in your notebook.**

Beispiel: das Brot → die Brote

1. das Ei
2. der Apfel
3. die Tomate
4. der Hund
5. das Buch
6. die Banane

Exercise 2. **Sort the plurals into the five families: -e, -er, -n/-en, -s, no ending.**

die Tische die Kinder die Frauen die Autos die Väter die Brote die Lampen die Handys die Bücher die Brötchen

Exercise 3. **Ein, kein or keine?**

1. Da ist _____ Hund im Garten. Alle Hunde sind im Haus.
2. Wir haben _____ Eier mehr.
3. Auf dem Tisch liegt _____ Apfel, nur Bananen.
4. Oma braucht heute _____ Tomaten.
5. Hier ist _____ Brötchen für dich.

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 4. **Something is wrong with every plural. Correct the sentence.**

1. Ich kaufe drei Brötchens.
2. Die Kinders spielen mit Minka.
3. Wir brauchen zwei Brot.
4. Das Autos stehen vor dem Haus.
5. Oma kauft vier Apfels.

Exercise 5. **Your turn.**

Write a shopping list for the market with six things on it, all in the plural and each with a number, like sechs Eier. Use at least three different plural families from this chapter.

THE NOUN • CHAPTER 10

Mein, dein, unser

Whose is it?

A1

You can now name things: chapter 8 gave every noun its article, chapter 9 taught you to count them. But when you talk about people, naming is not enough. You do not say *the mother*, you say *my mother*. German has a small family of words for this, and the good news arrives early. They all play by the rules of ein and kein, which you already know. Watch Lena and Tom with a photo album:

DEUTSCH

Heute regnet es, und Lena zeigt Tom ein Fotoalbum. „Das ist **mein Vater**, und das ist **meine Mutter**“, sagt sie.

„Ist das **dein Bruder**?“, fragt Tom.

„Nein, das ist Onkel Peter. **Seine Wohnung** ist in Zürich. Und die Frau hier ist Tante Anna. **Ihre Tochter** heißt Mia.“

„Und das? Ist das **euer Haus**?“

„Ja, und das hier ist **unser Garten**. Der Apfelbaum ist schon sehr alt."

Auf dem letzten Foto sind Bello und Minka. Lena lacht: „**Mein Hund**, **meine Katze**, meine ganze Familie!"

ENGLISH

Today it is raining, and Lena is showing Tom a photo album. "That is my father, and that is my mother," she says.

"Is that your brother?" asks Tom.

"No, that is Uncle Peter. His flat is in Zurich. And the woman here is Aunt Anna. Her daughter is called Mia."

"And that? Is that your house?"

"Yes, and this here is our garden. The apple tree is already very old."

In the last photo are Bello and Minka. Lena laughs: "My dog, my cat, my whole family!"

Nine owners, seven little words

Every personal pronoun you know owns exactly one of these words. Learn them as pairs, because the pairing is the whole vocabulary of this chapter:

Why call them possessive *articles* and not adjectives? Because they stand where ein stands and dress as ein dresses. In chapter 2 you saw kein borrow the endings of ein. Every word in the card borrows them too. Before a

Die Possessivartikel • one per owner

OWNER	POSSESSIVE	MEANING
ich	**mein**	my
du	**dein**	your (one person)
er	**sein**	his
sie	**ihr**	her
es	**sein**	its
wir	**unser**	our
ihr	**euer**	your (you lot)
sie	**ihr**	their
Sie	**Ihr**	your (polite, always capital)

Das Ein-Spiel • the ein-game

THE NOUN IS	FORM	EXAMPLE
der	**mein**	**mein Bruder** • my brother
die	**meine**	**meine Schwester** • my sister
das	**mein**	**mein Auto** • my car
die (plural)	**meine**	**meine Eltern** • my parents

masculine or neuter noun it stays bare, before a feminine or plural noun it takes an -e:

Watch one noun walk through the articles it can wear. The noun never changes, only its little companion does:

Das ist der Hund. a particular dog: der

That is the dog.

Das ist ein Hund. any dog: ein

That is a dog.

Das ist mein Hund. my dog: ein-game, no ending

That is my dog.

Das ist meine Katze. die Katze is feminine: -e

That is my cat.

Mein Vater arbeitet in Köln.

My father works in Cologne.

Meine Mutter kocht gern.

My mother likes cooking.

Dein Fahrrad ist neu, oder?

Your bike is new, isn't it?

Unsere Oma backt heute einen Kuchen.

Our grandma is baking a cake today.

Meine Eltern sind am Wochenende zu Hause.

My parents are at home at the weekend.

His or her? Look at the owner, not the thing

Here is the one place where English speakers stumble, so let us slow down. In seine Mutter two decisions were made, and they answer two different

questions. The choice between sein and ihr answers *who owns it*: sein for a male owner, ihr for a female one, like *his* and *her*. The ending answers *what the thing is*: Mutter is feminine, so -e. Keep the two questions apart and the trap never closes:

Das ist Tom. **Sein** Vater heißt Herr Weber.
That is Tom. His father is called Herr Weber.

Das ist Lena. **Ihr** Vater arbeitet in Köln.
That is Lena. Her father works in Cologne.

Lena ist vierzehn. **Ihre** Katze heißt Minka.
Lena is fourteen. Her cat is called Minka.

Onkel Peter wohnt in Zürich. **Seine** Wohnung ist klein.
Uncle Peter lives in Zurich. His flat is small.

Oma backt am Sonntag. **Ihr** Kuchen ist berühmt.
Grandma bakes on Sundays. Her cake is famous.

Look closely at the second and the last example. Ihr Vater and ihr Kuchen feel wrong to English ears, because *her* sits next to a masculine noun. But the owner is female, so ihr it is, and the noun is masculine, so no ending. One small bonus: ihr also means *their*, because plural sie owns the same word, and context nearly always tells you which ihr you are hearing.

Two small quirks: euer and Ihr

The family has one member with a cosmetic habit. When euer takes the -e ending, it drops the e in its middle: nearly always eure. The full euere

is not wrong, merely old-fashioned and rare, so write eure and recognise the other. German is following its ear here, not a rule. Unser keeps its e calmly: unsere Katze.

Ist das **euer** Haus?

Is that your house?

Eure Küche ist wirklich schön.

Your kitchen is really lovely.

Sind das **eure** Fotos?

Are those your photos?

Wo ist **euer** Garten?

Where is your garden?

Unser Haus ist alt, aber **unsere** Küche ist neu.

Our house is old, but our kitchen is new.

The second quirk is about politeness on paper. The polite Sie is always capitalised, and its possessive Ihr inherits the capital, wherever it stands. In writing, that capital is the only difference between polite *your* and *her* or *their*:

Ist das **Ihr** Mantel, Frau Müller?

Is that your coat, Frau Müller?

Ihre Tasche ist noch hier, Herr Weber.

Your bag is still here, Herr Weber.

Wie heißt **Ihr** Hund, Frau Schmidt?

What is your dog called, Frau Schmidt?

Ist das **ihr** Hund?

Is that her dog?

Ihr Zug fährt um neun, Herr Braun.

Your train leaves at nine, Herr Braun.

Watch out

× *Das ist sein Mutter.*

✓ *Das ist seine Mutter.* That is his mother.

The ending follows the thing. Mutter is feminine, so the ein-game demands -e, whoever the owner is.

× *Das ist Lena. Sein Bruder heißt Max.*

✓ *Das ist Lena. Ihr Bruder heißt Max.* That is Lena. Her brother is called Max.

The word follows the owner. Lena is female, so ihr Bruder, even though Bruder is masculine.

× *Ist das euere Katze?*

✓ *Ist das eure Katze?* Is that your cat?

As soon as euer takes an ending it drops its middle e. Euere is listed in the dictionaries and is not an error, but it reads as old-fashioned and you will rarely meet it. Write eure.

× *Wie heißt ihr Hund, Frau Müller?*

✓ *Wie heißt Ihr Hund, Frau Müller?* What is your dog called, Frau Müller?

The polite Ihr is always capitalised. With a small i the sentence asks about *her* dog instead.

One promise before you practise. These nine words stay with you for the rest of the book, and later, when the cases arrive, they will bend exactly as

ein and kein bend. Learn the owners and the ein-game now, and everything later is just new endings on old friends.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. **Mein or meine? The article in brackets tells you the gender.**

1. Das ist _____ Vater. (der Vater)
2. Das ist _____ Mutter. (die Mutter)
3. Das ist _____ Auto. (das Auto)
4. Das sind _____ Eltern. (die Eltern, Plural)
5. Das ist _____ Katze. (die Katze)

Exercise 2. **Sein, seine, ihr or ihre? Look at the owner first, then at the thing.**

1. Das ist Tom. _____ Vater heißt Herr Weber.
2. Das ist Lena. _____ Hund heißt Bello.
3. Das ist Onkel Peter. _____ Wohnung ist in Zürich.
4. Das ist Oma. _____ Kuchen ist fantastisch.
5. Das ist Lena. _____ Katze heißt Minka.

Exercise 3. **Euer or eure?**

1. Ist das _____ Haus? (das Haus)
2. Ist das _____ Küche? (die Küche)
3. Sind das _____ Fotos? (die Fotos, Plural)
4. Wo ist _____ Garten? (der Garten)
5. _____ Wohnung ist sehr schön. (die Wohnung)

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 4. **Whose is it? Complete the second sentence with the right possessive.**

Beispiel: Lena hat eine Katze. → Das ist ihre Katze.

1. Tom hat ein Fahrrad. Das ist _____ Fahrrad.
2. Ich habe ein Buch. Das ist _____ Buch.
3. Wir haben eine Katze. Das ist _____ Katze.
4. Du hast eine Tasche. Das ist _____ Tasche.
5. Lena und Tom haben ein Spiel. Das ist _____ Spiel.

Exercise 5. **Your turn.**

Introduce your family in five sentences, like Lena with her photo album. Use mein and meine at least twice each, and say one thing about each person: Mein Bruder heißt …, Meine Mutter arbeitet in …

THE NOUN • CHAPTER 11

Zahlen, Uhrzeit, Datum

Counting, the clock, the date

A1

You cannot spend a single day in Germany without numbers. Prices, ages, bus lines, phone numbers, and above all the time of day arrive in the first minute of the first conversation. The grammar is light, but German hides two famous surprises in its numbers. It reads two-digit numbers backwards, and its half-hours look forwards to the next hour. This chapter hands you both keys. Watch the numbers at work:

DEUTSCH

Am Freitag ruft Lena Tom an. „Hallo Tom! Im Kino läuft der neue Film. Kommst du mit?“ „Klar! Was kostet eine Karte?“

„**Sechs Euro fünfzig**. Wir sind ja Schüler.“ „Und wann fängt der Film an?“ „**Um acht**. Wir treffen uns **um halb acht** vor dem Kino. Der Film dauert **zwei** Stunden und **zwanzig** Minuten.“

„Gut. Gibst du mir noch deine neue Nummer?“ „Ja: **null eins sieben drei, vier acht neun, zwo sechs eins fünf**.“

„Danke! Also bis morgen, **um halb acht**. Das ist **sieben Uhr dreißig**, oder?“ „Genau, Tom. Nicht **acht Uhr dreißig**!“

ENGLISH

On Friday Lena rings Tom. “Hello Tom! The new film is on at the cinema. Are you coming along?” “Of course! What does a ticket cost?”

“Six euros fifty. We are pupils, after all.” “And when does the film start?” “At eight. We will meet at half past seven in front of the cinema. The film lasts two hours and twenty minutes.”

“Good. Will you give me your new number as well?” “Yes: zero one seven three, four eight nine, two six one five.”

“Thanks! So see you tomorrow, at half past seven. That is 7:30, right?” “Exactly, Tom. Not 8:30!”

From null to zwanzig, then the tens

Every number you will ever say is built from a small starter kit: the numbers up to twelve, the teens, and the tens. Learn these three columns and the rest of the number line comes free. The card marks the few shapes that misbehave, exactly the ones learners misspell:

Now the first surprise. English says *twenty-one*: tens first, then units. German says the units first, joins them with und, and welds everything into one single word. Think of the old English nursery rhyme *four-and-twenty blackbirds*; German never stopped counting that way:

Die Zahlen • the starter kit

ONE	TEEN	TEN
1 eins	11 **elf**	10 zehn
2 zwei	12 **zwölf**	20 zwanzig
3 drei	13 dreizehn	30 **dreißig**
4 vier	14 vierzehn	40 vierzig
5 fünf	15 fünfzehn	50 fünfzig
6 sechs	16 **sechzehn**	60 **sechzig**
7 sieben	17 **siebzehn**	70 **siebzig**
8 acht	18 achtzehn	80 achtzig
9 neun	19 neunzehn	90 neunzig

Zero is **null**, one hundred is **hundert**. The green forms are the rebels: elf and zwölf refuse -zehn, sechzehn and siebzehn drop letters, dreißig ends in -ßig.

21 ein + und + zwanzig → **einundzwanzig**

47 sieben + und + vierzig → **siebenundvierzig**

Notice that the eins of twenty-one loses its -s inside the compound: einund-zwanzig, never einsundzwanzig. And however long it grows, the number stays one word, with no spaces and no hyphens:

Zwei und zwei ist **vier**.

Two and two is four.

Ein Tag hat **vierundzwanzig** Stunden.

A day has twenty-four hours.

Ein Jahr hat **zweiundfünfzig** Wochen.

A year has fifty-two weeks.

Tom wohnt in Haus Nummer **zwölf**.

Tom lives at number twelve.

Oma backt **dreißig** Plätzchen.

Grandma is baking thirty biscuits.

Numbers in the wild: age, prices, phone numbers

Where will you actually say these words? In three everyday rituals, each with a fixed shape. Age uses sein from chapter 1, with Jahre alt optional. Prices put the euros before the cents with nothing in between, no word for the decimal comma at all. And phone numbers are read digit by digit, in small groups; on the phone many Germans say zwo instead of zwei, so that it cannot be misheard as drei.

Ich bin **vierzehn**.

I am fourteen.

Onkel Peter ist **dreiundvierzig** Jahre alt.

Uncle Peter is forty-three years old.

Das Eis kostet **zwei Euro zwanzig**.

The ice cream costs two euros twenty.

Die Kinokarte kostet **sechs Euro fünfzig**.

The cinema ticket costs six euros fifty.

Meine Nummer ist **null eins sieben drei, vier acht neun, zwo sechs eins fünf.**

My number is zero one seven three, four eight nine, two six one five.

Written prices look like 6,50 €: Germany uses a comma where English uses a decimal point. Read it out as sechs Euro fünfzig. Nobody says Komma when talking about money.

The clock, the everyday way

Telling the time needs only three little words, nach, vor and halb, plus the numbers you already own. The first two behave exactly like English *past* and *to*. The third is the second great surprise of this chapter. English *half past seven* looks back at the hour that has passed. German halb acht looks forward: it means halfway to eight, so it is 7:30, not 8:30. Walk once round the clock face and watch the logic:

Es ist sieben Uhr. — the full hour

It is seven o'clock.

Es ist Viertel nach sieben. — 7:15, a quarter after the hour

It is quarter past seven.

Es ist halb acht. — 7:30, halfway TO eight

It is half past seven.

Es ist Viertel vor acht. — 7:45, a quarter before the next hour

It is quarter to eight.

Die Uhrzeit • the everyday pattern

CLOCK	GERMAN	THINK
7:00	sieben Uhr	the plain hour
7:15	Viertel nach sieben	a quarter past
7:30	**halb acht**	halfway to eight
7:45	Viertel vor acht	a quarter to
8:00	acht Uhr	the next hour

Es ist acht Uhr. the next full hour

It is eight o'clock.

At the half hour the German mind has already moved on to the coming hour. Whenever you hear halb, subtract one from the number you hear and you have the English time.

There is also an official style, the one you hear at stations and on the news. It runs on the 24-hour clock and simply reads the digits: 19:30 becomes neunzehn Uhr dreißig, with the minutes after Uhr and no halb or Viertel anywhere. Announcements use it, friends do not.

Wann? Um.

Asking for the time and giving the time of an event are two different sentences. Wie viel Uhr ist es? asks what the clock shows, and the answer

starts with Es ist. Wann? asks when something happens, and the answer starts with um. Learn um plus the time as one chunk, the way chapter 4 taught each separable verb as one package:

Der Film fängt **um acht** an.
The film starts at eight.

Wir treffen uns **um halb acht**.
We are meeting at half past seven.

Lena steht **um sieben** auf.
Lena gets up at seven.

Die Schule beginnt **um Viertel nach acht**.
School begins at quarter past eight.

Um zehn schläft Bello schon.
At ten Bello is already asleep.

The last example shows a familiar friend. An um-chunk is a time phrase, so it can take position one, and then the verb follows in position two, exactly as chapter 1 promised.

Der Wievielte? Ordinals and the date

The numbers so far count things. To put things in order, and above all to say a date, German needs a second set, and building it is nearly mechanical. Up to nineteen, add -te to the number. From twenty upwards, add -ste. Four forms refuse to obey, and they are of course among the ones you will use most:

Die Ordinalzahlen • -te up to 19, -ste from 20

FIGURE	GERMAN	NOTE
1.	**erste**	not einte
2.	zweite	regular
3.	**dritte**	not dreite
4.	vierte	regular
7.	**siebte**	drops the -en of sieben
8.	**achte**	one t, not two
19.	neunzehnte	the last of the -te
20.	zwanzigste	-ste begins here
21.	einundzwanzigste	the ending goes on the whole word
31.	einunddreißigste	same again

In writing, German uses the figure with a full stop after it. der 1. Mai is read aloud as der erste Mai.

An ordinal in front of a noun is an adjective, and German adjectives take endings, which is not today's business. So learn the two date shapes as fixed chunks, exactly the way you learned um plus the time a page ago. Saying what the date is takes der and -te. Saying when something happens takes am and -ten:

Heute ist **der erste** Mai.

Today is the first of May.

Morgen ist **der zweite** Mai.

Tomorrow is the second of May.

Ich habe **am zwölften** Juni Geburtstag.

My birthday is on the twelfth of June.

Am dritten Oktober haben wir frei.

On the third of October we have a day off.

Der Kurs beginnt **am einundzwanzigsten** September.

The course begins on the twenty-first of September.

The months are the easy part, because ten of the twelve are almost the English word: Januar, Februar, März, April, Mai, Juni, Juli, August, September, Oktober, November, Dezember. All twelve are masculine, and to name a whole month you use im: im Mai, im August.

Years have a shape of their own. From 1100 to 1999 German reads them in hundreds, and from 2000 straight through: 1998 is neunzehnhundertachtundneunzig, 2026 is zweitausendsechsundzwanzig. And here German is stricter than English. A bare year takes no preposition at all. Say Ich bin 2010 geboren, or the fuller im Jahr 2010, but never in 2010.

Heute ist der dritte Mai. — der + -te: naming the date

Today is the third of May.

Ich habe am dritten Mai Geburtstag. — am + -ten: fixing an event to it

My birthday is on the third of May.

Ich bin am dritten Mai 2010 geboren. — the year simply follows, bare

I was born on the third of May 2010.

Watch out

× *Halb acht ist acht Uhr dreißig.*

✓ *Halb acht ist sieben Uhr dreißig.* Half past seven is 7:30.

Halb looks forward to the coming hour, so halb acht is halfway to eight. Hear halb, subtract one hour.

× *Lena ist zwanzigeins Jahre alt.*

✓ *Lena ist einundzwanzig Jahre alt.* Lena is twenty-one years old.

German never says the ten first. Units, then und, then the ten: one-and-twenty, like the old nursery rhyme.

× *Oma backt zwei und zwanzig Plätzchen.*

✓ *Oma backt zweiundzwanzig Plätzchen.* Grandma is baking twenty-two biscuits.

The parts are welded into a single word. Three separate words would mean *two and twenty*, two different amounts of biscuits.

× *Es ist halb nach sieben.*

✓ *Es ist halb acht.* It is half past seven.

English builds *half past*; German does not. Halb never takes nach or vor. It stands alone before the coming hour.

× *Ich bin geboren in 2010.*

✓ *Ich bin 2010 geboren.* I was born in 2010.

A bare year takes no preposition in German. Either the year stands alone, or you say im Jahr 2010, but never in 2010.

Watch out (continued)

× *Ich habe am fünfte Mai Geburtstag.*

✓ *Ich habe am fünften Mai Geburtstag.* My birthday is on the fifth of May.

After am the ordinal always ends in -ten. Learn am ersten, am zweiten, am dritten as one chunk, the way you learned um acht.

From here on, the numbers never leave you. They will name the plural amounts of chapter 9, the prices in every dialogue, and the dates of your first stories about the past. Whenever a time, a price or a date appears in this book from now on, read it out loud in German. The reversal, the forward-looking halb and the -ten of a date become natural only in the mouth, never on the page.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. **Write the numbers in words. One word each, remember!**

1. 8 2. 12 3. 17 4. 21 5. 33 6. 56 7. 78

Exercise 2. **Say the prices in full sentences.**

Beispiel: 3,50 € → Das kostet drei Euro fünfzig.

1. 2,20 € 2. 6,50 € 3. 4,80 € 4. 15,90 € 5. 12,99 €

Exercise 3. **Match each clock time to the right words: halb sieben, Viertel vor sechs, Viertel nach sieben, halb acht, Viertel vor acht.**

1. 7:15 2. 7:30 3. 7:45 4. 6:30 5. 5:45

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 4. **Answer the questions with um and the time in brackets.**

Beispiel: Wann fängt der Film an? (8:00) → Der Film fängt um acht Uhr an.

1. Wann stehst du auf? (7:00)
2. Wann beginnt die Schule? (8:15)
3. Wann kommt der Bus? (7:30)
4. Wann schläft Bello? (10:00 abends)

Exercise 5. **Say the date, then say when. Watch der … -te against am … -ten.**

Beispiel: 1.5. → Heute ist der erste Mai. Ich komme am ersten Mai.

1. 3.10. 2. 7.6. 3. 8.1. 4. 20.11. 5. 31.12.

Exercise 6. **Your turn.**

Describe a typical day in four sentences, each with a different um-time. Use at least one halb and one Viertel, and start at least one sentence with the um-chunk in position one.

THE NOUN • CHAPTER 12

Man und es

The two little stand-ins

A2

Every sentence you have built so far had a real subject: Lena, Tom, the dog, the train. But some of the most useful German sentences have nobody in them at all. Who exactly is raining when it rains? Who is "you" in *you can't smoke here*? German answers with two tiny stand-in words, man and es. Watch them carry a whole rainy Sunday:

DEUTSCH

Es ist Sonntag, und **es regnet** und regnet. **Es ist kalt** und grau. Lena sitzt am Fenster und ruft Tom an.

„Hallo Tom! **Wie geht es dir**?"

„**Mir geht es gut**. Aber **man kann** heute nicht draußen spielen."

„Nein. Bei so einem Wetter **bleibt man** lieber zu Hause. Komm doch zu mir! **Es gibt** Kakao, und Oma backt einen Kuchen."

„Super! **Man sagt**, dass dein Bello Besuch mag."

„Ja, das stimmt. Bis gleich!“

Zehn Minuten später **klingelt es** an der Tür.

ENGLISH

It is Sunday, and it rains and rains. It is cold and grey. Lena sits at the window and rings Tom.

“Hello Tom! How are you?”

“I’m fine. But you can’t play outside today.”

“No. In weather like this you’d rather stay at home. Why don’t you come round to mine? There is hot chocolate, and Grandma is baking a cake.”

“Great! They say your Bello likes visitors.”

“Yes, that’s true. See you in a minute!”

Ten minutes later there is a ring at the door.

Man: the word for everybody and nobody

English has three ways of talking about people in general: *one* knocks before entering, *you* can’t smoke here, *they* say it will rain. German rolls all three into a single little pronoun, man. It means people in general, nobody in particular. Two things to fix at once. First, man is not der Mann: one n, no capital letter, and no men involved. Women and children are included just as much. Animals are not: man is always about people, so Bello and Minka need sie. Second, its grammar could not be smaller: it counts as one

Man • always the er-form

VERB	ER …	MAN …
sagen	er sagt	**man sagt**
sprechen	er spricht	**man spricht**
können	er kann	**man kann**
dürfen	er darf	**man darf**
müssen	er muss	**man muss**

single somebody, so the verb takes the same er-form you have used since chapter 1.

Die Leute sagen in Köln „Hallo“. — a real, named subject

People in Cologne say hello.

Man sagt in Köln „Hallo“. — man steps in, verb stays in the er-form

People say hello in Cologne.

In Köln sagt man „Hallo“. — position two still rules, as always

In Cologne people say hello.

Notice how naturally man pairs with the modal verbs from chapter 3. Rules, customs and possibilities are exactly what man is for, so man kann, man darf and man muss do an enormous amount of everyday work:

Man darf hier nicht rauchen.

You are not allowed to smoke here.

Man kann das Brot beim Bäcker kaufen.

You can buy the bread at the baker’s.

Man muss an der Ampel warten.

You have to wait at the traffic lights.

Wie **schreibt man** das?

How do you spell that?

In der Schweiz **spricht man** auch Deutsch.

In Switzerland people speak German too.

The last example is why Onkel Peter feels at home in Zürich. And learn the question Wie schreibt man das? whole today, because it will rescue you in every German office and classroom you ever visit.

Es: the subject for the weather

Now for the second stand-in. Some events have no doer at all. The sky simply rains, and there is nobody to name. German still needs a subject, because a German verb is not allowed to go without one, so it supplies es. English does exactly the same with *it*: *it is raining*. Nobody can point at this "it". It is a grammatical subject and nothing more.

Do not mistake this es for a way of filling position one. It is the subject of the sentence, so it stays even when something else takes the front seat: Im Winter schneit es oft. Position one is occupied by the time phrase, the verb sits second as always, and es follows it, exactly where a subject belongs. Take it away and the sentence collapses.

Es • the fixed expressions

EXPRESSION	ENGLISH
Es regnet.	It is raining.
Es schneit.	It is snowing.
Es ist kalt / warm.	It is cold / warm.
Es ist spät / früh.	It is late / early.
Es gibt …	there is, there are
Wie geht es dir?	How are you?

Es regnet schon wieder.

It is raining again.

Im Winter **schneit es** oft.

In winter it often snows.

Es ist heute sehr kalt.

It is very cold today.

Es ist schon spät.

It is already late.

Es klingelt an der Tür.

There is a ring at the door.

The verb after es is always the er-form, just as with man, because es also counts as one single something. And when another word takes position one, es slides behind the verb without complaint: Im Winter schneit es oft.

Es gibt, and the most useful es of all

The last two rows of the card deserve their own stories. To say that something exists, English uses *there is* or *there are*. German uses one fixed formula for both: es gibt, literally "it gives". Think of the world as generously handing you things. The formula never changes, whether one thing exists or a hundred: es gibt einen Park, es gibt viele Parks.

Es gibt heute Kuchen bei Oma.
There is cake at Grandma's today.

In Köln **gibt es** einen Zoo.
There is a zoo in Cologne.

Gibt es hier ein Café?
Is there a café here?

Zum Glück **gibt es** heute keine Hausaufgaben.
Luckily there is no homework today.

Was **gibt es** heute zum Abendessen?
What is there for dinner tonight?

You may have noticed the small surprise in einen Zoo. The noun after es gibt wears a slightly different ending, and the next part of the book explains exactly why. For now, simply learn es gibt einen for der-words as part of the formula.

One more es-expression opens half the conversations in Germany. To ask how someone is, German literally asks "how goes it to you": Wie geht es dir? to a friend, Wie geht es Ihnen? to Herr Weber. The answer keeps the

same shape: Mir geht es gut, "to me it goes well". The little words dir, Ihnen and mir belong to a case you have not met yet, and chapter 15 tells their full story. Until then, learn these lines whole, the way you learned Guten Tag:

Wie **geht es** dir, Tom?

How are you, Tom?

Mir geht es gut, danke.

I am fine, thanks.

Wie **geht es** Ihnen, Herr Weber?

How are you, Herr Weber?

Danke, **es geht**.

Thanks, so-so.

Und dir? **Mir geht es** super!

And you? I am doing great!

Watch out

× *Der man kauft Brot.*

✓ *Der Mann kauft Brot. / Man kauft das Brot beim Bäcker.* The man buys bread. / You buy the bread at the baker's.

Two different words. Der Mann, capital and double n, is a male person. man, small and single n, is people in general and never takes an article.

Watch out (continued)

× *Man haben hier viel Zeit.*

✓ *Man hat hier viel Zeit.* People have a lot of time here.

Man counts as one single somebody, so the verb takes the er-form from chapter 1: man hat, man ist, man kann.

× *Ich bin gut, danke.*

✓ *Mir geht es gut, danke.* I am fine, thanks.

As an answer to Wie geht es dir?, German keeps the geht-es shape. Ich bin gut means you are good at something, like a sport.

× *Es sind kalt heute.*

✓ *Es ist kalt heute.* It is cold today.

The placeholder es is one single something, so its verb is always singular: es ist, es regnet, es gibt.

With man and es your sentences no longer need a named hero. You can state a rule, report the weather, announce that cake exists and ask after someone's day, all before lunch. That closes the part on the noun. The next part asks what the nouns in a sentence are *doing*, which is the question the four cases answer, and es gibt einen Zoo will be the first mystery it solves.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Make it a general rule. Rewrite with man.

Beispiel: Die Leute essen hier viel Brot. → Man isst hier viel Brot.

1. Die Leute sagen in Köln „Hallo".
2. Wir dürfen hier nicht rauchen.
3. Die Leute kaufen das Brot beim Bäcker.

Übungen (continued)

4. Wir müssen an der Ampel warten.
5. Die Leute sprechen in der Schweiz Deutsch.

Exercise 2. Weather report. Put in the verb in the right form.

1. Es _____ heute den ganzen Tag. (regnen)
2. Im Winter _____ es in Köln selten. (schneien)
3. Es _____ heute sehr kalt. (sein)
4. Es _____ schon spät. (sein)
5. Es _____ an der Tür. (klingeln)

Exercise 3. man or Mann?

1. Der _____ dort ist Herr Weber.
2. _____ darf hier nicht parken.
3. Wie schreibt _____ das?
4. Ein _____ kauft Blumen für seine Frau.
5. In Köln sagt _____ „Hallo“.

Exercise 4. Complete the dialogue with: geht, es, mir, mir, dir.

Lena: „Guten Tag, Herr Weber! Wie _____ es Ihnen?“
Herr Weber: „Danke, _____ geht es gut. Und _____?“
Lena: „_____ geht _____ super, danke!“

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Write five rules of your school or your office with man. Use man darf, man darf nicht, man muss and man kann at least once each. Beispiel: Man darf im Unterricht nicht essen.

THE FOUR CASES • CHAPTER 13

Nominativ und Akkusativ

The doer and the target

A1

Welcome to the part of the book that frightens learners in advance and then turns out to be smaller than its reputation. German nouns play roles in the sentence, and the article is their costume: it changes to show who is acting and who is acted upon. The costumes are called cases. There are four, you will learn them one at a time, and here is the secret this whole part rests on: most of the costumes look exactly alike. Today's chapter needs you to learn precisely one new signal, a single -n, and it turns up in only four words.

DEUTSCH

Im Garten ist viel los. Der Hund hat **einen Ball**. Lena wirft **den Ball**, und der Hund holt **den Ball** zurück. Immer wieder.

Die Katze Minka sieht **einen Vogel**. Der Vogel sieht **die Katze** und fliegt schnell weg.

Oma liest **die Zeitung**. Tom bringt **einen Kuchen**. Alle essen **den Kuchen**, und der Hund bekommt **ein Stück**.

ENGLISH

There is a lot going on in the garden. The dog has a ball. Lena throws the ball, and the dog brings the ball back. Again and again.

Minka the cat sees a bird. The bird sees the cat and quickly flies away.

Grandma is reading the newspaper. Tom brings a cake. Everyone eats the cake, and the dog gets a piece.

Two roles, two questions

A great many sentences tell the same tiny story: somebody does something to something. The doer is the subject, and its case is called the **nominative**. The thing the action is aimed at is the object, and its case is called the **accusative**. German gives each role its own question word. Wer? finds the doer. Wen? or was? finds the target:



Ask the two questions and the roles come apart. Wer holt? Der Hund. The dog is nominative. Was holt er? Den Ball. The ball is accusative. That den is the whole news of this chapter.

One promise this book will not make, because it would fail you later. Doer and target are a picture, not a definition. They fit the sentences of this chapter and thousands of others, and that is exactly why they are the right way in. But German has plenty of sentences where nobody does anything and nothing is a target, and their cases are just as firm: Der Mantel gefällt mir, the coat pleases me, Mir ist kalt, I am cold. What actually decides a case is the verb, which comes with its cases built in the way an English verb comes with its prepositions, and the preposition, which comes with a case of its own. Chapters 16 to 19 hand you that properly. Until then, use the picture, and remember it is a picture.

The one article that changes

Here is the table, and read it with the right expectations: three of its four columns are about to tell you that nothing happens.

Only the masculine changes: der becomes den, ein becomes einen, and the signal to listen for is -en: den, einen, keinen, meinen. Feminine, neuter and plural wear the same costume in both roles. Three quarters of the table is a gift.

Lena wirft **den Ball**.

Lena throws the ball.

Der Vogel sieht **die Katze**.

The bird sees the cat.

Oma liest **die Zeitung**.

Grandma is reading the newspaper.

Die Formen • nominative and accusative

	MASKULIN	FEMININ	NEUTRUM	PLURAL
Nominativ	der Mann	die Frau	das Kind	die Kinder
Akkusativ	**den** Mann	die Frau	das Kind	die Kinder
with ein-	ein**en**	eine	ein	—
with kein-	kein**en**	keine	kein	keine
the signal	**-en**	—	—	—

Mein, dein, sein and friends play the ein-game: Ich sehe meinen Bruder, deine Schwester, sein Auto.

Tom bringt **einen Kuchen**.

Tom brings a cake.

Der Hund bekommt **ein Stück**.

The dog gets a piece.

Ich sehe **meinen Bruder** nicht.

I can't see my brother.

Two phrases that always take the accusative

Two everyday patterns come with the accusative built in, and both are worth automating now. Haben always takes an accusative object, which is

why you say einen the moment you own anything masculine. And es gibt, there is, demands the accusative too:

Ich habe **einen Bruder**.

I have a brother.

Hast du **einen Hund**?

Do you have a dog?

Wir haben heute **keinen Unterricht**.

We have no lessons today.

Es gibt **einen Park** in der Nähe.

There is a park nearby.

Gibt es hier **einen Supermarkt**?

Is there a supermarket here?

Watch out

× *Ich habe ein Bruder.*

✓ *Ich habe einen Bruder.* I have a brother.

Haben takes the accusative, and Bruder is masculine: einen Bruder.

× *Der Hund holt der Ball.*

✓ *Der Hund holt den Ball.* The dog fetches the ball.

The sentence has one doer slot and one target slot. The doer wears der, the target wears den: der Hund (wer?), den Ball (was?).

× *Es gibt ein Park in der Stadt.*

✓ *Es gibt einen Park in der Stadt.* There is a park in the town.

Es gibt always takes the accusative: einen Park, einen Bahnhof, einen Markt.

Watch out (continued)

× *Wen kommt heute zu Besuch?*

✓ *Wer kommt heute zu Besuch?* Who is coming to visit today?

Wen asks for the target. The person doing the coming is the doer: wer.

One letter learned, one case pair done. The next chapter gives the accusative its pronouns, so you can stop repeating den Ball, den Ball, den Ball and simply say ihn.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Der or den?

1. _____ Hund holt _____ Ball.
2. _____ Vogel sieht _____ Hund nicht.
3. Wirft Lena _____ Ball?
4. _____ Kuchen ist für alle da.
5. Alle essen _____ Kuchen.

Exercise 2. Ein, eine or einen?

1. Ich habe _____ Bruder.
2. Tom bringt _____ Kuchen.
3. Wir haben _____ Katze.
4. Es gibt hier _____ Park.
5. Lena hat _____ Fahrrad.
6. Hast du _____ Idee?

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 3. Wer or wen?

1. _____ wirft den Ball?
2. _____ siehst du im Garten?
3. _____ liest die Zeitung?
4. _____ besucht ihr am Sonntag?

Exercise 4. Answer with es gibt and the word in brackets.

Beispiel: Was gibt es hier? (ein Park) → Es gibt einen Park.

1. Was gibt es zum Essen? (ein Kuchen)
2. Was gibt es in der Stadt? (ein Markt)
3. Was gibt es im Garten? (ein Hund und eine Katze)
4. Was gibt es heute nicht? (kein Unterricht)

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Write five sentences about what you have and what there is near your home: Ich habe … Es gibt … Use at least three masculine nouns.

THE FOUR CASES • CHAPTER 14

Die Pronomen im Akkusativ

Me, you, him: the short words

A1

In the last chapter the article did the work: der Hund became den Hund the moment the dog was on the receiving end of the verb. But real conversation rarely repeats a noun twice. Once we both know who we are talking about, English shrinks *the dog* to *him*, and *I* shrinks to *me* when someone sees *me*. German does exactly the same, and this chapter gives you its set of short words. Watch them fly around a game of hide and seek:

DEUTSCH

Es ist Sonntag. Lena und Tom spielen Verstecken im Garten. Der Hund Bello und die Katze Minka spielen mit. Lena zählt bis zehn und ruft: „Ich finde **euch**!“

Tom hat ein gutes Versteck, aber Lena sieht seine Schuhe. Sie findet **ihn** sofort. „Und wo ist Minka? Siehst du **sie**?“, fragt Lena. „Nein, ich sehe **sie** nicht“, sagt Tom.

Jetzt hat Lena ein Versteck, aber Bello bellt laut. „Bello findet **mich** immer!“, lacht Lena. „Bello, Minka, kommt! Wir spielen noch einmal. Ich brauche **euch**!“

ENGLISH

It is Sunday. Lena and Tom are playing hide and seek in the garden. Bello the dog and Minka the cat are playing too. Lena counts to ten and calls: “I will find you!”

Tom has a good hiding place, but Lena sees his shoes. She finds him straight away. “And where is Minka? Do you see her?” asks Lena. “No, I don’t see her,” says Tom.

Now Lena has a hiding place, but Bello barks loudly. “Bello always finds me!” laughs Lena. “Bello, Minka, come! We are playing again. I need you!”

From nominative to accusative

You already own half of this chapter. The subject pronouns ich, du, er, sie, es, wir, ihr, sie have been with you since your very first German sentence. What you need now is their accusative outfit, the form they wear when the action lands on them instead of starting from them. English makes the same change: *I* see him, but he sees *me*. Here is the whole wardrobe on one card:

Now look at how little actually happens. Sie, es, sie, Sie do not change at all. Uns and euch you simply learn as the partners of wir and ihr, and they will never trouble you again. The interesting changes are three. Mich

Die Pronomen • nominative to accusative

SINGULAR		PLURAL	
ich → **mich**	me	wir → **uns**	us
du → **dich**	you	ihr → **euch**	you (plural)
er → **ihn**	him	sie → **sie**	them
sie → **sie**	her	Sie → **Sie**	you (polite)
es → **es**	it		

and dich rhyme with each other, so they come as a pair: learn one and the other follows. And er becomes ihn, which should feel familiar, because it is the masculine -n again. In chapter 13 the accusative turned der into den. Here it turns er into ihn. One case, one letter, and once more it is only the masculine that bothers to show it.

Bello findet **mich** immer.

Bello always finds me.

Ich sehe **dich**!

I can see you!

Lena sucht Tom und findet **ihn** sofort.

Lena looks for Tom and finds him straight away.

Kennst du **sie**? Das ist Frau Weber.

Do you know her? That is Mrs Weber.

Oma besucht **uns** am Sonntag.

Grandma is visiting us on Sunday.

Kinder, ich höre **euch**!

Children, I can hear you!

Things have gender too

Here comes the part where English quietly leads you astray. In English, every thing is *it*: the key, the bag, the phone, all *it*. German does something different, and it follows directly from Part I of this book. A thing keeps the gender of its noun even after the noun has left the sentence. Der Schlüssel is masculine, so the key is er as a subject and ihn as an object. Die Tasche is feminine, so the bag is sie. Only das Handy is truly es. The rule fits in one line: **pick the pronoun by the noun's gender, not by whether the thing is alive.** To a German ear, calling the key es sounds as odd as calling your brother *it* would sound to you.

Wo ist der Schlüssel? Ich sehe **ihn** nicht.

Where is the key? I can't see it.

Die Tasche? Ich habe **sie**.

The bag? I've got it.

Das Buch? Ich lese **es** gerade.

The book? I am reading it right now.

Der Kuchen ist fertig. Wir essen **ihn** später.

The cake is ready. We'll eat it later.

Ich suche meine Brille. Hast du **sie**?

I am looking for my glasses. Have you got them?

Das Handy ist neu. Tom braucht **es** für die Schule.
The phone is new. Tom needs it for school.

Notice what this does for the listener. When Lena says Ich sehe ihn nicht, the little word ihn already tells you she means something masculine, the key and not the bag. The gender you learned with each noun in Part I was never decoration. It is the thread that lets German pronouns point back at the right thing.

Watch out

× *Ich liebe du.*
✓ *Ich liebe dich.* I love you.
After the verb, du changes into dich, just as English *I* changes into *me*. The subject form never follows the verb as its object.

× *Wo ist der Bus? Ich sehe es nicht.*
✓ *Wo ist der Bus? Ich sehe ihn nicht.* Where is the bus? I can't see it.
English *it* is a trap. Der Bus is masculine, so the bus stays masculine as a pronoun: er as subject, ihn as object.

× *Kennst du er?*
✓ *Kennst du ihn?* Do you know him?
Er is the subject form only. As soon as he is the one being known, seen or found, he becomes ihn, with the same masculine -n as den.

× *Oma sieht wir.*
✓ *Oma sieht uns.* Grandma sees us.
Wir does the seeing; uns gets seen. English has the very same pair in *we* and *us*.

With mich, dich, ihn and their friends, the accusative is now complete: you can mark the receiving end of a verb whether it is a full noun or a short word. The next chapter opens the third case. The dative is the case of the receiver, the person something is given *to*, and it will hand every one of these pronouns yet another outfit: mir, dir, ihm.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. **Replace the underlined noun with a pronoun. Mind the gender!**

Beispiel: Ich sehe den Hund. → Ich sehe ihn.

1. Tom sucht den Ball.
2. Lena findet die Katze.
3. Ich lese das Buch.
4. Wir kaufen die Äpfel.

Exercise 2. **Put in the pronoun that fits the context: ihn, sie or es.**

1. Wo ist mein Schlüssel? Ich finde _____ nicht.
2. Die Suppe ist heiß. Ich esse _____ später.
3. Das Auto ist schmutzig. Papa wäscht _____ am Samstag.
4. Der Film ist toll. Wir sehen _____ heute Abend.
5. Das Fenster ist offen. Bitte schließ _____!
6. Die Bücher sind schwer. Tom trägt _____ nach Hause.

Exercise 3. **Complete the dialogue with mich, dich, euch or uns.**

Lena: „Tom, ich sehe _____! Ich sehe deine Schuhe!“
Tom: „Ja, ja. Bello findet _____ auch immer. Ich brauche ein besseres Versteck.“

Übungen (continued)

Oma ruft: „Kinder, wo seid ihr? Ich suche _____ schon zehn Minuten!“

Lena: „Hier, Oma! Du findest _____ im Garten!“

Exercise 4. Er or ihn? Decide whether the pronoun is the subject or the object.

1. Wo ist Bello? _____ schläft im Garten.
2. Ich rufe Bello, aber ich sehe _____ nicht.
3. Der Kuchen riecht gut. Ist _____ schon fertig?
4. Ja, wir essen _____ gleich.

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Look around your room and write five sentences about things in it, each with a pronoun: ihn, sie or es. For example: Der Stuhl ist alt, aber ich mag ihn. Das Bett? Ich liebe es. Check each noun’s gender before you choose.

THE FOUR CASES • CHAPTER 15

Der Dativ

The case of the receiver

A2

Every sentence about giving has three characters: someone who gives, something that changes hands, and someone who receives it. You already know the first two. The nominative names the giver, and the accusative marks the thing. This chapter adds the third character. The dative is the case of the receiver, the person the action arrives at, and German dresses it in its own set of little words: dem, der, den, einem, mir, dir, ihm. Watch them at work at a birthday party:

DEUTSCH

Am Samstag hat Oma Geburtstag. Lena kauft **ihr** einen Blumenstrauß und schenkt **der Oma** auch eine Karte. Tom hilft **seinem Vater** in der Küche: Sie backen **der Oma** einen Kuchen.

Um vier kommen die Gäste. Lena zeigt **den Gästen** den Garten. Der Kuchen schmeckt **allen**. „Der Strauß gefällt **mir** sehr", sagt Oma. „Ich danke **euch** von Herzen."

Nur der Hund ist traurig. Der Kuchen gehört leider nicht **ihm**.

ENGLISH

On Saturday it is Grandma's birthday. Lena buys her a bouquet and also gives Grandma a card. Tom helps his father in the kitchen: they are baking Grandma a cake.

At four the guests arrive. Lena shows the guests the garden. Everyone likes the cake. "I love the bouquet," says Grandma. "I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Only the dog is sad. Sadly, the cake does not belong to him.

One sentence, three roles

Take the simplest giving sentence there is and ask German's three question words about it. Wer? finds the giver, was? finds the thing, and the new question, wem? (to whom?), finds the receiver:



Whatever answers wem? stands in the dative. That is the way into the case, and it is worth saying in one line: **the accusative is what you give, the dative is who you give it to.** It is a way in rather than the whole story. The dative also turns up where nothing is being handed over at

all, because certain verbs and certain prepositions simply demand it, and chapters 16 and 17 are about exactly that. Picture the sentence as an arrow. The nominative is where the arrow starts, the accusative is what flies, and the dative is where the arrow lands. If a phrase is the natural answer to wem?, it is dative: Wem gibst du den Ball? Dem Kind.

One practical consequence follows at once. Things are given; people receive. So the dative object is almost always a person, an animal, or a group, which is why this chapter is full of mothers, guests, children and one disappointed dog. The verbs of transfer, geben, schenken, zeigen, bringen, erzählen, kaufen, all build the same three-role sentence:

Ich gebe **dem Kind** den Ball.
I give the child the ball.

Sie schenkt **ihrer Mutter** einen Schal.
She gives her mother a scarf.

Wir bringen **der Nachbarin** die Post.
We bring the neighbour the post.

Der Lehrer erklärt **den Schülern** die Regel.
The teacher explains the rule to the pupils.

Er kauft **seiner Tochter** ein Eis.
He buys his daughter an ice cream.

Zeigst du **mir** deine Fotos?
Will you show me your photos?

English has the same receiver role. It just refuses to dress it up. English marks the receiver either with *to* ("I give the ball *to the child*") or by position alone ("I give *the child* the ball"). German replaces both tricks with one case

ending, and that has a pleasant consequence. Because dem Kind is audibly dative, German never needs a word for *to* in these sentences, and adding one is a classic English-speaker's mistake. The dative alone already means *to the child.*

The article forms

Before you look at the table, listen to it. The dative has the most regular endings of all four cases, so you can learn the tune before the words. The dative wears two letters: -m and -r. Masculine and neuter both take dem, the feminine takes der, and the plural takes den. So there are really only three forms to learn, because masculine and neuter collapse into one. That collapse is no accident: those two genders are near twins everywhere in German, and only the nominative and the accusative ever pull them apart. Here the twins dress alike again, and dem serves them both.

The plural holds the one genuine surprise. In every other cell of the table the article does all the work and the noun just stands there. In the dative plural, and only there, the noun itself joins in: after den, the noun takes a final -n of its own, den Kindern, den Gästen. There is no clever reason to remember; it is simply how the dative plural is built, and it is the one ending in this book you have to take on trust. It does have a happy side effect, though, worth noticing rather than learning: that extra -n keeps the dative den from sounding like the masculine accusative den of chapter 13. The noun only skips it when it already ends in -n (den Frauen) or is a foreign plural in -s (den Autos). Read the card and listen for this in the last two rows:

Die Formen • the dative endings

	MASKULIN	FEMININ	NEUTRUM	PLURAL
Nominativ	der Mann	die Frau	das Kind	die Kinder
Dativ	**dem** Mann	**der** Frau	**dem** Kind	**den** Kinder**n**
with ein-	ein**em**	ein**er**	ein**em**	—
with kein-	kein**em**	kein**er**	kein**em**	kein**en** …**-n**
the signal	**-em**	**-er**	**-em**	**-en + n**

Every word that plays the article game (mein, dein, sein, unser, dieser, jeder) takes exactly these endings: meinem Vater, deiner Schwester, diesem Kind, jedem Gast.

One small warning before the examples. The feminine dative der Frau looks exactly like a masculine nominative. Do not let that unsettle you. The verb and the word order always tell you who is doing what.

Der Kellner bringt **dem Gast** die Rechnung.

The waiter brings the guest the bill.

Die Jacke gehört **der Frau** am Fenster.

The jacket belongs to the woman at the window.

Ich schenke **dem Mädchen** ein Buch.

I am giving the girl a book.

Er erzählt **einer Kollegin** die Neuigkeit.

He tells a colleague the news.

Das Fahrrad gehört **keinem von uns**.

The bicycle belongs to none of us.

Sie empfiehlt **einem Freund** das Restaurant.

She recommends the restaurant to a friend.

And here is the plural echo at work, article and noun sounding the -n together:

Die Lehrerin hilft **den Kindern** bei den Hausaufgaben.

The teacher helps the children with their homework.

Er dankt **den Gästen** für die Blumen.

He thanks the guests for the flowers.

Sie zeigt **den Touristen** die Altstadt.

She shows the tourists the old town.

Das Haus gehört **meinen Eltern**.

The house belongs to my parents.

Der Trainer erklärt **den Spielern** den Plan.

The coach explains the plan to the players.

The pronouns

In real conversation the receiver is rarely "the child". It is *me*, *you*, *him*. So the dative pronouns are the forms you will actually say most often, and two of them, mir and dir, may be the most frequently spoken case forms in the whole language. Before the card, notice that the melody you just learned carries over: ihm and ihr end in the same -m and -r as dem and der. The

Die Pronomen • nominative to dative

SINGULAR		PLURAL	
ich → **mir**	to me	wir → **uns**	to us
du → **dir**	to you	ihr → **euch**	to you (plural)
er → **ihm**	to him	sie → **ihnen**	to them
sie → **ihr**	to her	Sie → **Ihnen**	to you (polite)
es → **ihm**	to it		

paradigm rhymes with itself, so you are not learning new endings, only new beginnings.

One small ambush hides in the card: ihr is both the nominative *you all* and the dative *to her*. The sentence always disarms it, because the nominative ihr comes with its own verb form (ihr geht), while the dative ihr never does.

Kannst du **mir** bitte helfen?

Can you help me, please?

Wie geht es **Ihnen**?

How are you? (literally: how goes it to you?)

Das Kleid gefällt **ihr** sehr.

She likes the dress a lot. (literally: the dress is pleasing to her)

Ich zeige **euch** die Wohnung.

I will show you (plural) the flat.

Der Wagen gehört **uns** nicht.

The car does not belong to us.

Gib **ihm** bitte den Schlüssel.

Please give him the key.

Das Essen schmeckt **ihnen** nicht.

They do not like the food. (literally: the food does not taste good to them)

Verbs that insist on the dative

A small family of verbs takes a dative object even though nothing visible changes hands. They puzzle English speakers because their English cousins take a plain direct object: you help *someone*, you thank *someone*. For some of them the receiver picture still helps a little, because help, thanks and answers are things a person *gets*. Do not lean on it, though. These verbs simply come with the dative attached, and chapter 16 will put that on a proper footing. Learn each one with its case and you will never need the metaphor.

Three of these verbs, gefallen, gehören, schmecken, feel downright backwards, and it is worth seeing why before you meet them in the list. English says "I like the dress" and makes *I* the subject. German turns the sentence around: the thing is the subject, and the person is the receiver. Das Kleid gefällt mir is literally *the dress is pleasing to me*. The pleasure travels from the dress to you, and the dative marks where it lands. Once you hear these verbs that way, the case stops being a rule and becomes the only choice that makes sense. Learn all eight as "verb + wem" and the case comes free:

helfen (+ Dativ) • to help

Meine Schwester hilft **mir** bei den Hausaufgaben.

My sister helps me with my homework.

danken (+ Dativ) • to thank

Wir danken **Ihnen** für die Einladung.

We thank you for the invitation.

gefallen (+ Dativ) • to please, to be to someone's liking

Der Film hat **meinem Vater** gut gefallen.

My father liked the film. (the film was pleasing to him)

gehören (+ Dativ) • to belong to

Die Tasche gehört **der Frau** dort drüben.

The bag belongs to the woman over there.

antworten (+ Dativ) • to answer (a person)

Der Junge antwortet **dem Lehrer** nicht.

The boy does not answer the teacher.

passen (+ Dativ) • to fit, to suit

Die Hose passt **meinem Bruder** nicht mehr.

The trousers no longer fit my brother.

schmecken (+ Dativ) • to taste good (to someone)

Die Suppe schmeckt **den Kindern** nicht.

The children do not like the soup. (it does not taste good to them)

folgen (+ Dativ) • to follow

Der Hund folgt **seinem Herrchen** überallhin.

The dog follows his master everywhere.

Two objects, one order

Give-sentences often carry both objects at once, a receiver and a thing, so German needs a rule for who goes first. There is one default for nouns, one exception for pronouns, and the whole system fits on a ladder. Watch the same sentence tighten step by step as its objects turn into pronouns:

Ich gebe **meinem Bruder** das Geld. — two nouns: dative first

I give my brother the money.

Ich gebe **ihm** das Geld. — pronoun before noun

I give him the money.

Ich gebe es **meinem Bruder**. — pronoun before noun

I give it to my brother.

Ich gebe es **ihm**. — two pronouns: accusative first

I give it to him.

The ladder holds three rules, and each has its reason. With two nouns, the receiver leads: Ich gebe **meinem Bruder** das Geld, the same order English uses in "I give my brother the money." A pronoun always overtakes a noun, whichever case it carries, because pronouns are light little words and German likes to move the light things forward: Ich gebe **ihm** das Geld.

Ich gebe es meinem Bruder. Only when both objects are pronouns does the order flip to accusative first: Ich gebe es ihm, never ihm es.

Ich schreibe **meiner Tante** eine Karte.

I am writing my aunt a card.

Ich schreibe sie **ihr** noch heute.

I will write it to her today.

Sie schenkt **ihrem Sohn** ein Fahrrad.

She is giving her son a bicycle.

Sie schenkt es **ihm** zum Geburtstag.

She is giving it to him for his birthday.

Bringst du **uns** die Speisekarte?

Will you bring us the menu?

Der Kellner bringt sie **uns** sofort.

The waiter brings it to us right away.

Watch out

× *Ich helfe meine Mutter jeden Samstag.*

✓ *Ich helfe meiner Mutter jeden Samstag.* I help my mother every Saturday.

helfen takes the dative, even though English *help* takes a direct object. The helped person receives the help.

× *Das Geschenk gefällt mich sehr.*

✓ *Das Geschenk gefällt mir sehr.* I like the present a lot.

With gefallen, the thing is the subject and the person is the dative receiver: the gift is pleasing *to me*.

Watch out (continued)

× *Ich gebe das Buch zu ihm.*

✓ *Ich gebe ihm das Buch.* I give him the book.

No zu. The dative by itself already means *to him*; English speakers add zu because English needs *to*.

× *Sie hilft den Kinder.*

✓ *Sie hilft den Kindern.* She helps the children.

In the dative plural the noun takes a final -n as well as the article: den Kindern, den Gästen, den Spielern.

Two further chapters lean on what you now know. The next chapter sets dative and accusative side by side in the sentences where both appear, and chapter 17 hands the dative to the prepositions (aus, bei, mit, nach, seit, von, zu), which demand it without asking any question at all.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Put in the dative article: dem, der or den.

1. Ich danke _____ Lehrer.
2. Das Auto gehört _____ Nachbarin.
3. Er hilft _____ Kind.
4. Sie zeigt _____ Gästen den Garten.
5. Der Hund folgt _____ Mann.
6. Das Handy gehört _____ Schülerin.

Exercise 2. Replace the dative noun with a pronoun.

Beispiel: Ich helfe meinem Bruder. → Ich helfe ihm.

1. Der Film gefällt meiner Mutter.

Übungen (continued)

2. Das Fahrrad gehört den Kindern.
3. Ich danke Frau Weber für die Hilfe.
4. Die Suppe schmeckt meinem Vater nicht.
5. Wir antworten dem Lehrer auf Deutsch.

Exercise 3. **Choose the verb and put it in, using each verb exactly once: passen, schmecken, gehören, danken, gefallen, helfen.**

1. Die Schuhe _____ mir leider nicht.
2. Der Kuchen _____ den Gästen ausgezeichnet.
3. Wem _____ diese schwarze Tasche?
4. Ich _____ dir herzlich für die Blumen.
5. Das Bild _____ mir sehr gut.
6. Kannst du deiner Oma im Garten _____?

Exercise 4. **Build the sentence, then replace the accusative object with a pronoun and build it again.**

1. ich / geben / meine Schwester / das Buch
2. er / zeigen / die Gäste / der Garten
3. wir / schenken / der Lehrer / eine Karte

Exercise 5. **Your turn.**

Birthdays are coming. Write five sentences about presents: wem schenkst du was? Use at least one pronoun receiver (ihm, ihr, ihnen) and one plural receiver with its extra -n.

THE FOUR CASES • CHAPTER 16

Wen oder wem?

Choosing between the two

A2

Chapter 15 ended with a promise: to set the dative and the accusative side by side in the sentences where both appear. Here is that chapter. You already own both cases separately. What remains is the moment of choice, the split second in which you must decide between mich and mir, between ihn and ihm. Watch Lena make that choice a dozen times without noticing:

DEUTSCH

Es ist Dezember, und Lena plant die Geschenke. Sie schenkt **ihrer Mutter einen Schal** und **ihrem Vater eine Mütze**. Oma bekommt **einen Kalender** mit Fotos von der Familie.

Am Nachmittag zeigt Lena **Tom ihre Liste**. Er liest sie langsam und sucht **seinen Namen**. „Und was schenkst du **mir**?“, fragt er. „Das sage ich **dir** nicht!“, lacht Lena. „Aber es gefällt **dir** bestimmt.“

ENGLISH

It is December, and Lena is planning the presents. She is giving her mother a scarf and her father a woolly hat. Grandma is getting a calendar with photos of the family.

In the afternoon Lena shows Tom her list. He reads it slowly and looks for his name. "And what are you giving me?" he asks. "I am not telling you!" laughs Lena. "But you will definitely like it."

Ask the verb

With the objects of a verb, the choice between the two cases is not yours to make. The verb has already made it, and you only have to ask the right question. (After a preposition the story differs: chapter 17 and chapter 18 name prepositions that fix the case outright, and chapter 19 has nine where the choice really is yours, because it carries meaning.) Point the question wen? or was? at the sentence, and whatever answers is the target of the action, the accusative. Point wem? at it, and whatever answers is the receiver, the dative. One sentence from the story carries both answers at once:



Was schenkt Lena? Einen Schal. That is the accusative. Wem schenkt sie ihn? Ihrer Mutter. That is the dative. Now sort the verbs you know into

three drawers. The biggest drawer by far holds the ordinary verbs that take a plain accusative: sehen, haben, brauchen, fragen, lieben and hundreds more. The second drawer is the small family from chapter 15 that insists on the dative, because their object is really a receiver: helfen, danken, gefallen, gehören, antworten, schmecken. The third drawer holds the giving verbs, geben, schenken, zeigen, bringen, erzählen, which take both objects at once, the receiver in the dative and the thing in the accusative. Here are all three drawers open:

Ich sehe **den Bus** schon.

I can already see the bus.

Lena fragt **ihren Bruder** nach seiner Größe.

Lena asks her brother about his size.

Wir brauchen **einen Plan** für Dezember.

We need a plan for December.

Tom hilft **seiner Schwester** beim Einpacken.

Tom helps his sister with the wrapping.

Die Mütze gefällt **ihrem Vater** sehr.

Her father likes the woolly hat a lot.

Sie schenkt **ihrer Oma** **einen Kalender**.

She is giving her grandma a calendar.

Notice that the question test works even when English misleads you. English asks *whom does Tom help?* with the same little word it uses for *whom does Lena ask?*, so English cannot warn you that the two verbs part ways. German can. Fragen answers to wen?, helfen answers to wem?, and the safest habit is to learn each dative verb together with its question, as helfen + wem, exactly as chapter 15 recommended.

Verben mit Dativ • learn the verb, not a rule

helfen	to help	**gefallen**	to please, to like
danken	to thank	**gehören**	to belong to
antworten	to answer	**folgen**	to follow
schmecken	to taste good to	**passen**	to fit, to suit

Four of these translate into English with a plain object, which is exactly why they must be learned as German words rather than as translations: Ich helfe dir, not ich helfe dich.

Be honest with yourself about what the question test can and cannot do. It checks a case you already suspect; it does not discover one, because choosing which question to ask is already choosing the case. And the receiver picture, useful as it has been, will not carry you through this drawer. Nobody receives anything in Der Mantel gefällt mir or Das Buch gehört meiner Schwester, and folgen and passen are no better. These verbs simply come with the dative attached, the way English *listen* comes with *to* and *wait* with *for*. Nobody asks why. You learn the verb with its case, and after a few dozen the pattern starts feeling like sense rather than list.

The pairs

With nouns the choice is visible in the article, den Vater against dem Vater. With pronouns it is the whole word that changes, so the pronouns are where the choice truly lives. Here are the two sets side by side, each pair answering its own question:

Die Paare • wen? and wem? side by side

	WEN?	WEM?		WEN?	WEM?
ich	mich	**mir**	wir	uns	**uns**
du	dich	**dir**	ihr	euch	**euch**
er	ihn	**ihm**	sie	sie	**ihnen**
sie	sie	**ihr**	Sie	Sie	**Ihnen**
es	es	**ihm**			

The signal letters from chapter 15 return: ihm and ihr rhyme with dem and der.

Before you sigh at another table, read the plural column again. Uns is uns in both cases, and euch is euch. Two persons come off the worry list entirely, and you can say Er sieht uns and Er hilft uns without choosing anything. The real work sits in the first column, in mich/mir and dich/dir, the pairs of everyday conversation. Drill them until the verb picks the form for you:

Er sieht **mich** nicht.

He does not see me.

Er hilft **mir** trotzdem.

He helps me anyway.

Ich frage **dich** zum letzten Mal.

I am asking you for the last time.

Ich danke **dir** für die Idee.

I thank you for the idea.

Lena liebt **ihn** doch.

Lena does love him.

Der Schal gehört **ihm** nicht.

The scarf does not belong to him.

Both at once

When a giving verb brings both objects into one sentence, the order follows the ladder you climbed at the end of chapter 15. This section only reminds you of it. With two nouns, the receiver leads. A pronoun overtakes a noun, whichever case it carries. And when both objects are pronouns, the order flips to accusative first. The same rules, on a fresh sentence:

Ich zeige **meiner Schwester** das Foto.

I show my sister the photo.

Ich zeige **ihr** das Foto.

I show her the photo.

Ich zeige es **meiner Schwester**.

I show it to my sister.

Ich zeige es **ihr**.

I show it to her.

Lena sagt es **ihm** nicht.

Lena is not telling him.

If the last line of the ladder ever wobbles, remember the story: „Das sage ich dir nicht!“ Lena puts das up front for emphasis, but had she used the

plain order, it would have been Ich sage es dir nicht, accusative before dative, never dir es.

Watch out

× *Ich liebe dir.*
✓ *Ich liebe dich.* I love you.
Lieben is an ordinary accusative verb. The loved one is the target of the feeling, not a receiver, so it is wen?, not wem?.

× *Kannst du mich helfen?*
✓ *Kannst du mir helfen?* Can you help me?
Helfen belongs to the dative family from chapter 15. Help is something a person receives, so the verb asks wem?.

× *Sie fragt ihm.*
✓ *Sie fragt ihn.* She asks him.
A classic trap. Fragen looks like antworten, but it takes the accusative. You ask *someone*, you answer *to someone*: Sie fragt ihn, er antwortet ihr.

× *Ich gebe ihm es.*
✓ *Ich gebe es ihm.* I give it to him.
When both objects are pronouns, the accusative goes first. The order es ihm is fixed, exactly as the ladder in chapter 15 showed.

You now hold the full machinery of the two object cases: what each one means, how each one looks, and how to choose between them. The next chapter adds a shortcut. Seven little prepositions, aus, bei, mit, nach, seit, von, zu, take the dative every single time, without asking any question at all.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. **Wen oder wem? Form the question for the underlined part.**

Beispiel: Lena fragt ihren Bruder. → Wen fragt Lena?

1. Tom hilft seiner Schwester.
2. Wir besuchen unsere Oma am Sonntag.
3. Das Fahrrad gehört meinem Bruder.
4. Er liebt seine Frau.

Exercise 2. **Put in mich, mir, dich or dir. The English word in brackets tells you the person.**

1. Kannst du _____ bitte helfen? (me)
2. Ich sehe _____ morgen in der Schule. (you)
3. Das Geschenk gefällt _____ sehr. (me)
4. Ich danke _____ für die Karte. (you)
5. Warum fragst du _____ nicht? (me)
6. Oma liebt _____ doch. (you)

Exercise 3. **Ihn or ihm?**

1. Ich frage _____ heute Abend.
2. Das Auto gehört _____ nicht.
3. Wir danken _____ für die Hilfe.
4. Siehst du _____ dort am Fenster?

Exercise 4. **Climb the ladder: replace first the dative noun with a pronoun, then also the accusative noun. Watch the order flip.**

Beispiel: Ich zeige meinem Bruder das Foto. → Ich zeige ihm das Foto. → Ich zeige es ihm.

Übungen (continued)

1. Sie schenkt ihrer Mutter einen Schal.
2. Wir geben dem Kind den Ball.
3. Er erzählt seinen Freunden die Geschichte.

Exercise 5. Your turn.

December is coming for you too. Write five sentences about presents for three people: wem schenkst du was? Use at least two pronoun receivers (ihm, ihr, ihnen) and at least one sentence with both a pronoun thing and a pronoun receiver (Ich schenke es ihr).

THE FOUR CASES • CHAPTER 17

Präpositionen mit Dativ

Seven words, one case

A2

In chapter 15 the dative answered a question: whatever answers wem? stands in the dative. This chapter is different, and in a way easier. Seven little prepositions take the dative every single time, without asking any question at all. They happen to be among the most frequent words in the language, so this one closed club will decorate half the sentences you say. Watch all seven at work:

DEUTSCH

Am Sonntag kommt Besuch: Lenas Onkel Peter. Er kommt **aus der Schweiz** und bleibt eine Woche **bei der Familie**. **Seit einem Jahr** wohnt er in Zürich. Er reist immer **mit dem Zug**, denn er fliegt nicht gern.

Nach dem Frühstück gehen Lena und ihr Onkel **zu Oma**. Sie trinken Kaffee, und Oma erzählt **von früher**. Am Abend gehen die beiden **nach Hause**.

„Grüß deine Eltern **von mir**!“, ruft Oma **aus dem Fenster**.

ENGLISH

On Sunday there is a visitor: Lena's Uncle Peter. He comes from Switzerland and is staying with the family for a week. He has been living in Zurich for a year. He always travels by train, because he does not like flying.

After breakfast Lena and her uncle go to Grandma's. They drink coffee, and Grandma talks about the old days. In the evening the two walk home.

"Say hello to your parents from me!" Grandma calls from the window.

Seven words, one rule

Here is the club. Generations of learners have memorised it as a little chant, and you should too, because membership is the entire grammar: after these seven words, the dative is automatic. They are not quite the only dative prepositions in German, but they are the seven you will meet daily; rarer members such as außer and gegenüber take the dative just as these do. Gegenüber has one habit of its own: after a pronoun it stands behind, mir gegenüber, never gegenüber mir.

Notice what this means in practice. You never have to think about the case after these words again. Mit arrives, and der Zug bows into dem Zug on its own. All the endings you learned in chapter 15, -em, -er, -em, -en plus the plural -n, simply reappear here, summoned by a preposition instead of a question.

Der Dativ-Club • always, without exception

aus	out of, from	aus der Schweiz, aus dem Haus
bei	at, with	bei der Familie, bei Oma
mit	with, by	mit dem Zug, mit meiner Schwester
nach	after; to	nach dem Essen, nach Berlin
seit	since, for	seit einem Jahr, seit Montag
von	from, of	von mir, von der Arbeit
zu	to	zu Oma, zur Schule

Say the chant out loud a few times: aus, bei, mit, nach, seit, von, zu. A few quieter members, gegenüber (opposite) and außer (except for), join the club at higher levels.

The seven, one by one

aus (+ Dativ) • out of, from (an origin)

Tom kommt gerade aus **dem Haus**.

Tom is just coming out of the house.

bei (+ Dativ) • at, with (a person or place)

Lena wohnt noch bei **ihren Eltern**.

Lena still lives with her parents.

mit (+ Dativ) • with; by (a means of transport)

Wir fahren mit **dem Bus** in die Stadt.

We take the bus into town.

nach (+ Dativ) • after; to (cities and countries)

Nach **dem Essen** gehen wir spazieren.

After the meal we go for a walk.

seit (+ Dativ) • since, for (a length of time)

Ich lerne seit **einem Jahr** Deutsch.

I have been learning German for a year.

von (+ Dativ) • from, of

Das Geschenk ist von **meiner Oma**.

The present is from my grandma.

zu (+ Dativ) • to (people and places in town)

Am Samstag fahren wir zu **meiner Tante**.

On Saturday we are going to my aunt's.

One member deserves a second look. Seit tells you how long something has been going on, and German pairs it with the present tense, because the situation is still true now. Ich lerne seit einem Jahr Deutsch: literally *I am learning German since a year*, because the learning has not stopped. English switches to *have been learning*, and that mismatch is exactly what the Watch-out panel below is for.

The little fusions

German finds zu dem and bei dem a mouthful, so the preposition and the article melt together. These fusions are not casual slang. They are the normal forms, in writing too, and using the long form puts a spotlight on the noun (zu dem Arzt sounds like *to that particular doctor*):

zu + dem → **zum**

zu + der → **zur**

bei + dem → **beim**

von + dem → **vom**

Ich gehe heute **zum** Arzt.

I am going to the doctor today.

Lena fährt **zur** Schule.

Lena is going to school.

Tom ist **beim** Friseur.

Tom is at the hairdresser's.

Das ist ein Foto **vom** See.

That is a photo of the lake.

Nach or zu? The going-places rule

Both nach and zu can translate English *to*, so here is the border between them. Nach is for the big map: cities, most countries (the ones without an article) and the word Hause. Zu is for everything you could actually walk up to: people, shops, buildings.

Im Sommer fliegen wir **nach Italien**.
In the summer we are flying to Italy.

Der Zug fährt **nach Berlin**.
The train goes to Berlin.

Um sechs gehe ich **nach Hause**.
At six I go home.

Ich gehe **zu Oma**.
I am going to Grandma's.

Er muss **zum** Supermarkt.
He has to go to the supermarket.

Kommst du mit **zur** Post?
Are you coming along to the post office?

And one pair is worth learning as a picture: nach Hause is the journey, zu Hause is the sofa. Ich gehe nach Hause means I am on my way; ich bin zu Hause means I have arrived and my shoes are off.

Watch out

× *Ich gehe nach meiner Oma.*
✓ *Ich gehe zu meiner Oma.* I am going to my grandma's.
People always take zu. Nach is for cities, countries and nach Hause.

× *Wir fahren zu Berlin.*
✓ *Wir fahren nach Berlin.* We are going to Berlin.
Cities and article-less countries take nach, never zu. The few countries with an article, like die Schweiz, take in; that story comes with the two-way prepositions.

× *Ich habe seit 2023 hier gewohnt.*
✓ *Ich wohne seit 2023 hier.* I have lived here since 2023.
With seit, German uses the present tense as long as the situation still holds. English *have lived* is the false friend.

× *Er kommt mit den Zug.*
✓ *Er kommt mit dem Zug.* He is coming by train.
After mit the dative is automatic: mit dem Zug, mit der Bahn, mit den Kindern.

The club needs a rival to feel complete. The accusative keeps a small gang of prepositions of its own, and a third family famously switches between the two cases depending on the question. Both are coming later in this part, and the method stays the same: learn the members once, and the case takes care of itself.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. **Put in the preposition, using each of the seven exactly once: aus, bei, mit, nach, seit, von, zu.**

1. Ich fahre _____ dem Fahrrad zur Schule.
2. Tom kommt _____ der Schweiz.
3. _____ dem Essen gehen wir spazieren.
4. Wir wohnen _____ einem Jahr in Köln.
5. Das Geschenk ist _____ meiner Oma.
6. Am Samstag fahre ich _____ meiner Tante.
7. Lena wohnt noch _____ ihren Eltern.

Exercise 2. **Put in the dative form: dem, der, den or einem.**

1. Wir fahren mit _____ Zug.
2. Lena wohnt bei _____ Familie.
3. Nach _____ Schule gehe ich nach Hause.
4. Er kommt aus _____ Schweiz.
5. Seit _____ Monat lerne ich Deutsch.
6. Tom erzählt von _____ Ferien.

Exercise 3. **Rewrite with the fused form: zum, zur, beim or vom.**

Beispiel: Ich gehe zu dem Arzt. → Ich gehe zum Arzt.

1. Wir fahren zu dem Bahnhof.
2. Sie geht zu der Post.
3. Tom ist bei dem Bäcker.
4. Das Brot ist von dem Markt.

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 4. Nach or zu?

1. Wir fahren im August _____ Berlin.
2. Ich gehe heute _____ meiner Freundin.
3. Um sechs fahre ich _____ Hause.
4. Gehst du morgen _____ Oma?
5. Im Winter fliegen wir _____ Spanien.

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Describe your way to school or work in five sentences. Use mit, zu or zur, nach, bei and seit at least once each.

THE FOUR CASES • CHAPTER 18

Präpositionen mit Akkusativ

Five words, one case

A2

Chapter 17 handed you a club of seven words that always take the dative. Here is its rival, and it is even smaller. Five little prepositions take the accusative every single time, no questions asked. Learn the members once, and the case takes care of itself, exactly as promised. Watch all five help Lena hunt for a present:

DEUTSCH

Samstagmorgen. Tom hat bald Geburtstag, und Lena geht **durch die Stadt**. Sie sucht ein Geschenk **für ihn**. Im Buchladen findet sie nichts, denn Tom liest nicht gern. **Gegen elf** wird sie müde. **Ohne eine Idee** steht sie am Marktplatz.

Dann läuft sie **um die Ecke**, und da ist ein Sportgeschäft: ein Trikot! **Um zwölf** ist sie wieder zu Hause.

„**Ohne dich** finde ich nie etwas“, sagt sie zu Bello.

ENGLISH

Saturday morning. Tom's birthday is coming up soon, and Lena walks through the town. She is looking for a present for him. In the bookshop she finds nothing, because Tom does not like reading. Around eleven she gets tired. Out of ideas, she stands in the market square.

Then she walks round the corner, and there is a sports shop: a football shirt! At twelve she is back home.

"Without you I never find anything," she says to Bello.

Five words, one rule

Here is the club card. Just like the dative seven, these five are worth memorising as a chant, because membership is the entire grammar: after these five words, the accusative is automatic. One more is worth carrying with them, because you will need it from your first week: bis, until. It takes the accusative too, and usually stands in front of a bare word, bis morgen, bis Montag, bis nächste Woche.

Notice how gentle this club is in practice. You learned in chapter 13 that only the masculine actually shows the accusative: der becomes den, ein becomes einen, and the feminine, neuter and plural forms do not change at all. So durch die Stadt and ohne das Auto look exactly like the nominative, and only durch den Park and für meinen Bruder wear the uniform openly. Five words, one ending to watch.

Der Akkusativ-Club • always, without exception

durch	through	durch die Stadt, durch den Park
für	for	für ihn, für meinen Bruder
gegen	against; around (times)	gegen den Baum, gegen elf
ohne	without	ohne eine Idee, ohne dich
um	around; at (clock times)	um die Ecke, um zwölf

Say the chant out loud a few times: durch, für, gegen, ohne, um. Two quieter members join at higher levels: bis (until), and entlang (along), which takes the accusative when it follows its noun: den Fluss entlang.

The five, one by one

durch (+ Akkusativ) • through

Wir gehen durch **den Park**.

We walk through the park.

für (+ Akkusativ) • for

Das Geschenk ist für **meinen Bruder**.

The present is for my brother.

gegen (+ Akkusativ) • against; around (with times)

Das Auto fährt gegen **den Baum**.

The car drives into the tree.

ohne (+ Akkusativ) • without

Ohne **meinen Kaffee** bin ich nur ein halber Mensch.

Without my coffee I am only half a person.

um (+ Akkusativ) • around; at (with clock times)

Wir sitzen um **den Tisch**.

We sit around the table.

Two members moonlight as time words, and the pair is worth learning together. Um is the sharp one: um sieben Uhr means at seven on the dot. Gegen is the vague one: gegen elf means around eleven, give or take. Lena gets tired gegen elf but is home um zwölf, and the difference is exactly the difference between a guess and a promise.

Pronouns after the five

The accusative pronouns from chapter 14 come straight back here: mich, dich, ihn, sie, es, uns, euch, sie. After one of the five, a pronoun must wear its accusative form, and no phrase in this book is more useful than the first example below:

Das ist **für dich**!

That is for you!

Ohne ihn gehen wir nicht.

Without him we are not going.

Bist du **gegen mich**?

Are you against me?

Der Kuchen ist **für euch**.

The cake is for you (all).

Ohne uns beginnt das Spiel nicht.

Without us the game does not start.

One small note before the Watch-out panel. In everyday speech the five like to melt into a following das, just as zu dem melted into zum: durch das becomes durchs, für das becomes fürs, and um das becomes ums. Wir gehen durchs Haus, danke fürs Geschenk. These fusions are common and completely natural, though a little more casual than zum and zur were.

Watch out

× *Das Geschenk ist für mir.*

✓ *Das Geschenk ist für mich.* The present is for me.

Für is an accusative-club member, so the dative mir is banned after it. Für mich, für dich, für ihn: always accusative.

× *Ohne meinem Hund gehe ich nicht.*

✓ *Ohne meinen Hund gehe ich nicht.* Without my dog I am not going.

The dative endings from chapter 17 do not belong here. Ohne summons the accusative, so masculine mein becomes meinen.

Watch out (continued)

× *Das ist für du.*

✓ *Das ist für dich.* That is for you.

After a preposition the pronoun can never stay in its nominative form. Du must change into dich, just as *he* changes into *him* in English *for him.*

× *Das Auto fährt gegen dem Baum.*

✓ *Das Auto fährt gegen den Baum.* The car drives into the tree.

Gegen never takes the dative, however tempting dem may feel after chapter 17. The clubs do not share members: gegen den Baum, gegen die Wand, gegen das Tor.

Twelve prepositions are now sorted for life: seven for the dative, five for the accusative. Only one family is still missing, and it is the famous one. Nine prepositions switch sides, taking the accusative for movement and the dative for position, and they are waiting in the next chapter. The method, you will be glad to hear, stays the same.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Put in the preposition, using each of the five exactly once: durch, für, gegen, ohne, um.

1. Wir gehen _____ den Park zum See.
2. Das Geschenk ist _____ meinen Bruder.
3. Der Ball fliegt _____ das Fenster und es klirrt.
4. _____ meine Brille kann ich nichts lesen.
5. Die Kinder sitzen _____ den Tisch.

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 2. Put in the accusative form of the article in brackets.

1. Lena geht durch _____ Stadt. (die)
2. Das Trikot ist für _____ Freund. (ein)
3. Das Auto fährt gegen _____ Baum. (der)
4. Ohne _____ Regenschirm gehe ich nicht raus. (mein)
5. Wir laufen um _____ Ecke. (die)
6. Danke für _____ Geschenk! (das)

Exercise 3. Put in the accusative pronoun: dich, ihn or uns. One is needed twice.

1. Das ist für _____! (you, informal singular)
2. Tom ist mein Freund. Ohne _____ gehe ich nicht.
3. Ich bin nicht gegen _____, ich bin für _____! (you, informal singular, twice)
4. Kommt ihr mit? Ohne _____ macht das Spiel keinen Spaß. (us)

Exercise 4. Um or gegen? Um is exact, gegen is approximate.

1. Der Film beginnt _____ 20:00 Uhr, keine Minute später.
2. Ich komme _____ sieben, vielleicht auch etwas später.
3. Der Zug fährt pünktlich _____ 9:15 Uhr ab.
4. Wir sind _____ Mittag zurück, so ungefähr.

Exercise 5. Your turn.

You are hunting for a present, just like Lena. Tell the story in five sentences, using durch, für, gegen, ohne and um at least once each.

THE FOUR CASES • CHAPTER 19

Wechselpräpositionen

The nine that switch sides

A2

Chapter 17 gave you a club that always takes the dative, and chapter 18 gave you a gang that always takes the accusative. Nine prepositions refused to join either side. They take the dative or the accusative, and the sentence itself decides which. That sounds like trouble, but the decision rests on one simple question, and you will watch a cat answer it a dozen times:

DEUTSCH

Wo ist Minka? Lena sucht die Katze überall. Sie schaut **unter den Tisch**. Aber Minka liegt nicht **unter dem Tisch**. Sie sitzt auch nicht **auf dem Sofa** und nicht **hinter dem Vorhang**.

Dann hört Lena etwas. Da! Minka sitzt **im Schrank**, **zwischen den Pullovern**. Sie springt **auf das Bett** und läuft **vor die Tür**. „Du willst **in den Garten**?“ Lena macht die Tür auf, und Minka läuft **in den Garten**.

ENGLISH

Where is Minka? Lena is looking for the cat everywhere. She looks under the table. But Minka is not lying under the table. She is not sitting on the sofa either, and not behind the curtain.

Then Lena hears something. There! Minka is sitting in the wardrobe, between the jumpers. She jumps onto the bed and runs to the door. "You want to go into the garden?" Lena opens the door, and Minka runs into the garden.

Nine prepositions, two masters

Here are the nine. You already know most of them as words, because they are the basic vocabulary of space: in, on, over, under, in front of, behind, next to, between. What is new is their double life. Each one serves two masters, the dative and the accusative, and switches sides from sentence to sentence.

Notice that in the opener the same preposition appeared with both cases. Lena schaut unter den Tisch, but Minka liegt nicht unter dem Tisch. Same table, same preposition, different article. The next section explains what changed.

Die Wechselpräpositionen • Dativ or Akkusativ

in	in, into	im Schrank, in den Garten
an	at, on (a side)	am Fenster, ans Meer
auf	on (top of)	auf dem Sofa, auf das Bett
über	over, above	über dem Sofa
unter	under	unter dem Tisch
vor	in front of	vor der Tür
hinter	behind	hinter dem Vorhang
neben	next to	neben dem Bett
zwischen	between	zwischen den Pullovern

Textbooks call them Wechselpräpositionen, the switching prepositions, or simply the two-way prepositions. The nine cover every direction a cat can take.

The two questions

Every sentence with one of the nine answers exactly one of two questions. Wo? asks *where?*, in what place something is happening, and the answer stands in the dative. Wohin? asks *where to?*, towards what destination something is heading, and the answer stands in the accusative.

The choice is not arbitrary. Remember chapter 13: the accusative is the case of the target. When Minka jumps onto the bed, the bed is the target of her jump, so it takes the target's case. When she is already lying there, nothing is aiming at anything. The bed is just the setting, and the setting

takes the dative. A destination is accusative. A place is dative. Watch one cat and one cook make the switch:

Minka springt auf den Tisch. wohin? the table is the destination, accusative

Minka jumps onto the table.

Minka sitzt auf dem Tisch. wo? the table is the place, dative

Minka is sitting on the table.

Ich gehe in die Küche. wohin? the kitchen is the destination, accusative

I am going into the kitchen.

Ich bin in der Küche. wo? the kitchen is the place, dative

I am in the kitchen.

Now the one refinement that saves you from the commonest wrong turn. It is tempting to shorten all of this to *movement means accusative, stillness means dative*, and that shortcut will betray you. Plenty of German sentences are full of movement and take the dative, because the movement happens inside the place rather than into it. Compare:

Ich laufe **im Park**.

I run in the park. (wo? all the running happens inside the park)

Ich laufe **in den Park**.

I run into the park. (wohin? the park is where I end up)

Die Fische schwimmen **im Aquarium**.

The fish swim in the tank. (wo? they never leave it)

Minka springt **auf dem Bett**.

Minka is jumping about on the bed. (wo? she lands where she started)

Minka springt **auf das Bett.**

Minka jumps onto the bed. (wohin? she was somewhere else before)

So do not ask whether anything is moving. Ask whether the phrase names **where it happens or where it ends up.** A place is dative however energetic the scene. The accusative is for the destination, and for the path taken to reach one: Wir fahren **über die Brücke**, over the bridge and out the other side.

English quietly makes the same distinction with *onto* versus *on* and *into* versus *in*. German just makes it everywhere, and with the article instead of the preposition. Here are the nine at work in both directions. Read each pair and ask the question yourself, wo or wohin:

Ich lege das Buch **auf den Tisch.**

I put the book on the table. (wohin?)

Das Buch liegt **auf dem Tisch.**

The book is lying on the table. (wo?)

Wir hängen das Bild **über das Sofa.**

We hang the picture above the sofa. (wohin?)

Das Bild hängt **über dem Sofa.**

The picture hangs above the sofa. (wo?)

Der Hund läuft **hinter das Haus.**

The dog runs behind the house. (wohin?)

Das Fahrrad steht **neben der Tür.**

The bicycle is standing next to the door. (wo?)

Vier Paare • put it there, or be there

PUT	WOHIN?, AKK.	BE	WO?, DAT.
stellen	auf **den** Tisch	stehen	auf **dem** Tisch
legen	auf **den** Tisch	liegen	auf **dem** Tisch
setzen	auf **den** Stuhl	sitzen	auf **dem** Stuhl
hängen	an **die** Wand	hängen	an **der** Wand

Only hängen uses one word for both jobs, and the case is what tells them apart.

The verb is a useful witness, though not the judge. The most reliable witnesses are four pairs that German keeps deliberately apart, one verb for putting something somewhere and one for its being there. The putting verb always takes a destination, so accusative; the being verb always names a place, so dative:

Verbs like gehen, fahren and laufen are weaker witnesses, because as you have just seen they take either case depending on whether the phrase names the destination or the ground being covered. When one of those turns up, go back to the question.

The little fusions

Chapter 17 melted zu dem into zum. The two busiest switchers, in and an, fuse in exactly the same way, and on both sides of the switch. These are the normal everyday forms, in writing too:

in + dem → **im**

in + das → **ins**

an + dem → **am**

an + das → **ans**

Minka sitzt **im** Schrank.

Minka is sitting in the wardrobe. (wo?)

Wir gehen heute Abend **ins** Kino.

We are going to the cinema tonight. (wohin?)

Die Katze schläft gern **am** Fenster.

The cat likes sleeping by the window. (wo?)

Im Sommer fahren wir **ans** Meer.

In the summer we go to the seaside. (wohin?)

The fusion even tells you the case: im and am hide a dative dem, so they answer wo?, while ins and ans hide an accusative das, so they answer wohin?.

The Switzerland promise

Chapter 17 left a promise unpaid. The rule there was that cities and articleless countries take nach: nach Berlin, nach Italien. But a few countries carry an article, die Schweiz, die Türkei, die USA, and for them the Watch-

out panel said only: they take in, and that story comes with the two-way prepositions. This is that story, and now you can see why it works. A country with an article is a noun like any other, so it travels with in and plays the full two-way game. Going there is wohin?, so accusative. Being there is wo?, so dative.

Wir fahren im August **in die Schweiz**.

We are going to Switzerland in August. (wohin?)

Onkel Peter wohnt **in der Schweiz**.

Uncle Peter lives in Switzerland. (wo?)

Sie fliegt **in die Türkei**.

She is flying to Turkey. (wohin?)

Der Zug fährt **nach** Berlin.

The train goes to Berlin. (no article, so nach as before)

The old rule stays untouched. Cities and article-less countries keep nach, and nach Hause keeps its special place. Only the countries with an article switch teams and join in.

Watch out

× *Ich gehe in dem Kino. (meant as: to the cinema)*

✓ *Ich gehe ins Kino.* I am going to the cinema.

If the cinema is your destination, the question is wohin? and the case is accusative: in das Kino, fused to ins Kino. Ich gehe im Kino is not impossible, but it means you are walking about inside the building.

Watch out (continued)

× *Das Buch liegt auf den Tisch.*

✓ *Das Buch liegt auf dem Tisch.* The book is lying on the table.

Liegen is a verb of rest. The book is not going anywhere, so the question is wo? and the case is dative.

× *Wir fahren nach der Schweiz.*

✓ *Wir fahren in die Schweiz.* We are going to Switzerland.

The payoff of the chapter 17 promise: countries with an article never take nach. They travel with in plus the accusative, because the journey answers wohin?.

× *Die Lampe hängt über den Tisch.*

✓ *Die Lampe hängt über dem Tisch.* The lamp hangs above the table.

Hanging there is a position, not a movement, so wo? and the dative. The accusative version needs someone hanging it up: Ich hänge die Lampe über den Tisch.

With this chapter the preposition triangle is complete. The dative club of chapter 17 never switches, the accusative gang of chapter 18 never switches, and the nine here switch by one question: wo or wohin. You can now put anything anywhere in German, and say whether it is on its way or already there.

That is the case system finished, and with it the hardest climb in this book. What the next chapter adds is comfort rather than difficulty: a handful of very common verbs, sein, haben and the modals, keep a second past tense that Germans use every day, and you already know almost all of it.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. **Wo or wohin? Decide which question each sentence answers.**

1. Minka schläft auf dem Sofa. _____
2. Lena stellt die Tasse in den Schrank. _____
3. Das Auto steht vor dem Haus. _____
4. Der Hund läuft hinter den Baum. _____

Exercise 2. **Put in dem, den, die or das. The verb tells you the case.**

1. Die Katze springt vom Boden auf _____ Tisch. (der Tisch)
2. Das Buch liegt auf _____ Tisch. (der Tisch)
3. Ich lege den Schlüssel in _____ Tasche. (die Tasche)
4. Minka sitzt zwischen _____ Pullovern. (die Pullover)
5. Tom stellt die Lampe neben _____ Bett. (das Bett)
6. Das Bild hängt über _____ Sofa. (das Sofa)

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 3. Put in im, ins, am or ans.

1. Heute Abend gehen wir _____ Kino.
2. Der Pullover liegt _____ Schrank.
3. Im Juli fahren wir _____ Meer.
4. Die Katze sitzt gern _____ Fenster.

Exercise 4. Nach or in die?

1. Wir fliegen im Mai _____ Türkei.
2. Der Zug fährt _____ Berlin.
3. Im Winter fahren wir _____ Schweiz.
4. Meine Tante reist _____ Italien.

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Describe your room in five sentences. First say where things are, in the dative (Das Bett steht neben dem Fenster). Then move two of them somewhere new, in the accusative (Ich stelle die Lampe auf den Tisch).

TIME • CHAPTER 20

Präteritum: war und hatte

The past of being and having

A2

Chapter 5 gave you a comfortable rule: spoken German tells its past in the Perfekt. That rule is true, and now comes its one honest exception. A tiny group of verbs, sein, haben and the modals, prefer a different past tense even at the breakfast table. It is called the Präteritum, and its stars are war, hatte and the modal pasts. Across most of Germany, nobody says Ich bin müde gewesen over their coffee (the south and Austria are fonder of it). They say Ich war müde, and so will you.

DEUTSCH

Montagmorgen vor der Schule. Tom wartet schon am Tor und winkt Lena zu sich.

„Wo **warst** du am Wochenende?“, fragt er.

„Ich **war** bei Oma“, sagt Lena. „Wir **hatten** Besuch. Onkel Peter **war** da, und Oma **hatte** viel Arbeit. Und du? Du **wolltest** doch auch kommen.“

„Ich **konnte** nicht kommen. Ich **musste** für Mathe lernen. Und Bello **war** krank. Wir **mussten** mit ihm zum Tierarzt."

„Armer Bello! **Hattet** ihr denn am Sonntag Zeit?"

„Nein, ich **durfte** nicht raus. Ich **sollte** mein Zimmer aufräumen."

ENGLISH

Monday morning outside school. Tom is already waiting at the gate and waves Lena over.

"Where were you at the weekend?" he asks.

"I was at Grandma's," says Lena. "We had visitors. Uncle Peter was there, and Grandma had a lot of work. And you? You wanted to come too."

"I couldn't come. I had to revise for maths. And Bello was ill. We had to take him to the vet."

"Poor Bello! Did you have time on Sunday, then?"

"No, I wasn't allowed out. I was supposed to tidy my room."

War and hatte: the everyday past

Look back at the dialogue. Lena and Tom are speaking, not writing, and yet not a single gewesen or gehabt appears. The reason is simple economy. Ich war is shorter than ich bin gewesen, and for the two most frequent verbs in the language, German chose the short road:

Präteritum • sein und haben

	SEIN	HABEN
ich	**war**	**hatte**
du	**warst**	**hattest**
er, sie, es	**war**	**hatte**
wir	**waren**	**hatten**
ihr	**wart**	**hattet**
sie, Sie	**waren**	**hatten**

Notice the two green rows. Ich war and er war are identical, and so are ich hatte and er hatte. You have met this pattern before. In chapter 3 the modals did the same in the present, ich kann, er kann, with no -t on the er form. The whole past tense works this way. So when ich and er match, you are almost always looking at a modal or a past form. (Wissen is the one everyday verb that does it in the present too: ich weiß, er weiß.)

Gestern **war** ich bei Oma.

Yesterday I was at Grandma's.

Warst du am Samstag zu Hause?

Were you at home on Saturday?

Wir **hatten** am Sonntag Besuch.

We had visitors on Sunday.

Lena **hatte** keine Zeit.

Lena had no time.

Präteritum • die Modalverben

INFINITIVE	ICH / ER	MEANING IN THE PAST
können	**konnte**	was able to, could
müssen	**musste**	had to
wollen	**wollte**	wanted to
dürfen	**durfte**	was allowed to
sollen	**sollte**	was supposed to

The sixth modal of chapter 3 is missing on purpose. Mögen does have a past, mochte (liked), but the möchte you actually use is already a polite form rather than a present tense, so it has no past of its own.

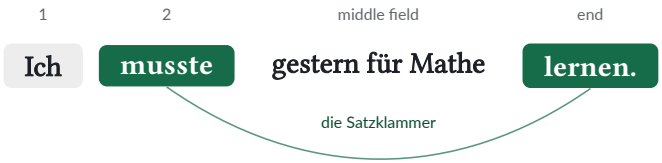
Hattet ihr schöne Ferien?
Did you have a nice holiday?

The modals join in

The modals follow hatte like ducklings. Take the stem, drop any umlaut, and add the same endings you have just seen: -te, -test, -te, -ten, -tet, -ten. The umlaut really does disappear, so können becomes konnte. Here is the ich form of each, which, as you now expect, is also the er form:

One warning before you fall in love with these forms. A word könnte, with the umlaut kept, also exists and means a polite *could*. That is a different story, so for the past tense, keep the umlaut off.

The sentence shape has not changed at all. In chapter 3 the modal took position two and sent its partner verb to the very end, and the Satzklammer holds in the past exactly as it held in the present:



Ich **musste** gestern für Mathe lernen.

I had to revise for maths yesterday.

Lena **konnte** am Samstag nicht kommen.

Lena couldn't come on Saturday.

Wir **wollten** am Sonntag ins Kino gehen.

We wanted to go to the cinema on Sunday.

Tom **durfte** bis zehn Uhr aufbleiben.

Tom was allowed to stay up until ten.

Ich **sollte** mein Zimmer aufräumen.

I was supposed to tidy my room.

And every other verb? Still the Perfekt

Do not let the new tense spread too far. For every other verb, spoken German still tells its past in the Perfekt, exactly as chapter 5 taught. The two

tenses are partners, not rivals. War, hatte and the modal pasts paint the background, and the Perfekt reports what happened in front of it:

Am Samstag **war** ich bei Oma, und wir **haben** einen Kuchen **gebacken**.
On Saturday I was at Grandma's, and we baked a cake.

Ich **hatte** keinen Hunger, aber ich **habe** zwei Stücke **gegessen**.
I wasn't hungry, but I ate two slices.

Tom **konnte** nicht mitkommen, denn er **hat** für Mathe **gelernt**.
Tom couldn't come along, because he was revising for maths.

Read those three sentences again and feel the rhythm. Being, having and the modals stay short, the events take the two-part Perfekt, and that mix is precisely how Germans sound.

You will notice a few more verbs slipping into the Präteritum in speech as your ear sharpens, wusste, dachte, ging and kam among them, and the further north you go the more of them you hear. Nothing you have learned goes wrong because of it: the Perfekt is always available for those verbs, and it is what you should keep saying. Recognise the others, and let them arrive in their own time.

Watch out

× *Ich habte gestern keine Zeit.*
✓ *Ich hatte gestern keine Zeit.* I had no time yesterday.
The past of haben loses its b: hatte, hattest, hatte. No form habte exists.

Watch out (continued)

× *Er wart am Wochenende krank.*

✓ *Er war am Wochenende krank.* He was ill at the weekend.

Wart belongs to ihr. The er form matches the ich form: ich war, er war.

× *Ich habe müde gewesen.*

✓ *Ich war müde.* I was tired.

For sein, one short war does the whole job.

× *Ich konnte nicht kommen gestern.*

✓ *Ich konnte gestern nicht kommen.* I couldn't come yesterday.

The Satzklammer still closes at the very end. Gestern lives inside the bracket, and kommen has the last word.

You now own the everyday past: war and hatte for states, the modal pasts for ability and duty, and the Perfekt for everything that happened. When the Präteritum returns later for the other verbs, today's endings will already feel like old friends.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. War or hatte? Put in the right form.

1. Gestern _____ ich sehr müde.
2. Wir _____ am Sonntag Besuch.
3. _____ du am Wochenende zu Hause?
4. Oma _____ viel Arbeit.
5. Wo _____ ihr am Samstag?
6. Die Kinder _____ keine Zeit.

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 2. Put in the modal in the Präteritum.

1. Ich _____ gestern für Mathe lernen. (müssen)
2. Lena _____ am Samstag nicht kommen. (können)
3. Wir _____ ins Kino gehen. (wollen)
4. Tom _____ bis zehn Uhr aufbleiben. (dürfen)
5. Ihr _____ Oma anrufen. (sollen)

Exercise 3. Yesterday, not today. Rewrite the dialogue in the past.

Beispiel: Ich bin müde. → Ich war müde.

1. „Wo bist du?“
2. „Ich bin bei Tom. Wir haben viel Zeit.“
3. „Ich kann leider nicht kommen.“
4. „Schade! Musst du lernen?“

Exercise 4. Perfekt or Präteritum? Put each sentence into the past, choosing the natural spoken form.

Beispiel: Ich bin krank. → Ich war krank.

1. Lena spielt mit Bello. (spielen)
2. Wir sind bei Oma. (sein)
3. Tom kauft Brot. (kaufen)
4. Ich habe keinen Hunger. (haben)

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Describe your last weekend in five sentences. Use war and hatte at least once each, one modal in the Präteritum, and the Perfekt for at least one thing you did.

THE SENTENCE • CHAPTER 21

Das Mittelfeld

Inside the bracket

A2

This chapter closes the book's work on the sentence itself, and it does so by going home. In chapter 3 you met the Satzklammer, the bracket that holds a German sentence together. Since then you have filled that bracket with more and more furniture: times, places, cases, prepositions, pronouns. The room between the two walls has a name, das Mittelfeld, the middle field, and it has house rules of its own. Until now you have simply been copying good sentences. This chapter makes the rules visible, and you will find you half know them already:

DEUTSCH

Beim Abendessen erzählt Lena von ihrem Tag. „Ich bin **heute um sieben mit Tom zur Schule** gefahren. Nach der Schule bin ich **mit Bello in den Park** gegangen. Dort habe ich Herrn Weber getroffen. Er hat **mir** eine lustige Geschichte erzählt. Oma hat **am Nachmittag in der Küche** einen Kuchen gebacken, aber ich habe **ihn** noch nicht probiert. Tom

hat **mich** um fünf angerufen. Wir gehen **morgen nach der Schule zusammen ins Kino**."

Oma lacht. „Und deine Hausaufgaben machst du **heute nicht** mehr?"

ENGLISH

At dinner Lena talks about her day. "I went to school with Tom at seven today. After school I went to the park with Bello. There I met Herr Weber. He told me a funny story. Grandma baked a cake in the kitchen in the afternoon, but I have not tried it yet. Tom rang me at five. Tomorrow after school we are going to the cinema together."

Grandma laughs. "And you are not doing any more homework today?"

Wann, wie, wo: the rhythm of the room

Why does Ich bin heute um sieben mit Tom zur Schule gefahren sound right, while the same pieces in another order sound foreign? Because German ears expect the middle field to follow a rhythm: **time before manner before place**. First *when*, then *how* or *with whom*, then *where*. English tends to do the exact opposite (*I went to school with Tom at seven*), which is why this rhythm needs learning at all. Watch one sentence grow, one beat at a time:

Ich fahre. — the bare sentence

I am going.

Das Mittelfeld • wann, wie, wo

QUESTION	ANSWERS	EXAMPLES
1. wann?	time	heute, um sieben, am Sonntag
2. wie?	manner, company	mit dem Rad, gern, mit Tom
3. wo(hin)?	place, direction	zu Hause, zur Schule, nach Köln

A strong habit, not an iron law. One piece may still move to position one for emphasis, as chapter 1 allowed: Morgen fahre ich zur Schule.

Ich fahre morgen. — wann? time comes first

I am going tomorrow.

Ich fahre morgen mit dem Rad. — wie? manner follows

I am going by bike tomorrow.

Ich fahre morgen mit dem Rad zur Schule. — wo? place comes last

I am cycling to school tomorrow.

And here is the quiet point of this chapter. The rhythm does not compete with the bracket, it lives *inside* it. Put a sentence like the ladder's last one into the Perfekt, and the whole wann-wie-wo train simply sits between the two verb parts:



Wir fahren **am Sonntag mit dem Zug nach Zürich**.

We are going to Zurich by train on Sunday.

Tom geht **jeden Tag mit Bello in den Park**.

Tom goes to the park with Bello every day.

Lena hat **gestern mit Oma in der Küche** gebacken.

Lena baked in the kitchen with Grandma yesterday.

Minka schläft **am Nachmittag gern auf dem Sofa**.

Minka likes sleeping on the sofa in the afternoon.

Onkel Peter kommt **im August mit dem Auto nach Köln**.

Uncle Peter is coming to Cologne by car in August.

Pronouns come early

There is a second current flowing through the middle field: known things drift to the front, new things drift to the back. A pronoun is the most known thing a sentence can contain. You only say es or ihn because both of you already know what it points to, so the pronoun hurries forward to the very front of the middle field, right after the subject, ahead of every time, manner and place. (When something else opens the sentence, the

subject still comes first: Gestern habe ich es gekauft.) The accusative and dative pronouns you collected in chapters 14 and 16 all obey this pull:

Ich habe **es** gestern gekauft.
I bought it yesterday.

Tom hat **sie** am Sonntag besucht.
Tom visited her on Sunday.

Oma gibt **mir** heute ein Stück Kuchen.
Grandma is giving me a piece of cake today.

Ich rufe **dich** morgen nach der Schule an.
I will ring you tomorrow after school.

Say the first example the other way round, Ich habe gestern es gekauft, and you can feel the little word straining against the leash. Pronouns first, then the wann-wie-wo train.

One honest word about all of this. What you have here is the **neutral** order, the one a sentence takes when nothing in it is being stressed, and it is the order to use while the language is still settling in your ear. Germans do rearrange the middle field to throw weight onto one piece, much as English says *yesterday I bought it* for emphasis. Those variants are not mistakes; they are choices you will start making once the neutral order runs by itself.

There is also one regular escape from the bracket, and you will want it as soon as chapter 22 gives you comparisons. A wie- or als-comparison is allowed to step outside, behind the closing word: Ich bin schneller gelaufen **als du**, Er hat mehr gegessen **als ich**. Everything else stays inside the bracket, as before.

Where nicht lives

Chapter 2 gave you nicht and a rough instinct for where to put it. The middle field lets us say it precisely. To deny one particular piece, nicht stands directly before that piece. To deny the whole sentence, it falls to the end of the middle field. And when the bracket is closed, by a prefix, a participle or an infinitive, nicht stands just before the closing part, because that final word belongs to the verb, not to the room. One thing counts as part of the verb's own picture and therefore stays behind nicht: a place or direction the verb cannot do without, and an adjective after sein. So it is Wir fahren nicht nach Köln and Der Kuchen ist nicht gut, never nach Köln nicht:

Bello schläft heute **nicht**.

Bello is not sleeping today.

Wir fahren **nicht** mit dem Bus, sondern mit dem Rad.

We are not going by bus but by bike.

Wir fahren **nicht** nach Köln.

We are not going to Cologne.

Der Kuchen ist heute **nicht** gut.

The cake is not good today.

Ich rufe dich heute **nicht** an.

I am not ringing you today.

Ich habe den Film **nicht** gesehen.

I have not seen the film.

Lena kann am Samstag **nicht** kommen.

Lena cannot come on Saturday.

Look at the last three again. An, gesehen and kommen all close a bracket, exactly the brackets of chapters 4, 5 and 3, and nicht slips in just before each of them. The last seat belongs to the verb, and nicht politely takes the seat beside it.

Watch out

× *Ich fahre nach Köln morgen.*

✓ *Ich fahre morgen nach Köln.* I am going to Cologne tomorrow.

Time before place. English ends with the time, German starts the middle field with it.

× *Ich habe gekauft gestern das Brot.*

✓ *Ich habe gestern das Brot gekauft.* I bought the bread yesterday.

The participle must close the bracket, nothing may follow it. Inside, the time comes before the new thing.

× *Ich rufe dich an nicht.*

✓ *Ich rufe dich heute nicht an.* I am not ringing you today.

The prefix keeps the last word, as always since chapter 4. Nicht stands just before it, never behind it.

× *Ich habe gestern es gekauft.*

✓ *Ich habe es gestern gekauft.* I bought it yesterday.

The pronoun is known information, so it hurries forward, ahead of the time.

And with that, the German sentence is complete. The bracket gives it walls, the wann-wie-wo rhythm arranges the furniture, pronouns keep close to the door, and nicht knows its seat. What follows will decorate the nouns and build longer sentences, but the room you have just tidied stays the same room, all the way to B1.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. **Build the sentence. Start with ich, Tom, wir or Oma.**

1. fahre / zur Schule / ich / mit dem Rad / morgen
2. hat / Tom / auf dem Markt / ein Brot / gestern / gekauft
3. fliegen / im Sommer / wir / nach Italien / mit der Familie
4. hat / einen Kuchen / Oma / heute / in der Küche / gebacken

Exercise 2. **Say no to the whole sentence. Put in nicht at the right place.**

1. Tom kommt heute.
2. Ich rufe dich am Sonntag an.
3. Ich habe den Film gesehen.
4. Lena kann am Samstag kommen.
5. Wir fahren morgen mit dem Bus. (deny only mit dem Bus)

Exercise 3. **Replace the bold part with a pronoun and put it in its place.**

Beispiel: Ich habe **das Brot** gestern gekauft. → Ich habe es gestern gekauft.

1. Ich habe **den Film** gestern gesehen.
2. Tom hat **seine Oma** am Sonntag besucht.

Übungen (continued)

3. Wir haben das Auto heute gewaschen.
4. Lena hat ihren Onkel gestern angerufen.

Exercise 4. Let the sentence grow, as on the ladder: first the bare sentence, then add the time, then the rest in the right order.

1. ich gehe + heute + mit Bello + in den Park
2. wir essen + am Sonntag + bei Oma
3. Tom fährt + morgen + mit dem Zug + nach Zürich

Exercise 5. Your turn.

Describe your day tomorrow in four sentences. Every sentence needs a time, and each one also needs a manner or a place, in the right order. One sentence should use the Perfekt or a modal verb, so that the middle field sits inside a closed bracket.

DESCRIBING • CHAPTER 22

Komparativ und Superlativ

Better, best, and how to say so

A2

English makes you learn two systems for comparing things. Short words take *-er*, *taller*, but long words need *more*, *more interesting*, and you simply have to know which is which. Here German is kinder than English: there is only ONE system, and every adjective uses it, short or long. This chapter builds that system in three steps, from *faster* to *as fast as* to *fastest*. Listen to Lena and Tom having the oldest argument in the world:

DEUTSCH

LENA und Tom sitzen im Garten. „Schwimmen ist **besser als** Fußball", sagt Lena. „Im Wasser bin ich **schneller als** du."

„Aber Fußball ist **spannender**", sagt Tom. „Und ich bin **so schnell wie** du. Vielleicht bin ich sogar **schneller**."

„Ich schwimme **lieber**", sagt Lena. „Schwimmen ist **gesünder**, und im Sommer ist das Wasser **wärmer als** der Rasen."

Da kommt Bello mit einem Ball. Er läuft **schneller als** Tom. Und er schwimmt sogar **besser als** Lena.

„Bello ist **am schnellsten** und **am besten**“, lacht Lena. „Aber **am liebsten** frisst er Omas Kuchen.“

ENGLISH

Lena and Tom are sitting in the garden. “Swimming is better than football,” says Lena. “In the water I am faster than you.”

“But football is more exciting,” says Tom. “And I am as fast as you. Perhaps I am even faster.”

“I prefer swimming,” says Lena. “Swimming is healthier, and in summer the water is warmer than the grass.”

Then Bello arrives with a ball. He runs faster than Tom. And he even swims better than Lena.

“Bello is the fastest and the best,” laughs Lena. “But what he loves most of all is eating Grandma’s cake.”

The comparative: every adjective takes -er

To say that one thing beats another, German adds **-er** to the adjective and nothing else: **klein** becomes **kleiner**, **schnell** becomes **schneller**. The rule has no size limit. Where English switches to *more* for long words, German calmly adds the same little ending: **interessant** becomes **interessanter**,

spannend becomes **spannender**. Never say mehr plus an adjective. Mehr interessant does not exist.

Four everyday adjectives adjust their spelling on the way, and it is better to meet them now than to be surprised by them later. Hoch loses its c the moment an ending arrives: **höher**, and later das **hohe** Haus. Nah keeps every letter and simply umlauts, **näher**, but springs a surprise in the superlative: am **nächsten**. Teuer and dunkel drop the e of their own stem, because German dislikes three weak syllables in a row: teurer, dunkler, never teuerer or dunkeler.

The second half of the rule is the word for *than*. It is **als**, and it follows the comparative like a shadow: Tom ist größer als Lena.

Tom ist **größer als** Lena.
Tom is taller than Lena.

Bello läuft **schneller als** Minka.
Bello runs faster than Minka.

Oma ist **älter als** Onkel Peter.
Grandma is older than Uncle Peter.

Der Film ist **interessanter als** das Buch.
The film is more interesting than the book.

In Zürich ist es **kälter als** in Köln.
In Zurich it is colder than in Cologne.

Kakao ist **süßer als** Tee.
Cocoa is sweeter than tea.

You noticed älter and größer. Many short, everyday adjectives with a, o or u put on an umlaut when they compare, just as some verbs changed their

Der Umlaut-Club • short a, o, u

ADJECTIVE	MEANING	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
alt	old	**älter**	am ältesten
jung	young	**jünger**	am jüngsten
groß	big, tall	**größer**	am größten
lang	long	**länger**	am längsten
kurz	short	**kürzer**	am kürzesten
warm	warm	**wärmer**	am wärmsten
kalt	cold	**kälter**	am kältesten

vowel in the present tense. It is a small club, and its members are words you use daily, so the card below is worth a photograph in your head:

Not every short word joins. Klar, froh and bunt stay as they are: klarer, froher, bunter. When in doubt, learn the comparative together with the adjective, exactly as you learn a verb together with its behaviour.

As good as: so … wie

Sometimes there is no winner. For a draw, German wraps the plain adjective, without -er, in the frame so … wie: Tom ist so schnell wie Lena, Tom is as fast as Lena. This gives you a clean division of labour. Als marks a difference, wie marks a tie, and the adjective itself tells you which frame

you are in: with -er it takes als, without -er it takes wie. Watch one family shrink into place:

Tom ist so groß wie Lena. — a tie: so + adjective + wie

Tom is as tall as Lena.

Herr Weber ist größer als Tom. — a difference: -er + als

Herr Weber is taller than Tom.

Oma ist nicht so groß wie Lena. — a polite difference: nicht so … wie

Grandma is not as tall as Lena.

The last line is a German favourite. Nicht so groß wie says *smaller* without saying it, which is why you will hear it constantly in careful, friendly speech.

Minka ist **so alt wie** Bello.

Minka is as old as Bello.

Tom schwimmt **so gut wie** Lena.

Tom swims as well as Lena.

Ich bin **nicht so schnell wie** du.

I am not as fast as you.

Der Tee ist **so heiß wie** der Kaffee.

The tea is as hot as the coffee.

Köln ist **nicht so groß wie** Berlin.

Cologne is not as big as Berlin.

The superlative: am -sten

For the top of the ladder, German has a fixed little formula: **am** plus the adjective plus **-sten**. Bello läuft **am schnellsten**, Bello runs fastest. The formula never changes, so you can build it for any adjective in one move. Only pronunciation asks for a small favour: after a t or d, and after a hissing sound like s, ß or z, the ending grows an e, because am altsten is impossible to say. So it is am ältesten, am kältesten, am lautesten, am kürzesten, am heißesten. One common adjective slips out of this rule and simply has to be remembered: groß makes am größten, with no extra e.

Bello läuft **am schnellsten**.

Bello runs fastest.

Im Juli ist es **am wärmsten**.

In July it is warmest.

Oma ist **am ältesten**.

Grandma is the oldest.

Dieser Kuchen schmeckt **am besten**.

This cake tastes best.

Am Abend ist die Straße **am lautesten**.

In the evening the street is noisiest.

Three words refuse the regular machine, and they are three of the most common words in the language. English does exactly the same thing, and with the same words: *good, better, best*, never *gooder*. Learn the trio as complete ladders:

Die Unregelmäßigen • three ladders to memorise

BASE	MEANING	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
gut	good	**besser**	am besten
viel	much, a lot	**mehr**	am meisten
gern	gladly	**lieber**	am liebsten

The last ladder is a gift. German has no everyday verb for *to prefer*. Instead it takes the little word gern, which you know from Ich trinke gern Tee, and climbs its ladder: gern for what you like, lieber for what you prefer, am liebsten for your favourite. Three rungs, and you can rank everything you love:

Ich trinke **gern** Tee.
I like drinking tea.

Ich trinke **lieber** Kakao.
I prefer drinking cocoa.

Am liebsten trinke ich Kaffee.
Most of all I like drinking coffee.

Lena schwimmt **lieber**, Tom spielt **lieber** Fußball.
Lena prefers swimming, Tom prefers playing football.

Bello frisst **am liebsten** Omas Kuchen.
What Bello loves eating most of all is Grandma's cake.

Watch out

× *Tom ist größer wie Lena.*

✓ *Tom ist größer als Lena.* Tom is taller than Lena.

After a comparative, *than* is always als. You will hear wie here in casual speech, but it is not standard. Wie belongs to the tie: so groß wie.

× *Der Film ist mehr interessant.*

✓ *Der Film ist interessanter.* The film is more interesting.

German never builds the comparative with mehr. However long the adjective, the answer is -er.

× *Dieser Kuchen ist am gutesten.*

✓ *Dieser Kuchen ist am besten.* This cake is the best.

Gut is irregular, exactly like English *good, better, best*: gut, besser, am besten.

× *Oma ist alter als Onkel Peter.*

✓ *Oma ist älter als Onkel Peter.* Grandma is older than Uncle Peter.

The umlaut is part of the form, not decoration. For the club members on the card it is compulsory: älter, größer, jünger. Adjectives outside the club leave their vowel alone, so schlank gives schlanker and froh gives froher. Learn the club, not a rule about vowels.

One machine, three settings: -er … als for a difference, so … wie for a tie, am -sten for the top. For now your comparatives stand alone after the verb, as in Bello ist schneller. They can also step in front of a noun, and there, like all German adjectives in that position, they pick up an ending. The ladders you learned today stay exactly the same.

Übungen • Exercises

Exercise 1. Build the ladder: comparative and superlative.

Beispiel: schnell → schneller, am schnellsten

1. klein
2. alt
3. warm
4. jung
5. interessant

Exercise 2. Als or wie?

1. Tom ist größer _____ Lena.
2. Minka ist so alt _____ Bello.
3. Der Sommer ist wärmer _____ der Winter.
4. Ich bin nicht so schnell _____ du.
5. Omas Kuchen ist besser _____ der Kuchen vom Supermarkt.

Exercise 3. Put in the right form of the word in brackets.

1. Fußball ist gut, aber Schwimmen ist _____. (gut)
2. Bello frisst _____ als Minka. (viel)
3. Ich trinke Tee, aber Kakao trinke ich _____. (gern)
4. Omas Kuchen ist am _____. (gut)
5. Am _____ schläft Minka in der Sonne. (gern)

Übungen (continued)

Exercise 4. **Rank the three things in one sentence with gern, lieber and am liebsten. The order is yours; only the three words are fixed.**

Beispiel: trinken: Tee, Kakao, Kaffee → Ich trinke gern Tee, lieber Kakao und am liebsten Kaffee.

1. essen: Brot, Käse, Kuchen
2. spielen: Karten, Schach, Fußball
3. hören: Radio, Podcasts, Musik

Exercise 5. **Your turn.**

Choose three things you know well, three cities, three foods or three sports, and compare them in five sentences. Use a comparative with als, a tie with so … wie, a superlative with am …sten, and lieber or am liebsten at least once each.

Answers

Where an exercise asks you to write your own German, the key gives one sample answer. Yours will differ, and that is the point: check that the pattern is right, not that the words match.

Chapter 1 · One verb, one home

Exercise 1: 1. wohne 2. spielst 3. trinkt 4. lernen 5. wartet 6. arbeiten

Exercise 2: 1. bin 2. Hast 3. ist 4. haben 5. Seid 6. haben

Exercise 3: 1. Um sieben trinken wir Kakao. 2. Am Montag beginnt die Schule um acht. 3. Am Abend lerne ich Deutsch. 4. Nach der Schule spielt Tom Fußball.

Exercise 4: 1. Heute lernen wir Deutsch. 2. Du wohnst in Berlin. 3. Ich heiße Tom. 4. Am Morgen trinke ich Tee.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Ich heiße Anna. Ich bin vierzehn Jahre alt. In Bonn wohne ich mit meiner Familie. Meine Eltern sind nett, und ich habe einen Bruder. Am Morgen trinke ich immer Kakao.

Chapter 2 · Asking, and saying no

Exercise 1: 1. Spielt Tom Fußball? 2. Habt ihr heute Zeit? 3. Ist das dein Fahrrad? 4. Trinkst du Kaffee? 5. Sind Sie müde?

Exercise 2: 1. Wie 2. Wo 3. Wann 4. Was 5. Wer 6. Warum

Exercise 3: 1. keinen 2. nicht 3. keine 4. nicht 5. kein 6. nicht

Exercise 4: 1. Ja 2. Doch 3. Nein 4. Doch

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Wohnst du hier in der Nähe? Hast du Geschwister? Wie heißt du? Woher kommst du? Was ist dein Lieblingsfach?

Chapter 3 · The bracket, for the first time

Exercise 1: 1. kann 2. Kannst 3. muss 4. darf 5. sollt 6. möchte

Exercise 2: 1. muss 2. kann 3. darf 4. will

Exercise 3: 1. Wir wollen am Samstag ins Kino gehen. 2. Kannst du mir bitte helfen? 3. Tom muss um sechs zu Hause sein. 4. Man darf hier nicht rauchen.

Exercise 4: 1. Autos dürfen hier nicht schnell fahren. 2. Ich muss nicht früh aufstehen. 3. Du musst nicht bezahlen. 4. Wir dürfen ihn nicht sehen.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Ich kann gut schwimmen. Am Montag muss ich früh aufstehen. Ich will am Samstag ins Kino gehen. Ich darf am Abend nicht lange fernsehen. Am Sonntag muss ich nicht zur Schule gehen.

Chapter 4 · The verb that splits in two

Exercise 1: 1. Lena macht das Fenster auf. 2. Er ruft seine Oma an. 3. Wir kaufen am Samstag ein. 4. Die Kinder sehen am Abend fern. 5. Machst du bitte die Tür zu?

Exercise 2: Separable: aufstehen, einkaufen, mitkommen, abfahren. Glued: verstehen, bezahlen, erzählen, besuchen.

Exercise 3: 1. Ich will heute einkaufen. 2. Tom darf mitkommen. 3. Wir können das Fenster aufmachen. 4. Lena möchte am Abend fernsehen.

Exercise 4: 1. Wann stehst du auf? 2. Wann fängt der Film an? 3. Der Zug fährt um acht ab. 4. Ich rufe dich morgen an.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Am Samstag stehe ich um acht auf. Dann rufe ich meine Freundin an. Wir kaufen zusammen auf dem Markt ein. Am Nachmittag komme ich nach Hause zurück. Am Abend sehe ich ein bisschen fern.

Chapter 5 · The bracket, a third time

Exercise 1: 1. haben 2. ist 3. Hast 4. ist 5. habe 6. sind

Exercise 2: 1. gearbeitet 2. gelesen 3. angerufen 4. verstanden 5. studiert 6. eingeschlafen

Exercise 3: 1. Tom ist nach Berlin gefahren. 2. Wir haben einen Film gesehen. 3. Lena ist um sieben aufgestanden. 4. Er hat eine Suppe bestellt. 5. Ich habe meiner Oma eine Karte geschrieben.

Exercise 4: 1. Gestern habe ich ein Buch gekauft. 2. Um zehn ist er eingeschlafen. 3. Am Samstag haben wir unsere Freunde besucht. 4. Wann bist du angekommen?

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Gestern bin ich um sieben aufgestanden. Ich habe gefrühstückt und Tee getrunken. Dann bin ich zur Schule gegangen. Am Nachmittag habe ich meine Hausaufgaben gemacht. Am Abend habe ich einen Film gesehen. Um zehn bin ich eingeschlafen.

Chapter 6 · Sentences that start with the verb

Exercise 1: 1. Hol! 2. Warte! 3. Gib! 4. Fahr! 5. Lies! 6. Schlaf!

Exercise 2: 1. Wartet! / Warten Sie! 2. Seid leise! / Seien Sie leise! 3. Macht das Fenster zu! / Machen Sie das Fenster zu! 4. Sprecht langsam! / Sprechen Sie langsam!

Exercise 3: 1. Gib mir bitte das Salz! 2. Machen Sie bitte die Tür zu! 3. Wartet bitte! 4. Hilf mir doch mal!

Exercise 4: 1. Mach das Fenster auf! 2. Kommt bitte mit! 3. Ruf mich morgen an! 4. Machen Sie bitte die Tür zu!

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Mach bitte den Ofen an. Schneide zwei Äpfel klein. Gib Mehl, Butter und Zucker in eine Schüssel. Back den Kuchen dreißig Minuten. Probier mal ein Stück!

Chapter 7 · Joining, and the verb's last home

Exercise 1: 1. Tom ist müde, aber er kommt mit. 2. Das ist kein Hund, sondern ein Wolf. 3. Lena liest ein Buch und Bello schläft. 4. Kommst du mit oder bleibst du zu Hause? 5. Wir gehen zu Fuß, denn der Bus kommt nicht.

Exercise 2: 1. Lena lernt viel, weil sie morgen einen Test hat. 2. Tom isst keinen Apfelkuchen, weil er kein Obst mag. 3. Wir gehen zu Fuß, weil der Bus nicht kommt. 4. Ich trinke Tee, weil Kaffee mir nicht schmeckt.

Exercise 3: 1. Lena sagt, dass der Film super ist. 2. Ich weiß nicht, ob der Bus morgen kommt. 3. Tom glaubt, dass der Fahrer krank ist. 4. Wir wissen nicht, ob das Café heute offen ist.

Exercise 4: 1. Wenn ich fertig bin, rufe ich dich an. 2. Wenn das Wetter schön ist, fahren wir zum See. 3. Wenn Oma Brot backt, freut sich Tom.

Exercise 5: 1. Ich bin müde, weil ich immer früh aufstehe. 2. Ich komme zu spät, weil der Zug nicht gekommen ist. 3. Lena freut sich, dass Tom mitkommen kann. 4. Ich weiß nicht, ob ich morgen Zeit habe.

Exercise 6: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Ich komme zu spät, weil der Bus nicht gekommen ist. Ich komme zu spät, weil ich immer zu spät aufstehe. Ich mache meine Hausaufgaben nicht, weil ich müde bin. Ich gehe heute nicht einkaufen, weil es den ganzen Tag geregnet hat.

Chapter 8 · Every noun wears a hat

Exercise 1: der: Lehrer, Sommer, Montag, Bäcker die: Zeitung, Blume, Wohnung, Freiheit das: Mädchen, Auto, Brötchen, Radio

Exercise 2: 1. Der 2. Die 3. Das 4. Der 5. Das 6. Die

Exercise 3: 1. Die Katze schläft auf dem Bett. 2. Der Hund bellt vor der Tür. 3. Die Sonne scheint heute nicht. 4. Das Fenster ist offen.

Exercise 4: 1. der Hund 2. die Katze 3. die Sonne 4. der Mond 5. der Tisch 6. die Tür 7. das Fenster 8. der Stuhl

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: der Tisch, die Lampe, das Buch, der Stuhl, das Fenster, die Tür. Der Tisch ist alt. Die Lampe ist neu. Das Fenster ist offen.

Chapter 9 · Five ways to say more than one

Exercise 1: 1. die Eier 2. die Äpfel 3. die Tomaten 4. die Hunde 5. die Bücher 6. die Bananen

Exercise 2: -e: die Tische, die Brote -er: die Kinder, die Bücher -n/-en: die Frauen, die Lampen -s: die Autos, die Handys no ending: die Väter, die Brötchen

Exercise 3: 1. kein 2. keine 3. kein 4. keine 5. ein

Exercise 4: 1. Ich kaufe drei Brötchen. 2. Die Kinder spielen mit Minka. 3. Wir brauchen zwei Brote. 4. Die Autos stehen vor dem Haus. 5. Oma kauft vier Äpfel.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: sechs Eier, vier Tomaten, zwei Brote, drei Äpfel, fünf Bananen, sechs Brötchen.

Chapter 10 · Whose is it?

Exercise 1: 1. mein 2. meine 3. mein 4. meine 5. meine

Exercise 2: 1. Sein 2. Ihr 3. Seine 4. Ihr 5. Ihre

Exercise 3: 1. euer 2. eure 3. eure 4. euer 5. Eure

Exercise 4: 1. sein 2. mein 3. unsere 4. deine 5. ihr

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Mein Vater heißt Raj. Meine Mutter arbeitet in Delhi. Mein Bruder ist zwölf Jahre alt. Meine Schwester wohnt in Berlin. Mein Hund heißt Max.

Chapter 11 · Counting, the clock, the date

Exercise 1: 1. acht 2. zwölf 3. siebzehn 4. einundzwanzig 5. dreiunddreißig 6. sechsundfünfzig 7. achtundsiebzig

Exercise 2: 1. Das kostet zwei Euro zwanzig. 2. Das kostet sechs Euro fünfzig. 3. Das kostet vier Euro achtzig. 4. Das kostet fünfzehn Euro neunzig. 5. Das kostet zwölf Euro neunundneunzig.

Exercise 3: 1. Viertel nach sieben 2. halb acht 3. Viertel vor acht 4. halb sieben 5. Viertel vor sechs

Exercise 4: 1. Ich stehe um sieben Uhr auf. 2. Die Schule beginnt um Viertel nach acht. 3. Der Bus kommt um halb acht. 4. Bello schläft um zehn Uhr abends.

Exercise 5: 1. Heute ist der dritte Oktober. Ich komme am dritten Oktober. 2. Heute ist der siebte Juni. Ich komme am siebten Juni. 3. Heute ist der achte Januar. Ich komme am achten Januar. 4. Heute ist der zwanzigste November. Ich komme am zwanzigsten November. 5. Heute ist der einunddreißigste Dezember. Ich komme am einunddreißigsten Dezember.

Exercise 6: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Ich stehe um halb sieben auf. Um Viertel nach acht beginnt die Schule. Ich esse um eins zu Mittag. Um zehn Uhr schlafe ich.

Chapter 12 · The two little stand-ins

Exercise 1: 1. Man sagt in Köln „Hallo“. 2. Man darf hier nicht rauchen. 3. Man kauft das Brot beim Bäcker. 4. Man muss an der Ampel warten. 5. Man spricht in der Schweiz Deutsch.

Exercise 2: 1. regnet 2. schneit 3. ist 4. ist 5. klingelt

Exercise 3: 1. Mann 2. Man 3. man 4. Mann 5. man

Exercise 4: 1. geht 2. mir 3. dir 4. Mir 5. es

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Man darf in der Pause draußen spielen. Man darf im Unterricht nicht essen. Man muss die Hausaufgaben machen. Man kann in der Bibliothek lesen. Man darf hier nicht rauchen.

Chapter 13 · The doer and the target

Exercise 1: 1. Der, den 2. Der, den 3. den 4. Der 5. den

Exercise 2: 1. einen 2. einen 3. eine 4. einen 5. ein 6. eine

Exercise 3: 1. Wer 2. Wen 3. Wer 4. Wen

Exercise 4: 1. Es gibt einen Kuchen. 2. Es gibt einen Markt. 3. Es gibt einen Hund und eine Katze. 4. Es gibt heute keinen Unterricht.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Ich habe einen Bruder. Ich habe einen Hund. Ich habe auch eine Katze. Es gibt einen Park in der Nähe. Es gibt auch einen Supermarkt und eine Schule.

Chapter 14 · Me, you, him: the short words

Exercise 1: 1. Tom sucht ihn. 2. Lena findet sie. 3. Ich lese es. 4. Wir kaufen sie.

Exercise 2: 1. ihn 2. sie 3. es 4. ihn 5. es 6. sie

Exercise 3: 1. dich 2. mich 3. euch 4. uns

Exercise 4: 1. Er 2. ihn 3. er 4. ihn

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Der Tisch ist klein, aber ich brauche ihn. Die Lampe ist neu, und ich mag sie. Das Bett ist weich, ich liebe es. Der Schrank ist voll, ich öffne ihn oft. Das Fenster ist groß, ich schließe es am Abend.

Chapter 15 · The case of the receiver

Exercise 1: 1. dem 2. der 3. dem 4. den 5. dem 6. der

Exercise 2: 1. Der Film gefällt ihr. 2. Das Fahrrad gehört ihnen. 3. Ich danke ihr für die Hilfe. 4. Die Suppe schmeckt ihm nicht. 5. Wir antworten ihm auf Deutsch.

Exercise 3: 1. passen 2. schmeckt 3. gehört 4. danke 5. gefällt 6. helfen

Exercise 4: 1. Ich gebe meiner Schwester das Buch. → Ich gebe es meiner Schwester. 2. Er zeigt den Gästen den Garten. → Er zeigt ihn den Gästen. 3. Wir schenken dem Lehrer eine Karte. → Wir schenken sie dem Lehrer.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Ich schenke meiner Mutter einen Schal. Meinem Vater schenke ich ein Buch. Ich schenke ihm auch eine Mütze. Meiner Schwester schenke ich Schokolade, denn sie gefällt ihr immer. Meinen Freunden schenke ich Karten für ein Konzert.

Chapter 16 · Choosing between the two

Exercise 1: 1. Wem hilft Tom? 2. Wen besuchen wir am Sonntag? 3. Wem gehört das Fahrrad? 4. Wen liebt er?

Exercise 2: 1. mir 2. dich 3. mir 4. dir 5. mich 6. dich

Exercise 3: 1. ihn 2. ihm 3. ihm 4. ihn

Exercise 4: 1. Sie schenkt ihrer Mutter einen Schal. → Sie schenkt ihr einen Schal. → Sie schenkt ihn ihr. 2. Wir geben dem Kind den Ball. → Wir geben ihm den Ball. → Wir geben ihn ihm. 3. Er erzählt seinen Freunden die Geschichte. → Er erzählt ihnen die Geschichte. → Er erzählt sie ihnen.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Ich schenke meinem Vater einen Kalender. Ich schenke ihm auch ein Buch. Meine Mutter bekommt einen Schal, und ich schenke ihn ihr am Morgen. Meiner Oma schenke ich Blumen. Ich bringe sie ihr am Sonntag.

Chapter 17 · Seven words, one case

Exercise 1: 1. mit 2. aus 3. Nach 4. seit 5. von 6. zu 7. bei

Exercise 2: 1. dem 2. der 3. der 4. der 5. einem 6. den

Exercise 3: 1. Wir fahren zum Bahnhof. 2. Sie geht zur Post. 3. Tom ist beim Bäcker. 4. Das Brot ist vom Markt.

Exercise 4: 1. nach 2. zu 3. nach 4. zu 5. nach

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Seit einem Jahr gehe ich in diese Schule. Ich fahre mit dem Bus zur Schule. Nach der Schule gehe ich nach Hause. Manchmal lerne ich bei einer Freundin. Wir machen zusammen Hausaufgaben und trinken Tee.

Chapter 18 · Five words, one case

Exercise 1: 1. durch 2. für 3. gegen 4. Ohne 5. um

Exercise 2: 1. die 2. einen 3. den 4. meinen 5. die 6. das

Exercise 3: 1. dich 2. ihn 3. dich, dich 4. uns

Exercise 4: 1. um 2. gegen 3. um 4. gegen

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Ich suche ein Geschenk für meine Schwester. Ich gehe durch die Stadt. Gegen zehn finde ich einen kleinen Laden. Ich laufe um die Ecke und kaufe eine Tasse. Ohne eine Pause gehe ich schnell nach Hause.

Chapter 19 · The nine that switch sides

Exercise 1: 1. wo 2. wohin 3. wo 4. wohin

Exercise 2: 1. den 2. dem 3. die 4. den 5. das 6. dem

Exercise 3: 1. ins 2. im 3. ans 4. am

Exercise 4: 1. in die 2. nach 3. in die 4. nach

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Das Bett steht neben dem Fenster. Der Schreibtisch steht an der Wand. Die Lampe steht auf dem Schreibtisch. Ich stelle die Lampe auf den Tisch. Ich hänge das Bild über das Bett.

Chapter 20 · The past of being and having

Exercise 1: 1. war 2. hatten 3. Warst 4. hatte 5. wart 6. hatten

Exercise 2: 1. musste 2. konnte 3. wollten 4. durfte 5. solltet

Exercise 3: 1. „Wo warst du?“ 2. „Ich war bei Tom. Wir hatten viel Zeit.“ 3. „Ich konnte leider nicht kommen.“ 4. „Schade! Musstest du lernen?“

Exercise 4: 1. Lena hat mit Bello gespielt. 2. Wir waren bei Oma. 3. Tom hat Brot gekauft. 4. Ich hatte keinen Hunger.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Am Samstag war ich bei Oma. Wir hatten viel Zeit. Ich musste am Morgen mein Zimmer aufräumen. Am Nachmittag habe ich mit Tom Fußball gespielt. Am Abend war ich sehr müde.

Chapter 21 · Inside the bracket

Exercise 1: 1. Ich fahre morgen mit dem Rad zur Schule. 2. Tom hat gestern auf dem Markt ein Brot gekauft. 3. Wir fliegen im Sommer mit der Familie nach Italien. 4. Oma hat heute in der Küche einen Kuchen gebacken.

Exercise 2: 1. Tom kommt heute nicht. 2. Ich rufe dich am Sonntag nicht an. 3. Ich habe den Film nicht gesehen. 4. Lena kann am Samstag nicht kommen. 5. Wir fahren morgen nicht mit dem Bus.

Exercise 3: 1. Ich habe ihn gestern gesehen. 2. Tom hat sie am Sonntag besucht. 3. Wir haben es heute gewaschen. 4. Lena hat ihn gestern angerufen.

Exercise 4: 1. Ich gehe. → Ich gehe heute. → Ich gehe heute mit Bello. → Ich gehe heute mit Bello in den Park. 2. Wir essen. → Wir essen am Sonntag. → Wir essen am Sonntag bei Oma. 3. Tom fährt. → Tom fährt morgen. → Tom fährt morgen mit dem Zug. → Tom fährt morgen mit dem Zug nach Zürich.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Ich fahre morgen um acht mit dem Bus zur Schule. Am Mittag esse ich in der Schule. Am Nachmittag muss ich zu Hause Hausaufgaben machen. Am Abend gehe ich mit meinem Vater in den Park.

Chapter 22 · Better, best, and how to say so

Exercise 1: 1. kleiner, am kleinsten 2. älter, am ältesten 3. wärmer, am wärmsten 4. jünger, am jüngsten 5. interessanter, am interessantesten

Exercise 2: 1. als 2. wie 3. als 4. wie 5. als

Exercise 3: 1. besser 2. mehr 3. lieber 4. besten 5. liebsten

Exercise 4: 1. Ich esse gern Brot, lieber Käse und am liebsten Kuchen. 2. Ich spiele gern Karten, lieber Schach und am liebsten Fußball. 3. Ich höre gern Radio, lieber Podcasts und am liebsten Musik.

Exercise 5: Answers will vary. Sample answer: Berlin ist größer als Köln. Hamburg ist so schön wie Köln. Am größten ist Berlin. Ich fahre lieber nach Hamburg als nach Köln. Am liebsten besuche ich Berlin.



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