

Hauptsachen zur Deutschen Grammatik:  
Comprehensive Review of German Grammar  
for High-School Students Entering a Level 3 Class

by

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**Dedicated to all my German students, deep past, recent past, current, and future.**

*„Wir Deutschen haben die Welt beherrscht, fremde Völker, die Nordsee und die Natur - den Konjunktiv  
nie.“*

*Dieter Hildebrandt (\*1927), deutsche. Kabarettist*

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## Introduction

Teaching for so many years the German language has brought me to two firm conclusions about the learning process: 1) in order to master German, ideas and concepts should be constantly reexamined and supplemented with deeper observation: 2) connections to prior learning and mother language experiences need to be apparent and obvious in order for solidification of linguistic input in the brain centers where language production takes place. In other words, a whirlwind of language stimuli should churn regularly in the student's mind. Yes, one can reduce second language learning to nervous system components, like cells and dendrites and synapses, and the release and reuptake of synaptic chemicals, neurotransmitters, and this can be very interesting for students of psychology and brain science, but for the average high-school student, for whom this manual is written, neurolinguistics be safely assigned a secondary status in an effort to learn German. I recognize fully that learning German is as much a social process as a mechanical process of linking together arbitrary sounds and morphemes and symbols. But without the latter, the mechanical/grammatical, our human desire to interact and associate with other humans through the use of a common language would collapse into an unintelligible swamp of confusion.

Rules are important, but in practice many common ones morph into new rules, or shall I say tendencies. These common rule breakages are learned more slowly and become a second tier of language acquisition. This manual is concerned with the rules, with the standard set of them, that occur in the German language. Once mastered, the exceptions and the nuance present in all modern world languages can be more readily learned.

The organisation of the manual follows a somewhat traditional grammatical trajectory: the parts of speech in German are given separate treatments in distinct chapters. It's impossible to discuss the parts of speech (**die Sprachteile**) in isolation; therefore, interconnected examples are given that I hope will build the essential web of German grammar necessary for meaningful speech and writing.

American English speakers, particularly high-schooler, have lamented the observation that they never learned English grammar adequately enough to assimilate the names for German parts of speech. I say then in German class it is high time they do learn English grammar jargon alongside the German terms. It is helpful to compare and contrast the forms in these two Germanic languages, for there are many similarities and a contrastive approach can shed valuable insights into both languages. However true the typical American high-school lament is shouldn't hinder an adequate understanding of how educated people discuss language.

Modern teachers of living world languages might recoil at the thought of a purely grammatical treatise of German which I am currently presenting. The focus has been for some time on the **communicative** properties of language acquisition, and how we can replicate in the classroom natural neuroprocesses in rewiring language centers of the brain, much like a child learns its first language. There is validity to this approach, I wholly believe, and it forms the base of my instruction, but older learners in high-school seem to strive for a more analytical description of form. They are more self-conscious of making mistakes, despite teacher skill in judiciously correcting errors. I hope this manual can provide an affective foundation for students so that they take more risks in using the German language in more complex communicative ways.

## Parts of Speech

Englisch term	German term – in order of frequency of usage	Adjectival/adverbial forms of the German terms, if applicable / examples of said part of speech
noun	das Substantiv, das Hauptwort, das Nomen, das Nennwort	nominal
pronoun	das Pronomen, das Fürwort	pronominal, fürwortlich
personal pronoun	das Personalpronomen	<i>er, sie, es, ihn, ihm, usw.</i>
demonstrative pronoun	das Demonstrativpronoun; das Demonstrativum	<i>der, die, das, denen, usw.</i>
definite article	der bestimmte Artikel	<i>der, die, das, den, dem, des</i>
indefinite article	der unbestimmte Artikel	<i>ein, einen, eine, einer</i>
ein-word	das Ein-Wort	<i>mein, sein, ihr, unser, usw.</i>
possessive adjective	das Possessivadjektiv; der Possessivartikel	<i>mein, sein, ihr, unser, usw.</i>
demonstrative determiner	der Demonstrativartikel	<i>dieser, jeder, alle, solcher, manche</i>
interrogative determiner	der Interrogativartikel; der Frageartikel	<i>welcher, welche, welchen, usw.</i>
der-word	das Der-Wort	<i>dieser, jeder, alle, solcher, manche, welcher, welche, welchen, usw.</i>
gender	das Geschlecht; das Genus; grammatisches Geschlecht	
case	der Kasus; der Fall	
subject	das Subjekt	
direct object	das Akkusativobjekt	
indirect object	das Dativobjekt	

genitive object	das Genitivobjekt	
prepositional object; object of the preposition	das Objekt der Präposition	
preposition	die Präposition; das Verhältniswort;	präpositional
to govern, i.e., prepositions govern certain cases	regieren, d.h. Gegen regiert den Akkusativ.	
prepositional phrase	die präpositionale Phrase; der präpositionale Ausdruck	
da-compound	das Da-Kompositum	
wo-compound	das Wo-Kompositum	
nominative, accusative, dative, genitive	der Nominativ, der Akkusativ, der Dativ, der Genitiv	im Nominativ, im Akkusativ, usw.
masculine	männlich; maskulin	
feminine	weiblich; feminin	
neuter	sächlich; im Neutrum	
singular	der Singular; die Einzahl	singulär
plural	der Plural; die Mehrzahl	im Plural; pluralisch
to decline, i.e., to apply changes to articles and nouns	deklinieren	dekliniert
first person	die erste Person, die Ich-Form	
second person	die Du-Form	
third person	die dritte Person	
first person plural	die Wir-Form	
forms of address	Formen der Anrede	
formal address	formelle Anrede	
informal address	informelle Anrede	
verb	das Verb, das Verbum, das Zeitwort	verbal

strong verb; irregular verb	das starke Verb; das unregelmäßige Verb	
weak verb; regular verb	das schwache Verb; das regelmäßige Verb	
to conjugate (a verb)	konjugieren	konjugiert
subject-verb agreement	die Kongruenz	
past participle	das Partizip (Perfekt)	
verb tense	das Tempus, die Zeit, die Zeitform	
present tense	das Präsens, die Gegenwart	im Präsens; in der Gegenwart
present perfect	das Perfekt	im Perfekt
simple past tense	das Präteritum, das Imperfekt	im Präteritum, im Imperfekt
future tense	das Futur	im Futur
past perfect tense	das Plusquamperfekt	im Plusquamperfekt
helping verb, auxiliary verb	das Hilfsverb	
modal verb	das Modalverb	
finite verb	das finite Verb; finites Verb	finit
infinitive	der Infinitiv, die Nennform	
mood	der Modus	
indicative mood	der Indikativ	
subjunctive mood	der Konjunktiv	
imperative	der Imperativ	
adjective	das Adjektiv; das Eigenschaftswort	adjektivisch
predicate adjective	das Prädikatenadjektiv	
attributive adjective	das attributive Adjektiv	
adjective ending	die Adjektivendung	
adverb	das Adverb, das Umstandswort	adverbiell, adverbial

word order	die Wortstellung	
normal word order	die normale Wortstellung	
verb in second position	das Verb in der zweiten Stelle	
syntax	der Satzbau; die Syntax	
sentence	der Satz	
subordinate clause	der Nebensatz	
at the end of the sentence	am Satzende	
conjunction	die Konjunktion	
coordinating conjunction	die koordinierende Konjunktion	
subordinating conjunction	die subordinierende Konjunktion	
infinitive clause	der Infinitivsatz	

## Nouns

We start with nouns in German. One German word for a noun, **das Substantiv**, is an interesting one because it underscores what a noun is: something substantial, something of substance. The classic grade-school definition of noun holds true here: nouns are persons, places, things, ideas.

In German, nouns are always capitalized in a German sentence, and nouns possess **gender** – *das Geschlecht*. When asked what gender a noun is, one typically gives the **definite article in the nominative case** along with the noun: **das Haus, der Mann, die Gabel, das Fach, der Bleistift, die Schultasche**, etc. **Der** signifies masculine, **die** signifies feminine, and **das** signifies neuter. These are the three genders among German nouns.

Genders of German nouns must be memorized when learning the noun. There are some rules that can help determine gender. For example, all nouns ending in **-ung, -keit, and -heit** are always feminine: **die Umgebung, die Krankheit, die Sehenswürdigkeit**. Nouns for people are typically masculine unless tagged with the feminine **-in** marker and sometimes an added umlaut: **der Lehrer/die Lehrerin, der Arzt/die Ärztin, der Schüler/die Schülerin**. Nouns for family members follow natural gender, i.e. they're either masculine or feminine. One exception is the word for *the child* – **das Kind**.

Compound nouns in German have the same gender as the final noun in the compound. For example, **Haus** is neuter (*das Haus*), therefore, **Kaufhaus, Mietshaus, Rathaus, Krankenhaus** are also neuter.

Always learn the gender - **der, die das** – when you encounter, list, learn, utilize, etc. new nouns.

Nouns are either **singular** or **plural**. There are a few German nouns that are always plural; common ones are **die Leute, die Ferien, die Geschwister, die Eltern**. All nouns in the plural have the definite article **die** as its nominative case marker.



Speaking of plural, not only should one learn the noun's gender but also the noun's plural form. Plural forms in German fall into a variety of classes: **-e, -n, -, -s, "-e, "-er, -"**. Here are some examples of nouns in the singular and their corresponding plural form:

SINGULAR	PLURAL	CLASS
der Bleistift	die Bleistifte	-e
der Junge	die Jungen	-(e)n
der Taschenrechner	die Taschenrechner	- (no change)
das Auto	die Autos	-s
das Fach	die Fächer	"-er
die Stadt	die Städte	"-e
der Vater	die Väter	-"
der Hund	die Hunde	-e
die Katze	die Katzen	-n (all nouns ending in -e form their plural this way.)
das Haus	die Häuser	"-er
der Mann	die Männer	"-er
die Frau	die Frauen	-en
das Kind	die Kinder	-er (really a modified "-er; a common neuter noun plural form)
das Glas	die Gläser	"-er (see above)

### The Noun Phrase

Singular nouns (and plural nouns) in German sentences often appear not as single words but as **noun phrases**. Along with the noun itself, there might be what we can call a **determiner**. These determiners can be definite articles (**der, die, das, etc.**), indefinite articles (**ein, eine, einen, etc.**), possessive adjectives (**mein, dein, unser, euer, ihr, Ihr, sein**), demonstrative determiners (**dieser, jedes, alle, welchen? solche, kein, etc.**), indefinite adjectives (**wenig, mehr, alles, nichts, viel, mehrere, einige, etc.**).

Plural nouns often appear without a determiner in a German sentence:

**Kinder spielen gern Brettspiele.** *Children like to splay board games.*

The two nouns in the sentence, **Kinder** and **Brettspiele**, are plural and are present without determiners. See how the sentence changes when determiners are included:

**Die Kinder spielen gern meine Brettspiele.** *The children like to play my board games.*

Determiners in noun phrases add a certain kind of specificity to the noun, and when to use them in German follows generally the same rules as in English, stylistically and otherwise.

Other elements that can be present in a noun phrase are **attributive adjectives**. For example, if we take the sentence above and add some adjectives to spice up the sentence, we might come up with this:

**Die kleinen Kinder spielen gern meine alten Brettspiele.**

*The small children like playing my old board games.*

There are other elements that can be part of a German noun phrase, like relative clauses, extended participial modifiers, and adverbs. Taken as a whole, these added elements simply add information and texture to the noun phrase. And they also add a certain level of complexity.

Noun phrases can also be a part of a noun phrase, particularly with **prepositional phrases** and **genitive case nouns**. Here is an example of a noun phrase being part of another noun phrase:

**Der Mann mit dem roten Haar ist am Telefon.**

*The man with the red hair is on the telephone.*

In this sentence we have three different noun phrases. The main one, the **subject**, is **der Mann**. Attached to it is a prepositional phrase containing yet another noun phrase, **dem roten Haar**. The entire prepositional phrase adds information to **der Mann**, and in essence can be removed from the sentence and still leave behind a meaningful utterance: **Der Mann ist am Telefon**. The final noun phrase is another **object of a preposition, dem Telefon**, a noun in the **dative case** and the object of the preposition **an**. An + dem is generally contracted to form **am**.

It is interesting to note in the previous example that **am Telefon** is not optional; that is, removing this particular element of the sentence would render the sentence incomplete. Some noun phrases are essential to maintain meaning.

### Case in German

Noun phrases are in a specific gender in a German sentence. In the plural, we can say that gender dissolves away and all nouns are **die**. Noun phrases in German sentences not only possess gender/number (i.e., singular or plural), but they are also in a specific **case**. The determiners change form depending on what case the noun is in in a German sentence. This is markedly different from English, where the determiners do not change form. In German, changes in the form of the determiner is known as **declension**. The determiners present before the noun change form. What they mutate to depends on the **case** of the noun.

Now, the discussion of case for American learners of German is always fraught with indecision and anxiety, mostly because the corresponding terms in English are only superficially learned. Grammatical case in German refers fundamentally to **function**. The main question one asks himself is: What function does the noun serve in a sentence? Is it the **subject? Direct object? Indirect object? Object of a preposition? Certain kinds of time expressions? Object of certain special-case verbs?** In German, we can summarize the assignment of case as follows:

CASE	FUNCTION IN THE SENTENCE
<b>der Nominativ</b> – <i>subject. All German sentences have a noun in the nominative case.</i>	1. Subject of the verb – noun DOING the action of the verb.

	2. Object of the linking verbs <b>sein</b> and <b>werden</b>
<p><b>der Akkusativ</b> – <i>direct objects. Verbs that normally have or anticipate a direct object are known as <b>transitive verbs</b>. Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>haben</i></li> <li>• <i>kaufen</i></li> <li>• <i>bringen</i></li> <li>• <i>holen</i></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Direct object of the verb – noun BEING ACTED UPON DIRECTLY by the verb.</li> <li>2. object of the accusative-case prepositions – <b>durch, ohne, gegen, für, um, bis</b></li> <li>3. objects of the either-or prepositions – <b>neben, zwischen, auf, an, in, unter, hinter, über, vor</b></li> <li>4. certain kinds of specific time expressions – <b>jeden Tag, dieses Wochenende, diesen Sommer</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>der Dativ</b> – <i>indirect object. Many verbs that anticipate both a direct object AND indirect object. Examples:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>kaufen – to buy someone something</i></li> <li>2. <i>schreiben – to write someone something</i></li> <li>3. <i>bringen – to bring someone something</i></li> <li>4. <i>sagen – to say something to someone</i></li> <li>5. <i>erzählen – to tell someone something</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Indirect object of the verb – INDIRECT RECIPIENT OF THE VERB'S ACTION.</li> <li>2. objects of the dative-case only prepositions – <b>aus, außer, bei, mit, nach, seit, von, zu, gegenüber.</b></li> <li>3. objects of the either-or prepositions – <b>neben, zwischen, auf, an, in, unter, hinter, über, vor</b></li> <li>4. objects of dative-case verbs. Examples include <b>helfen, gefallen, danken, gratulieren, Leid tun, wehtun</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>der Genitiv</b> – <i>apostrophe 's in English. The word order of possessive expressions is reversed in German:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the boy's toy = das Spielzeug des Jungen</i></li> <li>• <i>a teacher's desk = der Schreibtisch eines Lehrers</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Proper names add an -s or apostrophe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Susannes Kusine</i></li> <li>• <i>Hans' Auto</i></li> <li>• <i>Gerhards Haus</i></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. nouns that “possess” another noun phrase directly preceding it in a sentence are in the genitive case. Genitive describes possession or relationship.</li> <li>2. objects of a few genitive-case only prepositions: <b>trotz, wegen, (an)statt, während, jenseits, diessseits, oberhalb, unterhalb</b> are some examples.</li> <li>3. indefinite, repetitive, or non-specific time phrases: <b>eines Tages, samstags, eines Abends</b></li> </ol>

The summary above can be expanded. For example, there are some verbs in German that do take a genitive case noun phrase. These verbs convey a more elevated tone of voice, more educated and erudite. Some examples of these low-frequency verbs include:

1. **sich bedienen** *to make use of* - Ich bediene mich des Spielzimmers für die Party.
2. **sich rühmen** *to boast of* - Er rühmt sich immer seiner Geschäftserfolge.
3. **sich enthalten** *to refrain from* – Sie enthält sich alkoholischer Getränke.

I wrote a short discussion of case mainly for my Level 2 students. I include it as an appendix and it should be reviewed. The above chart encapsulates the main points. The charts below illustrate

how the determiners are declined in German:

**der bestimmte Artikel:**

	<b>MASKULIN</b>	<b>FEMININ</b>	<b>NEUTRUM</b>	<b>MEHRZAHL</b>
NOMINATIV	der	die	das	die
AKKUSATIV	den	die	das	die
DATIV	dem	der	dem	den, -n
GENITIV	des -(e)s	der	des -(e)s	der

Several observations to this chart are important. **Masculine experiences the most robust changes** as masculine nouns are used in the 4 German cases, followed by **neuter, which shares the same form as masculine in two cases**, and **plural, which shares the same article as feminine-genitive. Feminine sees only two changes.**

Note when the changes begin taking place: in the **m.acc**. The other three gender/case combinations retain their forms in the accusative. Shading the pattern creates the boundaries of the American state of Oklahoma. I sometimes refer to this paradigm<sup>1</sup> as the “Oklahoma chart.”

Also note masculine/neuter genitive. Nouns in these two cases have an -s or -es tacked on the end. Monosyllabic nouns generally have an -es and polysyllabic nouns generally have -s. Some examples:

- Das Auto des Mannes steht vor dem Haus.
- Bringen Sie mir bitte die Arbeit des Mädchens!
- Der Preis des Computers ist günstig.

**der-Words – dies-, welch-, jed-**

The definite articles can be called **der-words**. These der-words have a specific set of endings that mutate depending on the case and gender of the noun they are attached to. There are other der-words whose endings are virtually identical to the definite articles. These added der-words are the following:

1. dies- - *this, that, these*
2. jed- - *each, every (used only with singular nouns)*
3. welch- - *Which? (used in questions)*
4. solch- - *such (used in both the singular and plural, mostly in the plural)*
5. jen- - *this, that (somewhat rare, used in concert with dies-, expressing the “former” and the “latter”)*

Notice I didn't put endings on these der-words, because the endings change depending on the noun that follows. Let's take *dies-* as an example and see what these endings are:

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<sup>1</sup> A paradigm in a grammatical context is a set of forms all of which contain a particular element, especially the set of all inflected forms based on a single stem or theme. das Paradigma, das Musterbeispiel, das Modell are various German translations of paradigm.

**Endings of other der-words using *dies-* as an example:**

	<b>MASKULIN</b>	<b>FEMININ</b>	<b>NEUTRUM</b>	<b>MEHRZAHL</b>
NOMINATIV	dieser	diese	dieses	diese
AKKUSATIV	<b>diesen</b>	diese	dieses	diese
DATIV	<b>diesem</b>	<b>dieser</b>	<b>diesem</b>	<b>diesen, -n</b>
GENITIV	<b>dieses -(e)s</b>	<b>dieser</b>	<b>dieses -(e)s</b>	<b>dieser</b>

The endings are almost the same as the definite articles. The exception is in the neuter nominative and accusative, where the ending is -es, still pretty close to **das**. Here are some examples of these der-words:

1. Dieser Junge wohnt in der Nähe.
2. Jeden Tag gehe ich schwimmen.
3. Welches Auto möchtest du denn kaufen?
4. Mit welchem Fahrrad kommt er?

**Masculine N-nouns, or weak masculine nouns**

I might as well engage a short discussion of a certain class of **masculine** nouns known as **Masculine N-Nouns**, or **Weak Masculine Nouns**. These are masculine nouns that in the **accusative, dative and genitive case** and an -n or -en to the noun. Some of these weak masculine nouns do add an -ens in the genitive and most do not. Some common examples of these nouns are as follows:

**der Alte** old man (-n, -n)

**der Architekt** architect (-en, -en)

**der Bär** bear (-en, -en), Often **des Bärs** in informal genitive usage

**der Bauer** farmer, peasant; yokel (-n, -n)

**der Beamte** civil servant (-n, -n)

**der Deutsche** male German (-n, -n)

**der Einheimische** native, local (-n, -n)

**der Erwachsene** adult (-n, -n)

**der Franzose** Frenchman (-n, -n)

**der Fremde** stranger (-n, -n)

**der Fürst** prince (-en, -en)

**der Herr** gentleman, lord (-n, -en)

**der Kunde** customer (-n, -n)

**der Löwe** lion; Leo (*astrol.*) (-n, -n)

**der Mensch** person, human being (-en, -en)

**der Name** name (-n, -ns)

**der Nachbar** neighbor (-n, -n) Often the -n ending is only used in the genitive singular.

**der Junge** boy (-n, -n)

**der Planet** planet (-en, -en)

**der Präsident** president (-en, -en)

**der Soldat** soldier (-en, -en)

**der Verwandte** relative (-n, -n)

In parentheses you see two endings, the ending for accusative and dative-case, and the second one is the ending in the genitive-case, which is almost always the same. This is the way you might see these weak masculine nouns notated in the most common dual-language English-German dictionaries.

These kinds of peculiarities should be noted whenever you look words up in dictionaries and when you use these nouns in your writing and speech.

### Plural Dative nouns

Plural dative nouns experience an interesting alteration: an -n is added to the noun whenever possible:

**Ich gebe den Kindern (pl.dat) Bonbons.** - *I give the kids candies.*

Plurals ending in -n or -s get no added -n ending in the plural-dative.

### Der unbestimmte Artikel

The forms of the **indefinite articles** are as follows. The indefinite article is the equivalent of English *a, an*, a decidedly indefinite determiner. Note that since there is no indefinite article in the plural, I use the word *kein* to illustrate the all-important endings.

	MASKULIN	FEMININ	NEUTRUM	MEHRZAHL
NOMINATIV	ein	eine	ein	keine
AKKUSATIV	einen	eine	ein	keine
DATIV	einem	einer	einem	keinen, -n
GENITIV	eines -(e)s	einer	eines -(e)s	keiner

The endings for these determiners are virtually identical to the endings of the definite articles, except for m.nom and n.nom/n.acc. And the classic Oklahoma Chart applies here, too!

### Ein words

The indefinite article is the classic “ein-Word.” There are other so-called ein words and the reason why they are called ein-words, is that these special determiners have the same exact endings as the ein-words. It's important to remember that in this ein-word paradigm, there are no endings in the m.nom and n.nom and n.acc. The ein-words I am referring to here are **die Possessivadjektive**:

- mein – *my*
- dein – *your (sg. informal)*
- sein – *his, its*

- ihr – *her*
- unser – *our*
- euer – *your (pl.informal)*
- ihr – *their*
- Ihr – *your (sg.pl.formal)*

These determiners, these possessive adjectives, when used and declined in German noun phrases, have the same endings, or lack thereof, of the **indefinite articles** laid out above.

Take note of the possessive adjectives **unser** and **euer**. Whenever they have an ending, the middle -e- is often *elided*, or, *elision* takes place to facilitate an easier pronunciation. unser → unsre(n)(m)(r); euer → eure(n)(m)(r)

## Prepositions

The next topic of discussion, which follows logically from the above discourse on nouns and noun phrases in the German language, is **Präpositionen**, prepositions. These words relate one noun phrase to another in time and space. They occur bound to a noun phrase, which is the **object of the preposition**.

Prepositional phrases generally act independently of all other elements of a German sentence. Most times the entire phrase can be left out of the sentence and the sentence will maintain meaning. Perhaps with not as much information, but the sentence without the prepositional phrase is mostly complete.

Prepositional phrases can be considered a type of **adverb**, a word or phrase that describes the verb or another adjective.

Other times prepositional phrases are mandatory and bound syntactically to the verb. Regardless, all prepositional phrases behave the same way with the same basic word order:

### preposition + noun phrase in a particular case

Yes, prepositions govern one of three cases in German: accusative, dative, or genitive. Never is a preposition followed by noun in the nominative case.

Let's examine the various prepositions in German. They can be classified into four categories: **accusative-case only, dative-case only, genitive-case only** and **either-accusative-or-dative-case (either-or prepositions; Wechselpräpositionen)**. Prepositions have multiple meanings and it is important to learn examples of the multiple uses of these highly important words. Learning them in context, or as *chunks*, is a useful way to begin mastering the nuance of German prepositions. In most languages I have studied, prepositions can be difficult because of the mutability of meaning that they possess.

### Accusative Case Prepositions

DOGFU is the classic mnemonic device to remember this small class of prepositions: **durch, ohne, gegen, für, um**. There are three other ones actually – **wider, bis, pro** – and we'll briefly discuss these also. Perhaps we can change the mnemonic device to DOGPFWUB?

PRÄPOSITION	MEANINGS and examples
durch	through -

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>durch die Stadt</b></li> <li>2. <b>durch das Haus</b></li> </ol> <p>by means of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. used this way in passive voice sentences.</li> <li>2. Die Stadt wurde durch den Tsunami zerstört. - <i>The city was destroyed by the tsunami.</i></li> </ol>
ohne	<p>without -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>ohne einen Bleistift</b></li> <li>2. <b>ohne die Gitarre</b></li> </ol>
gegen	<p>against -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. physical placement; spatial meaning</li> <li>2. against, meaning, versus</li> <li>3. <b>Er stellt das Rad gegen die Garage.</b></li> <li>4. <b>Wir spielten gegen die Mannschaft von Bremen.</b></li> <li>5. <b>Ich bin dagegen.</b> - <i>I am against that.</i></li> </ol> <p>towards -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. in time expressions</li> <li>2. <b>gegen sechs Uhr</b> – <i>towards 6 o'clock (but not past!)</i></li> </ol>
für	<p>for -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>für meinen Bruder</b></li> <li>2. <b>für meine Eltern</b></li> </ol>
um	<p>around -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. physical placement</li> <li>2. <b>Er läuft um den Park.</b></li> <li>3. <b>Sie wohnt um die Ecke</b></li> </ol>
wider	<p>against. This preposition is used primarily as an inseparable verbal prefix meaning <i>against</i>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>widersprechen</b> – to contradict</li> <li>2. <b>widerstehen</b> – to resist, withstand</li> <li>3. <b>widerlegen</b> – to refute, to rebut</li> <li>4. <b>widerrufen</b> – to revoke, repeal, rescind, recant</li> </ol> <p>Another meaning equates to <i>contrary to</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>wider Erwarten</b> – contrary to expectations</li> <li>2. <b>wider die Vernunft</b> – against all reason</li> <li>3. <b>wider besseres Wissen</b> – against better judgement</li> </ol>
bis	<p>until, as far as, up to. <b>Bis</b> is often used in concert with another preposition. The second preposition decides the case:</p>



	<p>1. <b>bis zum Bahnhof</b> – up to the train station</p> <p><b>Bis</b> is frequently in time expressions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>bis neun Uhr</b> – until 9 o'clock</li> <li>2. <b>bis dann</b> – until then! (see you then!)</li> <li>3. <b>von 6 bis 10</b> – from 6 till 10</li> </ol>
pro	<p>per – used as in English:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>pro Pfund</b> – per pound</li> <li>2. <b>pro Liter</b> – per liter</li> </ol>

Common contractions with the accusative case prepositions include **ums** (um + das), **fürs** (für + das), and, less common, **durchs** (durch + das). Most time using contractions is expected in German, unless you want to really emphasize the nominal object of the preposition.

### Dative-case Prepositions

The dative case prepositions are the following: **aus, außer, bei, mit, nach, seit, von, zu**. Sing these prepositions to the main melody of Johann Strauss's Blue Danube Waltz and you have a nice mnemonic device. Of course, there is another dative-case preposition, **gegenüber**, that doesn't easily fit into the song. In any case, these 9 prepositions always are followed by nouns in the dative case. This set of prepositions has a wide variety of meanings which must be learned and memorized. The best way to learn the various meanings is by chunking them with sample noun phrases to form example prepositional phrases. Let's go ahead and look at these high-frequency words methodically.

PRÄPOSITIONEN MIT DATIV	BEDEUTUNGEN und BEISPIELE
aus	<p>out of, physically out of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ich gehe direkt aus der Schule.</b></li> </ul> <p>from (cities, countries, nations of origin)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Die Frau kommt aus Polen.</b></li> </ul> <p>of, out of (materials, cotton, leather, brick, etc)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>aus Leder</b> – of leather, out of leather</li> <li>2. <b>aus Baumwolle</b> – out of cotton</li> <li>3. <b>aus Holz</b> - from wood</li> </ol> <p>due to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>aus einem Grund</b> – due to one single reason, for one reason</li> </ul>
außer	<p>besides, except for, in addition to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Außer Eva bestanden alle das Quiz nicht.</b> - Except for Eva everyone failed the quiz.</li> <li>2. <b>Außer einem Rechner brauche ich ein paar Bleistifte.</b> - In addition to a</li> </ol>

	calculator, I need a few pencils.
bei	<p>by, as in location; near to, at, on</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>beim Park</b> - by the park</li> <li>2. <b>bei seiner Ankunft</b> – on his arrival</li> </ol> <p>at someone's home</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>bei Monika</b> – at Monika's house</li> <li>2. <b>bei meinem Bruder</b> – at my brother's home</li> </ol>
mit	<p>with</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>mit mir</b> – with me</li> <li>2. <b>mit ihrer Schwester</b> – with her sister</li> </ol> <p>by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>mit dem Auto</b> – by car</li> <li>2. <b>mit dem Rad</b> – by bicycle</li> </ol>
nach	<p>after (in time expressions)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>nach der Schule</b></li> <li>2. <b>nach der Party</b></li> </ol> <p>to (countries/cities that require no article)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Ich fahre nach Deutschland.</b></li> <li>2. <b>Er reist nach Bremen.</b></li> <li>3. <b>nach Hause</b> – home, used with motion verbs – <b>Ich gehe nach Hause.</b> - I'm going home.</li> </ol> <p>towards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>nach links</b> – to the left</li> <li>2. <b>nach rechts</b> – to the right</li> </ol> <p>according to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Meiner Meinung nach</b> – in my opinion (note position of <i>nach</i> in this phrase)</li> <li>2. <b>nach ihren Angaben</b> – according to their numbers/account</li> </ol>
seit	<p>since, for (in time expressions) – <b>take special note!</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Seit einem Jahr spiele ich die Flöte.</b> - I've been playing the flute for one year (since one year).</li> <li>2. <b>Seit Jahren fahre ich jeden Sommer nach Europa.</b> - For years, I have been traveling each summer to Europe.</li> <li>3. <b>Seit einem Monat schwimmt er</b> – He's been swimming for a month.</li> </ol>
von	<p>from (in time expressions, or general locale)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Von 6 bis 8 Uhr</b> – from 6 until 8 o'clock</li> <li>2. <b>Vom Bahnhof gehe ich geradeaus.</b> - I am walking straight ahead from the train station.</li> </ol>

	<p>by (as in authorship)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ein Buch von Stephen King</b> in passive voice sentences, describing the <i>agent of the sentence</i>.</li> <li>• <b>Das Buch wird von der Frau geschrieben.</b> - The book is being written by the woman.</li> </ul>
zu	<p>to (direction in general locale - with motion verbs, to someone's house)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Zum Flughafen gehe ich.</b></li> <li>2. <b>Zum Park laufe ich.</b></li> <li>3. <b>Martina fährt zu Monika.</b> - Martina travels to Monika's house/home.</li> </ol> <p>Special Phrases:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>zu Hause</b> – at home</li> <li>2. <b>zu Ende</b> – finished, all over</li> <li>3. <b>zu Besuch</b> – for a visit</li> </ol>
gegenüber	<p>opposite to (physically), compared to, across from (usually used with <i>von</i>), vis-a-vis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>gegenüber dem Park</b></li> <li>2. <b>gegenüber vom Bahnhof</b> – across from the train station</li> <li>3. <b>deiner Idee gegenüber</b> – compared to your idea.</li> </ol> <p>sometimes <b>gegenüber</b> is used AFTER its nominal object, <i>postpositionally</i>, instead of <i>prepositionally</i>.</p>

To reiterate, nouns that follow the above listed prepositions are always in the dative case, therefore any determiners in the noun phrase must reflect the dative-case: **dem/einem, der/einer, den/keinen** – only three forms for the dative case!

Many of the dative case prepositions can be used in contractions with the definite articles **dem** and **der**: **zum, vom, zur, beim**. These are the only possible contractions among the dative-case prepositions, and they should be used whenever possible.

### Genitive Case Prepositions

There are in German numerous prepositions that govern the **genitive case**. The most common ones with their meanings are listed below:

PRÄPOSITIONEN MIT GENITIV	BEDEUTUNGEN
während	<p>during, while</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>während der Sommerferien</b> (pl.gen)</li> <li>2. <b>während eines Gewitters</b> (n.gen) – <i>during a storm</i></li> </ol>
(an)statt	<p>instead of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>statt des Konzerts</b> (n.gen)</li> </ol>

wegen	because of, on account of 1. <b>wegen des Wetters</b> (n.gen)
trotz	despite, in spite of 1. <b>trotz der schlechten Note</b> (f.gen) – <i>despite the bad grade</i>

There are other prepositions in German the genitive, listed below, and these are considered a more elevated tone of speech, perhaps encountered and used more in non-fiction, essays, newspaper editorials, and the like. Here they are:

- **jenseits** *on the other side of*
- **anlässlich** *on the occasion of*
- **kraft** *by virtue of*
- **anstelle** *in place of*
- **laut** *according to*
- **aufgrund** *on the basis of*
- **seitens** *on the part of*
- **außerhalb** *outside of*
- **bezüglich** *with regard to*
- **innerhalb** *within*
- **unterhalb** *beneath*
- **oberhalb** *above*

In less formal forms of German, in some dialects, and even in prose and poetry that aims to evince a lower linguistic register, the more common genitive-case prepositions are sometimes followed by the dative case, particularly with **während**, **wegen** and **trotz**. There are also some common adverbs derived from the genitive case prepositions whose meanings are in line with the basic meaning of the preposition. These are worth noting:

1. **stattdessen** – *instead of that, in lieu of that, rather*
2. **währenddessen** – *meanwhile, in the meantime, along the way*
3. **trotzdem** – *in spite of that, nevertheless, in any event, anyhow, regardless*
4. **deswegen** – *therefore, on account of that, hence, for this reason*

One can easily see the genitive-case forms in the above adverbial permutations of the genitive-case prepositions, aside from **trotz**, which is attached to a dative-case form.

### The either-accusative-or-dative-case Prepositions

This final set of prepositions are also known by the term *either-or prepositions* or **die Wechselpräpositionen**. *Wechseln* is the German verb for to change, switch, exchange. These high-frequency prepositions are followed by noun phrases in either the accusative or the dative case. Which case they govern all depends on the verb. If the verb is a verb of motion towards a goal, from point A to point B, either in a straight line or an arc, actual movement, then the preposition governs the **accusative case**. If the verb is a verb of stasis, **ein Verb des Stillstands**, of no motion, then the preposition from this set governs the **dative-case**.

In short,

**verbs of motion → Accusative**

**verbs of no motion → Dative**

There is an interesting set of German verbs that nicely illustrate the dichotomy of motion and no motion and are analogous to their English analogs. I include in the chart below the principal parts of these common and often confusing verbs. Look especially at their meanings and their related morphology.

<b>MOTION VERBS</b>	<b>NO MOTION COUNTERPART</b>
setzen (setzte, gesetzt) – <i>to set (something down)</i>	sitzen (saß, gesessen) – <i>to sit, to be sitting (somewhere)</i>
legen (legte, gelegt) – <i>to lay (something down)</i>	liegen (lag, gelegen) – <i>to be lying down</i>
stellen (stellte, gestellt) – <i>to put</i>	stehen (stand, gestanden) – <i>to be standing</i> sein (war, ist gewesen) – <i>to be</i>
stecken (steckte, gesteckt) – <i>to insert</i>	stecken (steckte, gesteckt) – <i>to be sticking out of, be placed.</i>
hängen (hängte, gehängt) – <i>to hang</i>	hängen (hing, gehangen) – <i>to be hanging</i>

Note that the motion verbs in this verb set are all weak/regular verbs, and their no-motion counterparts are all strong/irregular verbs, except for stecken, which is always regular. *Hängen* has two different sets of principal parts, one for motion (hanging something up, like a picture) and one for no-motion (to be hanging, like next to the window).

So when the following prepositions are used with these or any verb, the case the govern, dative-case or accusative-case, depends whether the verb is **depicting motion towards a goal or depicting a static situation, with no motion at all**. To reiterate:

**verbs of motion → Accusative**

**verbs of no motion → Dative**

Aside from the special set of verbs listed above, every verb can be classified as a motion verb or a non-motion verb with regard to these prepositions. The issue of motion/no-motion is only a real issue when using these prepositions, but as you'll see they are high-frequency words that can have multiple nuances in their meanings.

Here are the either-or prepositions:

<b>PRÄPOSITIONEN</b>	<b>BEDEUTUNGEN</b>
an	at (vertically), to (bodies of water), on 1. Das Regal steht an der Wand. 2. Ich h:ange die Uhr an die Wand. 3. Wir fahren an den Strand. 4. Er ist am Telefon.
auf	on, on top of, on to, at, to (like an island) 1. Er legt das Buch auf den Tisch. 2. Er geht auf die Uni. 3. Ich wohne auf dem Bauernhof.

	4. Sie segelte auf eine Insel. 5. Ich war auf der Post.
hinter	behind
in	in, to, into 1. Ich kaufe in der Stadt ein. 2. Sie fuhr in die Schweiz. 3. Wir sitzen in der Schule. 4. Im Sommer schwimme ich viel.
neben	beside, next to
über	above, about (always accusative in this case), over 1. Er sprach über seine Weltreise. 2. Das Bild hing über dem Fenster. 3. Sie hängte die Uhr neben das Fenster.
unter	beneath, under, among
vor	before, in front of
zwischen	between, among

Contractions are also common with some of the prepositions and should be used when possible, and in some cases, really must be used. Here are the most common contractions of prepositions and definite articles: vors / ins / am / ans / hinterm / aufs

Many of these prepositions, these either-or prepositions, appear in idiomatic verbal expressions, and the case they govern truly has nothing at all to do with motion/no-motion question. For example the verbal expression **sich freuen auf** – *to look forward to* has the preposition **auf** with it, but it governs the accusative case: **Ich freue mich auf den Sommer**. Another verbal expression that uses an either-or preposition is **teilnehmen an** – *to participate in*. Here the preposition **an** governs the dative case (perhaps understandably, since there's no motion towards a goal with **teilnehmen**: **Henrich nimmt am Deutschverein teil**). When learning verbal expressions that are bound semantically and syntactically with the either-or prepositions, it's best to learn the case the preposition governs (accusative or dative) because sometimes the motion/no-motion rules get a little murky and not entirely helpful in ascertaining the proper case.

## Personal Pronouns

We shift slightly from our discussion of prepositions and look at the **Pronomen** – *the pronouns*. These are little words that replace noun phrases in sentences, specifically noun phrases that have already been mentioned. Pronouns help economize our language so that we can focus our language on bigger details or more important details. The pronouns, as do full-blown noun phrases, have associated with them gender and also case. Therefore, the pronouns do change form depending on their function (i.e., subject, direct object, indirect object, object of preposition). Let's look at the forms of the pronouns.

	Nominativ	Akkusativ	Dativ
first person singular	ich	mich	mir
second person singular informal	du	dich	dir

third person singular 1. masculine 2. feminine 3. neuter	<b>er</b> <b>sie</b> <b>es</b>	<b>ihn</b> <b>sie</b> <b>es</b>	<b>ihm</b> <b>ihr</b> <b>ihm</b>
first person plural	wir	uns	uns
second person plural informal	ihr	euch	euch
third person plural	<b>sie</b>	<b>sie</b>	<b>ihnen</b>
Second person formal	Sie	Sie	Ihnen

Pronouns have what we call **antecedents**, the actual noun phrase the pronoun is standing in for, that the pronoun is replacing. This of course is only important in the third person, because the first person and second person pronouns are self-referential. In the first person, I or WE is the antecedent, and in the second person YOU are the antecedent, the people I am talking to. So really the whole issue of antecedents is relevant mainly to the **third-person pronouns, singular and plural**. The pronoun agrees with the antecedent in gender, but the case of the pronoun depends on the function in the sentences in which the antecedent is being referenced. Take a look at the series of the following German sentences. The **bold** words all refer to the same noun, **der alte Mann**:

1. **Der alte Mann** geht langsam durch den Park.
2. **Er** spricht auf einem Handy, laut und mit herzlichem Lachen.
3. Ich sehe **ihn** mit einem Fernglas von meinem Balkon.
4. **Er** sieht interessant aus. Ich möchte mit **ihm** sprechen.

Now I could have written these sentences with the entire noun phrase **der alte Mann** being used over and over again, but stylistically it is awkward, so pronouns are naturally used to economize our language and emphasize other pertinent details about the antecedent. Rarely are pronouns obligatory in a German sentence, but using them makes the language smoother and more concise.

The nominative case forms of the pronouns form the basis of verb conjugation paradigms. We use these nominative case forms to illustrate how verbs are conjugated in the German language. Here is an example of a typical verb conjugation paradigm:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	ich spiel - <b>e</b>	wir spiel - <b>en</b>
Second Person informal	du spiel - <b>st</b>	ihr spiel - <b>t</b>
Third Person	<b>er</b>	sie spiel - <b>en</b>

	sie es	spiel - t	
Second Person, Formal	Sie spiel - en		

In the pronoun chart above, I purposefully highlighted the third-person pronouns, in singular and plural. I wanted to highlight the similarities between these forms and the **definite article in German**. Looking at these similarities might help solidify these forms in your mind. Here they are side by side. I had to turn the pronouns clockwise in order to contrast them effectively with the definite articles.

**der bestimmte Artikel (noch einmal):**

	MASKULIN	FEMININ	NEUTRUM	MEHRZAHL
NOMINATIV	der	die	das	die
AKKUSATIV	den	die	das	die
DATIV	dem	der	dem	den, -n

**die Pronomen:**

	MASKULIN	FEMININ	NEUTRUM	MEHRZAHL
NOMINATIV	er	sie	es	sie
AKKUSATIV	ihn	sie	sie	sie
DATIV	ihm	ihr	ihm	ihnen

Do you see a pattern? Again, the masculine forms are the first to change as we move through the German cases, and the endings of the pronouns resemble the endings of the definite article. Even the plural dative pronoun **ihnen** resembles its definite article counterpart **den, -n** (ihnen / den, -n / ihnen / den, -n . . . say these a few times out loud).

**Pronominal versus Nominal objects and word order issues.**

Since pronouns refer to noun phrases, and noun phrases have in their forms pertinent grammatical information (case / gender / number), then it stands to reason that the pronouns also carry with them pertinent grammatical information of case, gender, and number. And they do. Let's distinguish for our next discussion between two kinds of noun objects – **nominal objects** and **pronominal object**. Nominal objects can contain numerous words, like a determiner, attributive adjective, adverb and the noun itself; they are full-blown noun phrases. Pronominal objects are single words, the personal pronouns, that stand in for already mentioned (or the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person self-referential pronouns) nouns. The issue that can arise with nominal and pronominal objects is proper word order, specifically when



the verb is followed by two noun objects.

There are in German many verbs that can have two kinds of noun objects (other than the subject, which is present in every German sentence). These two kinds of objects can be in either the accusative and the dative case (and rarely the genitive case; genitive case noun phrases usually follow another noun phrase), and this set of verbs have a meaning of doing something to somebody, or for somebody. Let's look at some examples with these verbs:

- geben – *to give something to someone*
- kaufen – *to buy something for someone*
- bringen – *to bring something for someone*

For these three verbs, the something being given, bought, or brought would be the accusative case object (direct object) and the person for whom or to whom these things are given, bought, or brought is in the dative case. The rules for word order of the accusative and dative case objects can be illustrated with the following examples:

Situation	Example	Explanation / Rule
two nominal objects	Der Lehrer gibt dem Jungen einen Bleistift.	<b>dative object comes before the accusative object</b> when both objects are nominal.
one of each, with accusative pronominal object.	Der Lehrer gibt <b>ihn</b> dem Jungen.	pronominal object comes before nominal objects, regardless of case.
one of each, with dative pronominal object.	Der Lehrer gibt <b>ihm</b> einen Bleistift.	same as above: pronominal object comes before nominal objects, regardless of case.
two pronominal objects	Der Lehrer gibt <b>ihn ihm</b> .	when two pronominal objects are present, the <b>accusative comes before the dative</b> .

### Prepositions and Personal Pronouns

If prepositions are always followed by noun phrases, can they be followed also by personal pronominal phrases? After all, what's a pronoun but a replacement or a stand-in for a noun phrase? So of course the answer to our question is yes, prepositions can be followed by personal pronouns, but **only if the antecedent is a human being**. Otherwise, one must use a **da-compound**. Let's see how this works with a sample sentence:

Ich fahre mit meiner Schwester in die Stadt.

The prepositional phrases are **mit meiner Schwester** and **in die Stadt**. Let's work with **mit meiner Schwester** first. Imagine that **meine Schwester** has already been mentioned in the conversation and for the sake of brevity the writer/speaker replaces **meiner Schwester** with the appropriate pronoun, in this case **ihr**, because the antecedent is feminine and **mit** always governs the dative case. The sentence can be rewritten then like:

Ich fahre mit **ihr** in die Stadt.

Since the antecedent is a human being, we can use a personal pronoun after the preposition. Now look at the second prepositional phrase **in die Stadt**, *in* being the preposition and *die Stadt* being its accusative case object. Imagine *die Stadt* has already been mentioned in the conversation, and the speaker wants to be more concise and replace *die Stadt* with a pronoun. Can he? No, because the noun *die Stadt* is inanimate. We would use a da-compound instead:

Ich fahre mit meiner Schwester **dahin**. or, even more concise:

Ich fahre **mit ihr dahin**.

I chose an interesting sentence. **Dahin** is the standard da-compound that is used for prepositional phrases that deal with direction toward a goal. The actual da-compound with *in* is **darin**, a legitimate da-compound. **Dahin** is used a generic da-compound to replace directional prepositional phrases. Consider these conversational couplets:

A: Ich fahre in die Schweiz. Fährst du auch in die Schweiz?  
B: Sicher, ich fahre auch **dahin!**

Or this short exchange:

A: Monika reist morgen nach Afrika.  
B: Echt? Ich reise auch morgen **dahin!**

Da-compounds can be formed with any preposition except for the following:

- ohne
- außer
- the genitive case prepositions

More examples of the da-compounds are in order. Remember, when the antecedent is an inanimate object or idea, da-compounds are used instead of personal pronouns when brevity and economy in language is required. And if the preposition begins with a vowel, then an extra **-r-** is added between the **da-** and the preposition. The **da** in da-compounds essential means *it*: with it, to it, under it, through it, etcetera.

A: Hängst du das Bild **an die Wand**?  
B: Ja, ich hänge es **daran**.

A: Bist du **dagegen** oder **dafür**? (*Are you for it or against it?*)  
B: **Dagegen**.

A: Wo liegt mein Kuli?  
B: **Unter dem Tisch**.  
A: Wo?  
B: **Darunter**. (pointing to under the table)

A: Wir haben den ganzen Abend **über Weltpolitik** gesprochen.  
B: Schrecklich! Ich spreche nicht gern **darüber**.

## Summary of Personal Pronouns

The personal pronouns stand in for already mentioned noun phrases. The third-person singular and plural pronouns have antecedents: noun phrases they refer back to. These pronouns carry forward the gender or number (plural or singular) of the antecedent; the case of the pronoun depends on its function in the sentence, just like any German noun phrase.

Pronouns after prepositions are possible, provided these pronouns have antecedents that are human. Otherwise, *da*-compounds are used (**dadurch, damit, darunter, dafür, davon, etc.**). Personal pronouns are not required in most cases, but their use makes our language more fluid and economical.

## Adjectives – these all-important Descriptive Words

**Adjektiv** – *adjectives* – are words that describe nouns. They add color and detail to our language. There are hundreds of adjectives in the German languages, and dozens more can be made when need by using special grammatical word-building rules. Here is a list of some very common adjectives in German, found on the Internet:

alt – old	grausam – cruel	pünktlich – punctual
ängstlich – scared	groß – tall, big	ruhig – calm, quiet
ärgerlich – annoying	gut – good	schlau – clever
aufgeregt – excited	häßlich – ugly	schnell – fast
bescheiden – modest	hervorragend – excellent	schön – beautiful
böse – mean	hilflos – helpless	schüchtern – shy
dankbar – grateful	hilfsbereit – helpful	schwach – weak
doof – stupid	höflich – polite	seltsam – strange
dumm – stupid	hübsch – pretty	süß – cute
ehrgeizig – ambitious	jugendlich – youthful	traurig – sad
ehrlich – honest	jung – young	treu – honest
eifersüchtig – jealous	klein – little, small	überrascht – surprised
einfach – easy	klug – smart	undankbar – ungrateful
erfahren – experienced	lächerlich – ridiculous	ungebildet – uneducated
erfolgreich – successful	langsam – slow	ungerecht – unfair
ernst – serious	langweilig – boring	unglücklich – unhappy
fett – fat	laut – loud	verrückt – crazy
frech – cheeky	leise – quiet	vorsichtig – careful
freundlich – friendly	lustig – funny, cheerful	weich – soft
froh – glad	müde – tired	weise – wise
geizig – tight	neidisch – envious	wütend – furious
gemein – mean	nervös – nervous	zufrieden – content
gierig – greedy	nett – nice	zuverlässig – reliable
glücklich – happy	neugierig – curious	

Words like these describe noun phrases or even pronouns. We should first distinguish between two types of adjectives, the **Prädikatenadjektiv** and the **attributive Adjektiv** – *the predicate adjective* and *the attributive adjective*. We look at these separately.

## The Predicate Adjective

Predicate adjectives are ones that appear directly after a special group of German verbs called *linking verbs*. These predicate adjectives describe the subject of these linking verbs and they never have any ending. They are not declined, that is, they have no added endings. The most important German linking verbs are **sein** – *to be*, **werden** – *to become*, **scheinen** – *to appear*. There are other linking verbs; see the article found on the web for an interesting contrastive study of both English and German linking verbs. Let's look at some examples:

1. Der Junge ist **klug**.
2. Das Kind war **zufrieden** mit dem Essen.
3. Er wird **nervös**, wenn es dunkelt. - *He becomes nervous when it gets dark.*

Linking verbs act like the = sign in mathematics: what's on the left side of the equal sign is the same as what's on the right side. In our conversation, the predicate adjective is describing the subject, and therefore can be considered referring to the same thing.

## Attributive Adjectives

Now we enter a discussion that is notoriously disliked by students of the German language. The whole topic is met with groans of frustration and other decidedly piquant words. The topic deals with adjective endings, and for whatever reason is has become the *bête noire* of the German language.

Attributive adjectives are those that are directly followed by the noun they are describing. These adjectives are part of German noun phrases, and they are followed by the noun in the German noun phrase. Attributive adjectives require endings in the German language. Which endings they get depends on several factors, looked at in the following order:

1. whether or not there is a definite article, indefinite article, or no article/determiner in the noun phrase.
2. the case the noun phrase is in – **nominative, accusative, dative, genitive**.
3. the gender of the noun / whether the noun is plural.

The first factor listed above is probably the most important. Does the noun phrase containing an attributive adjective have a determiner that introduces the noun in the sentence? Or is the attributive adjective unpreceded? The answer to this question determines which adjective ending chart to use.

Let's examine the charts. These charts illustrate the endings that attributive adjectives take in the various conditions. The first chart shows the adjectives endings when the adjective follows a **der-word**, i.e., a definite article or *dies-, welch-, jed-, manch-*. I am going to contrast these adjective endings with the endings/forms of the *der-words*. Hopefully, a pattern can be seen.

**der bestimmte Artikel:**

	M	F	N	PL
NOM	der	die	das	die
AKK	den	die	das	die
DAT	dem	der	dem	den, -n
GEN	des -(e)s	der	des -(e)s	der

**Adjective endings after der-words**

	M	F	N	PL
NOM	-e	-e	-e	-en
AKK	-en	-e	-e	-en
DAT	-en	-en	-en	-en
GEN	-en	-en	-en	-en

How about some examples of attributive adjectives after der-words in action:

- Der grosse Mann steht neben dem blauen Auto.
- Die kleine Frau geht schnell durch die ruhige Altstadt.
- Das glückliche Kind spielt mit dem freundlichen Hund.
- Die aufgeregten Fans warten auf die tolle Rockgruppe.
- Das Auto des alten Mannes war total kaputt.

**Attributive Adjective Endings after ein-Words**

When attributive adjectives follows ein-words, a different set of endings is utilized, the so-called mixed endings. These endings are a combination of strong and weak endings. Let's examine the pertinent charts side by side as we did with the attributive adjectives following der-words. Remember, ein-words include not only the indefinite article (ein, einen, einem, eine, einer), but also the possessive adjectives (mein, dein, sein, ihr, unser, euer, Ihr). And since there is no indefinite article for plural nouns, we'll use the ein-word **kein** to illustrate the important endings.

Some observations for this set of endings: use

1. Since the ein-words in the m.nom and the n.nom/acc cases have no discernible endings (**ein**), then any attributive adjective that follows must have a strong ending: **-er / -es**.
2. These strong endings correspond to the definite article endings.
3. These strong endings convey information about the noun that the indefinite articles, with their lack of ending, do not convey.
4. All the other adjective endings are identical to endings after der-words.
5. The Oklahoma chart applies here also.

**der unbestimmte Artikel:**

	M	F	N	PL
NOM	ein	eine	ein	keine
AKK	einen	eine	ein	keine
DAT	einem	einer	einem	keinen, -n

Several observations and comments are in order.

1. the only endings are -e and -en after the der-words.
2. attributive adjectives after plural determiners always have -en ending.
3. attributive adjectives describing nouns in the dative AND genitive are always -en.
4. Note the similarities of the Oklahoma chart. The adjective endings begin changing in the masculine accusative-case, just like the definite articles.

We can call these adjectives “weak endings.” Since the determiners in their form provide enough information about the case and gender/number of the noun, the attributive adjectives need only require a weak ending.

GEN	eines, (e)s	einer	eines -(e)s	keiner
-----	-------------	-------	-------------	--------

### Adjective endings after ein-words

	M	F	N	PL
NOM	<b>-er</b>	-e	<b>-es</b>	-en
AKK	-en	<b>-e</b>	<b>-es</b>	-en
DAT	-en	-en	-en	-en
GEN	-en	-en	-en	-en

Examples are instructive. The attributive adjective endings are in bold.

1. Mein **alter** Wagen braucht Reparaturen.
2. Ursula ist wirklich ein **nettes** Kind.
3. Er kaufte einen **neuen** Taschenrechner und eine modische Handtasche für seine **nette** Frau.
4. Sie gab ihrem **ältesten** Sohn ein **neues** Auto zum Geburtstag.
5. Ich fahre dieses Wochenende zu meinen **süßen** Großeltern.

### Adjective Endings with no determiner before them – unpreceded attributive endings

Now we discuss the final situation with these pesky attributive adjectives. We looked at the endings when the noun phrase is headed by a der-word and we looked at the endings when the noun phrase is headed by an ein-word. The final situation is when the noun phrase is headed by no determiner whatsoever, when the noun phrase has no der-word or ein-word. We can call these attributive adjectives **unpreceded adjectives**.

Sometimes noun phrases have no determiners. This occurs most often with plural nouns and with food words that are often expressed without definite articles. In a nutshell, the unpreceded adjective endings are virtually identical to the endings of the definite articles in the same cases and genders. Here is the chart of unpreceded adjective endings, using an appropriate noun and adjective that might be used without a determiner:

### Unpreceded Adjective Endings

	M	F	N	PL
NOM	<b>frischer</b> Spargel	warme Suppe	<b>kaltes</b> Wasser	gekochte Eier
AKK	<b>frischen</b> Spargel	warme Suppe	<b>kaltes</b> Wasser	gekochte Eier
DAT	frischem Spargel	warmer Suppe	<b>kaltem</b> Wasser	gekochten Eiern
GEN	frischen Spargels	warmer Suppe	<b>kalten</b> Wassers	gekochter Eier

Note the endings. They look almost identical to the endings of the definite articles. This makes sense, because the nouns have no determiners before them that “tell” the listener or reader the case and gender of the noun. If there is an attributive adjective and no determiner, then the attributive adjective requires

## a strong ending.

Masculine and neuter genitive endings however do not resemble the -es ending of the definite article. In these cases, the attributive adjective has a weak ending, because that strong ending that marks the noun as masc/neut.genitive, the -es ending, is added to the noun. Let's look at a few more examples of these unprecedented adjectives.

1. Hausgemachter Pudding schmeckt mir sehr. - m.nom
2. Ich brauche heißen Kaffee! - m.acc
3. Schokolade gefällt immer kleinen Kindern. - pl.dat
4. Er bekam als Geschenk eine Flasche roten Weins. - m.gen

## Comparative and Superlative Forms of Adjectives

Since we're on the topic of adjectives, we might as well discuss the three different forms adjectives that are found as predicate and attributive adjectives. The **positive** form of the adjective is the base form, the dictionary form, the normal form. Then we have the **comparative** form, used to compare nouns with other nouns. We have this in English and we use these forms all the time: **My car is faster than your car. A bigger hypocrite you'll never find. He wanted a more obvious answer.** All the underlined adjectives in these English sentences are comparative forms. They're formed mainly by adding the -er morpheme to the positive form of the adjective. Sometimes we use the word **more** to form English comparative adjectives.

Then we have **superlative** adjectives, which describe the highest level of an adjective's essence. In English we form the superlative forms by adding an -est to the adjective or by using the word **most**: **The tallest mountain is in the Himalayas. The most obvious answer had eluded us for some time. He owns the fastest car on our team.**

In German, the comparative and superlative forms of the adjectives are formed similarly. Let's look at a few examples and then we can summarize a few rules and exceptions to these rules. The following are examples of **predicate adjectives**, that is, adjectives that appear after the German linking verbs, the most common one being **sein**. Note the superlative forms of the predicate adjectives; they occur as prepositional phrases with **am (an + dem)** and an -en ending.

	Positive	Comparative	Superlative	Examples
1	einfach	einfacher	am einfachsten	Das Examen war einfach. Sein Exam war einfacher. Ihr Examen war am einfachsten.
2	schnell	schneller	am schnellsten	Mein Auto ist schnell. Euer Auto ist schneller. Ihr Auto ist am schnellsten.
3	klein	kleiner	am kleinsten	Er ist klein. Das Kind ist kleiner. Das Baby ist am kleinsten.
4	jung	jünger	am jüngsten	Ich bin jung. Du bist jünger. Sie ist am jüngsten.
5	süß	süßer	am süßesten	Der Kaffee ist süß.

				Der Tee ist süßer. Das Bonbon ist am süßesten.
--	--	--	--	---

Pretty regular and predictable these forms are. Note example 4: monosyllabic adjectives take an umlaut on their vowel (if possible!) in both the comparative and superlative forms:

- arm – ärmer – am ärmsten
- dumm – dümmer – am dümmsten
- kalt – kälter – am kältesten

Example 5 illustrates another minor issue. If the positive form ends in an -s, -sch, -z, or -t then in the superlative, an **-est** is added. An extra -e- is added to the superlative marker in order to facilitate pronunciation:

- nett – netter – am nettesten
- kurz – kürzer – am kürzesten
- weit – weiter – am weitesten

There are some irregular adjectives that require special attention. Here are several of them:

	Positive	Comparative	Superlative
1	viel – <i>a lot</i>	mehr	am meisten
2	gut	besser	am besten
3	nahe – <i>near</i>	näher	am nächsten
4	groß	größer	am größten
5	gern	lieber	am liebsten
6	hoch – <i>high</i>	höher	am höchsten

### Comparing Two Nouns Using Adjectives

When comparing two nouns, we use the word **als** and a comparative form of the adjective **Als** means *than* in this German grammatical context.

Das Haus ist **größer als** die Garage.  
Mein Auto ist **schneller als** dein Auto.

When making equal comparisons of two nouns, one uses **so....wie....** plus a positive form of the adjective:

Mein Auto ist **so schnell wie** dein Auto.      *My car is as fast as your car.*  
Er ist **so groß wie** sein Vater.              *He is as tall as his father.*

**Genauso** is sometimes used also in these equal comparisons:



Mein Auto **genauso schnell wie** dein Auto.

## Verbs in German

We now discuss verbs in German. Verbs are action words, and they form an important anchor to all German sentences. Every German sentence has a verb that is conjugated with a nominative case noun phrase.

We can distinguish two kinds of verbs: the **finite verb** and the **infinitive**. The finite verb is the verb form that is **conjugated** with the subject. The finite verb **agrees** with the subject. All languages have some sort of subject-verb agreement. The forms of the finite verb change depending on the subject. Is the subject the first-person pronoun **ich**? Then the finite verb changes. Is the subject a 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun, like **du**, **ihr**, or **Sie**? Then a different finite verb form is used. And so on and so forth. The finite verb in German must agree with the subject in all German sentences.

**Der Infinitiv** – *the infinitive* – is the base form of the verb, the dictionary form of the verb. It is the non-finite form, and the form you would find in the dictionary. In English, infinitives always have the word *to* in front of the verb: *to play*, *to drink*, *to win*, *to run*, *to go*, *to eat*, etc. In German, the infinitive always end in **-en (or -n)**: **spielen**, **trinken**, **gewinnen**, **laufen**, **gehen**, **essen**, usw.

Now, we can also use the term *the predicate* to refer to the refer to the verb. The predicate can consist of two or more verb forms that are utilized to form a certain tense or other kind of verbal construction. Predicates can be **simple** or **compound**. Simple predicates are single verb forms. Compound predicates consist of two or more verb forms: helping verbs, infinitives, finite verbs, auxiliary verbs, etc.

### Verb Tense – Present Tense

Tense refers to time, that is, when the action represented by the predicate occurs. The first tense we learned is the **present tense**. In German, the basic conjugation pattern in the present tense looks like this:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	ich spiel - <b>e</b>	wir spiel - <b>en</b>
Second Person informal	du spiel - <b>st</b>	ihr spiel - <b>t</b>
Third Person	er } sie } spiel - <b>t</b> es }	sie spiel - <b>en</b>
Second Person, Formal	Sie spiel - <b>en</b>	

Note of course the endings. To the **stem** of the verb (the part remaining when the **-(e)n** infinitive

marker is removed. one adds the appropriate ending in the present tense. This present tense conjugation is highly predictable and regular. Of course, there are exceptions.

### Stem-Vowel Changing Verbs

Here is one exception, the stem-vowel changing verbs. In the present tense, these verbs have change in the stem vowel, only in the **du** and **er/sie/es (third-person singular) forms**. These verbs are also known as **strong** or **irregular verbs**. The same endings are used as noted above, but the stem-vowel mutates. Here is a list of some of these verbs. In parentheses after the infinitive is the vowel the stem vowel mutates to:

a → ä	Here is a sample conjugation of a couple of these verbs. The stem-vowel only changes in the <b>du</b> and <b>er/sie/es</b> forms:	
• fahren (ä)	ich fahre / treffe / lese	wir fahren / treffen / lesen
• gefallen (ä)	du <b>fährst / triffst / liest</b>	ihr fahrt / trefft / lest
• laufen (ä)		
e → i	er	
	sie <b>fährt / trifft / liest</b>	sie fahren / treffen / lesen
	es	
• treffen (i)		
• helfen (i)		
• geben (i)	Sie fahren / treffen / lesen	
• essen (i)		
• bewerben (i)		
• sprechen (i)		
• nehmen (i)		
e → ie		
• sehen (ie)		
• lesen (ie)		

As you learn verbs, learn whether or not there is a stem-vowel change in the du and er/sie/es forms.

### Modal Verbs

Another exception to the above paradigm of present tense conjugation is with the modal verbs. These verbs are typically used with a dependent infinitive which is placed at the end of the sentence. This is an example of a compound predicate, where two verb forms are used to express the action words of the sentence. Modal verbs add a special modality, or a special twist, to the meaning of the main verb. Here are the modal verbs in German:

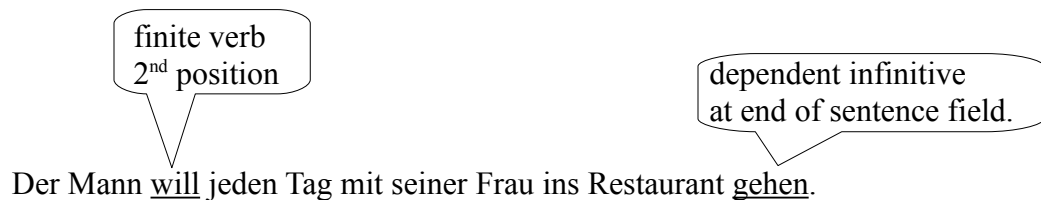
- müssen – *must, have to*
- sollen – *should, supposed to*
- wollen – *want*
- können – *can, is able to*
- mögen – *like* (This modal verb is rarely used with a dependent infinitive.)
- dürfen – *may, is allowed to, is permitted to*

The conjugation of these modal verbs in the present tense is unique. The du-forms have the classic -st ending (all du-forms have an -st ending!), but the ich and er/sie/es forms are, in the modal verbs, identical.

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

In summary, in the singular present tense forms, there is a vowel change (except for **sollen**), and the ich and er/sie/es forms are identical. The plural forms (and the formal Sie forms) are conjugated normally and predictably. No vowel changes, and the classic present tense endings are visible.

Modal verbs can be tricky at times, but at their most fundamental, they are easy to understand. They are most often used with **dependent infinitives** which are found at the end of the sentence:



In this sentence, *wollen* is the main verb, conjugated with the nominative case subject *der Mann* (3.sg) in its 2<sup>nd</sup> position. In fact, all finite/conjugated verbs are **always in the second position in German sentences (there are of course exceptions)**. And with the modal verbs, the dependent infinitive, in this example *gehen*, is at the end of the sentence.

Sometimes the dependent infinitive is understood or implied from context and is excluded from the sentence:

- Ich muss zur Schule.
- Ich kann Deutsch.
- Ich muss mal. (a subtle way of saying you need to go to the WC)
- Das darfst du nicht!

### **haben (to have) / sein (to be) / werden (to become, will in future tense)**

These three high-frequency verbs have irregular conjugations. They function as stand-alone verbs and also as **helping verbs / auxiliary verbs** in other German tenses. These are three highly important verbs in the German language and learning them accurately from the start will go a long way towards

increasing your fluency. I've made bold the verb forms that fall far outside the predictable present tense pattern of German verbs.

	sein – to be	haben – to have	werden – to become, will
ich	<b>bin</b>	habe	werde
du	<b>bist</b>	<b>hast</b>	<b>wirst</b>
er sie es	<b>ist</b>	<b>hat</b>	<b>wird</b>
wir	<b>sind</b>	haben	werden
ihr	<b>seid</b>	habt	werdet
sie	<b>sind</b>	haben	werden
Sie	<b>sind</b>	haben	werden

### **wissen – to know**

The German verb **wissen** – *to know (for a fact)* – is also irregular in the present tense. It deserves special consideration, and here is its conjugation in the present tense.

ich	<b>weiß</b>	wir	<b>wissen</b>
du	<b>weißt</b>	ihr	<b>wisst</b>
er sie es	<b>weiß</b>	sie	<b>wissen</b>
	Sie	<b>wissen</b>	

Wissen is similar to the modal verbs in its conjugation in that the ich and er/sie/es forms are identical and the singular forms of **wissen** experience a vowel change. In fact, historically **wissen** acted like a modal verb, sometimes having a dependent infinitive associated with it. In modern German, **wissen** is a stand-alone verb which mean to know for a fact.

## **Word Order in German Sentences**

We now take a short digression from German verbs in the area of word order in German sentences, statements of facts and questions alike. Now that at least one verb tense has been discussed, we talk about *syntax*, the study of how words are tacked together to form meaningful utterances. In German, the predicate, or the finite verb forms the axis around which all sentences elements rotate. And the general rule of thumb in a German sentence is the following:

SUBJECT – VERB – EVERYTHING ELSE – INFINITIVE/PAST PARTICIPLE  
and if the subject isn't first, then it's in third position, AFTER THE FINITE VERB.

The conjugated verb is always in the second position.

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**Case in German - A Short Explication**

Herr Kandah

All noun phrases are in a specific case. Which case they are in depends on the function of the noun phrase in the German sentence, among other things. Below are descriptions of these cases, plus examples that require the appropriate endings. Sometimes no ending is required (think ein-words!!) You have learned the German cases in a methodical order, from most basic to most complex. The exercises below become increasingly varied, with all cases being utilized as the cases are reviewed below.

## ***Nominative Case***

The first case you learned in German is the **Nominative case** (der Nominativ). This makes sense because the first simple sentences you used in German contained only nouns in the nominative. In fact, every sentence in German has one noun phrase in the nominative case. Nouns that are the **subject** of the verb are in the nominative case. They **do** the action of the verb.

Almost all nouns are marked somehow with **articles – definite or indefinite**. Sometimes they are marked by possessive adjectives. Their forms (i.e., endings) depend on the **case gender and number (i.e., singular or plural) of the noun. In the plural, there is no gender distinction in German nouns.**

Ergänzt bitte die folgenden Sätze!

1. Dies \_\_\_ Mann ist 56 Jahre alt.
2. D \_\_\_ Frau heißt Monika.
3. Ein \_\_\_ Freund kommt rüber.
4. Mein \_\_\_ Freundin ist zu Hause.
5. D \_\_\_ Autos sind teuer.
6. D \_\_\_ Buch ist nicht so interessant.

## ***Accusative Case***

The next case you studied is the **Accusative Case** (der Akkusativ). Nouns in this case are typically the **direct object of the verb**. That is, the accusative case noun is the **direct recipient of the verb's action**. In German, there are a plethora of verbs that demand or expect an accusative case noun phrase. Here are a slew of them:

- haben - *to have*
- besuchen - *to visit*
- kaufen - *to buy*
- schreiben - *to write*
- bringen - *to bring*
- spielen - *to play*
- machen - *to do, make*
- sehen - *to see*
- essen - *to essen*
- trinken - *to drink*
- brauchen – *to need*
- bringen – *to bring*
- putzen – *to clean*
- anrufen – *to call*

Ergänzt die folgenden Sätze!

1. Dies \_\_\_ Mädchen spielt ein \_\_\_ CD von Rammstein.
2. Mein \_\_\_ Vater putzt jed \_\_\_ Fenster.
3. Wir essen ein \_\_\_ Pizza.
4. Dies \_\_\_ Männer brauchen ein \_\_\_ Messer zum Essen.
5. Mein \_\_\_ Cousine schreibt d \_\_\_ Brief.

There are some **prepositions** that ALWAYS govern the accusative. Now, prepositions are cool words that relate one noun to another noun in time and space. Prepositions are followed by nouns, and these noun phrases are in a specific case. Never do they govern the nominative case. Here are some prepositions that ALWAYS govern the accusative case. There are a few others, but these are the most widely used in our course.

1. gegen - against
2. um - around
3. durch - through
4. für - for
5. ohne - without

Ergänzt die folgenden Sätze!

1. Gegen welch \_\_\_ Haus parkst du d \_\_\_ Auto?
2. D \_\_\_ Mann läuft um dies \_\_\_ Park.
3. Jed \_\_\_ Student kommt ohne sein \_\_\_ Rucksack.
4. Wir fliegen durch d \_\_\_ Wolken.
5. Ihr \_\_\_ Bruder hat etwas für sein \_\_\_ Freundin.

## **Dative Case**

Nouns in the **dative case** (der Dativ) are typically the **indirect object of the verb**. That is, these noun phrases are the indirect recipients of the verb's action. Indirect objects in English answer the question *For whom/what?* Or *To whom/what?* In German, this is represent by *Wem?*

Here are some verbs that often demand or expect both an accusative case noun phrase and a dative case phrase. Dative case noun phrases are not required for these verbs, but they do add descriptive information to the sentence.

kaufen – *to buy someone something*  
schreiben – *to write someone something*  
bringen – *to bring someone something*  
sagen – *to say something to someone*  
erzählen – *to tell someone something*



Ergänzt die folgenden Sätze!

1. Mein\_\_\_ Schwester kaufte d\_\_\_ Baby ein\_\_\_ Spielzeug.
2. Sein\_\_\_ Vater sagte d\_\_\_ Mädchen, daß sie zu Hause bleiben sollte.
3. Mein\_\_\_ Freund aus Wien schrieb dies\_\_\_ Kinder\_\_\_ ein\_\_\_ Geschichte.
4. Johann brachte jed\_\_\_ Mädchen ein\_\_\_ Blume.
5. Ich erzählte mein\_\_\_ Onkel etwas Lustiges.

There are some prepositions that always without exception govern the dative case. Here they are:

1. **aus** from, out of
2. **außer** except for, besides
3. **bei** at, near
4. **gegenüber** across from, opposite **Gegenüber** can go before or after its object.
5. **mit** with, by
6. **nach** after, to
7. **seit** since (time), for
8. **von** by, from
9. **zu** to, at

Ergänzt die folgenden Sätze!

1. Ich wohne bei dies\_\_\_ Park.
2. Außer mein\_\_\_ Schwester gehen wir zu d\_\_\_ Museum.
3. Gerd ging mit sein\_\_\_ Freundin zu dies\_\_\_ Gasthaus.
4. D\_\_\_ Lehrer kaufte sein\_\_\_ Schülern ein\_\_\_ Buch von d\_\_\_ deutschen Autorin.
5. Seit ein\_\_\_ Jahr war d\_\_\_ Junge in Deutschland.

There are some verbs that always have dative case objects. With these verbs the direct objects are in the dative case. Here are some of them:

stehen – *to suit (as in an article of clothing)*

passen – *to fit (as in an article of clothing)*

helfen – *to help*

gefallen – *to be pleasing to*

danken – *to thank*

folgen – *to follow*

fehlen – *to be missing*

Ergänzt die folgenden Sätze!

1. Dies\_\_\_ Mantel steht d\_\_\_ Mann nicht.
2. Ich helfe mein\_\_\_ Mutter im Garten.
3. Er dankte d\_\_\_ Frau.
4. D\_\_\_ Rechner fehlt d\_\_\_ Mädchen.
5. D\_\_\_ Polizist folgte d\_\_\_ Verbrecher aus d\_\_\_ Hotel.
6. Dies\_\_\_ Hemd mit ein\_\_\_ dunklen Farbe gefiel d\_\_\_ Mann nicht.

## Genitive Case

Noun phrases in the **genitive case** (der Genitiv) describe who or what is possessing something. These genitive noun phrases always follow the nouns they are possessing. The nouns being possessed can be in any case; the noun phrase possessing the noun is always in the genitive. In masculine and neuter genitive noun phrases, an extra -s or -es is added to the noun. An -s is added for polysyllabic nouns and an -es is added for monosyllabic nouns.

Ergänzt die folgenden Sätze!

1. Ich sah d \_\_\_\_ Auto dies \_\_\_\_ Mann \_\_\_\_.
2. Wir brachten d \_\_\_\_ CDs d \_\_\_\_ Jungen (singular).
3. Er vergaß d \_\_\_\_ Geschichte d \_\_\_\_ Mädchen \_\_\_\_.
4. D \_\_\_\_ Farbe dies \_\_\_\_ Bluse gefällt d \_\_\_\_ Mann nicht.
5. D \_\_\_\_ Junge trank ein \_\_\_\_ Glas Wasser von d \_\_\_\_ Flasche sein \_\_\_\_ Freund \_\_\_\_.

There are some prepositions that always govern the genitive case. Here they are:

- wegen – *on account of*
- während – *during, while*
- trotz – *in spite of, despite*
- anstatt – *instead of*

Ergänzt die folgenden Sätze!

1. Wegen d \_\_\_\_ Regenschauer \_\_\_\_ blieben wir zu Hause
2. Während d \_\_\_\_ Spiel \_\_\_\_ sah ich mein \_\_\_\_ Freund Harald.
3. Anstatt dies \_\_\_\_ Auto \_\_\_\_ kaufte d \_\_\_\_ Frau ein \_\_\_\_ Motorrad.
4. Trotz d \_\_\_\_ schlechten Note ging sie mit ihr \_\_\_\_ Freundinnen aus.

## Charts, Tables, Paradigms

## Definite Article

	Singular			Plural
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	
Nominative	der	die	das	die
Accusative	den	die	das	die
Dative	dem	der	dem	den
Genitive	des	der	des	der

## der-words

	Singular			Plural
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	
Nominative	dieser	diese	dieses	diese
Accusative	diesen	diese	dieses	diese
Dative	diesem	dieser	diesem	diesen
Genitive	dieses	dieser	dieses	dieser

Other *der*-words introduced are *welcher*, *jeder*, *solcher*, *mancher*, *derselbe*.

## Indefinite Article

	Singular			Plural
	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	
Nominative	ein	eine	ein	keine
Accusative	einen	eine	ein	keine
Dative	einem	einer	einem	keinen
Genitive	eines	einer	eines	keiner

Other *ein*-words (i.e., they take the same endings as *ein*): are the possessive adjectives: **mein**, **dein**, **sein**, **ihr**, **unser**, **euer**, **ihr**, **Ihr**.