

Auf geht's!

beginning German language and culture
interactive v. 2.1 grammar sequence

explanations developed by:

Christina J. Wegel

Based on the work of Richard Langston, UNC Chapel Hill

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- 1.1 Basic verbs in present tense
- 1.2 sein and haben
- 1.3 Nouns and gender
- 1.4 Subject pronouns
- 1.5 Basic word order
- 1.6 Asking questions

1.1 Basic verbs in present tense

The verbs *sein* (to be) and *haben* (to have) follow their own rules, but many other verbs that we use frequently follow a standard conjugation pattern. As an example, we will look at how the verb *machen* (to do; to make) behaves:

Subject	Conjugated Verb	Ending
ich	mache	–e
du	machst	–st
er–sie–es	macht	–t
wir	machen	–en
ihr	macht	–t
sie (3rd person plural)	machen	–en
Sie (you formal)	machen	–en

These endings apply more or less to a large number of regular German verbs, so you should memorize these as soon as possible.

1.2 sein and haben

The verbs *sein* and *haben* are two fundamental verbs in German—just like in English. It's great to know that we can rely on these two verbs to have basic conversations. It's less-than-great that these two important verbs follow their own rules! For every subject pronoun, we have to learn a new form; that is we have to conjugate the infinitives (*sein* and *haben*) to match the subject. In modern-day English, we can only still see this in the verb 'to be' (I am, you are, he–she–it is, etc.) and the 3rd-person singular as in: "He talks to me."

Here are the conjugated forms for *sein*:

ich bin	wir sind
du bist	ihr seid
er–sie–es ist	(S)ie sind

And here are the conjugated forms for *haben*:

ich habe	wir haben
du hast	ihr habt
er–sie–es hat	(S)ie haben

1.3 Nouns and gender

German has two approaches to grammatical gender: one that's logical as in: *der Mann, die Mutter, das Telefon*; and one that seems random at best: *der Maschinenbau, die Universität, das Kind*. You'll need to learn the correct gender for every noun. The gender is indicated by the *der, die, das* in front of each noun and called a definite article. It's best to learn the definite articles for each noun since the indefinite articles (*ein, eine, ein*) don't differentiate between masculine and neuter.

Imagine these sentences in English: "Here are a school and a restaurant. It is ugly." Phrased like that we wouldn't know whether the speaker finds the school or the restaurant ugly. In German, the subject pronoun ('it' in English) would make that clear as in: *Hier sind eine Schule und ein Restaurant. Sie ist hässlich*. Clearly, the speaker finds the school ugly and not the restaurant. The grammatical gender of *Schule* corresponds to *sie*. If the speaker found the restaurant ugly, he would have said: *Es ist hässlich*, since it's *das Restaurant*.

1.4 Subject pronouns

German—just as English—has different subject pronouns. A pronoun is a word, such as ‘he’ or ‘it’ that replaces a noun. We use a number of pronouns to show differences between people and things that we are talking about. Subject pronouns are very useful. When we use them, we do not have to repeat the subject as a noun over and over again.

In German these subject pronouns are:

ich	wir
du (you informal)	ihr (you informal plural)
er-sie-es	sie (3rd person plural) – Sie (you formal)

The pronoun has to correspond to the noun that it replaces. Thus, we would say: *Der Mann ist jung. Er hat eine Frau. Sie heißt Claudia.* In the beginning, you will focus your attention only on the subject pronouns listed above with the exception of *ihr*.

As you study German, you will encounter what you might perceive as random gender designations for things. For example, *die Universität* is feminine, *das Telefon* is neuter and *der Film* is masculine. So, you would say: **Die Universität ist groß. Sie ist schön.** It may sound odd now, but your ears will get used to it.

1.5 Basic word order

The most basic way to construct a sentence is to start with the subject. The subject is often the person doing something. The subject can, of course, also be a thing. For example: *Das Telefon klingelt laut.* (The phone rings loudly.)

For basic word order, keep **Subject – Verb – X** (S-V-X) in mind:

<i>Das Telefon</i>	<i>klingelt</i>	<i>laut.</i>
Subject	Verb	X

You can also create more complex sentences as well as sentences that do not start with the subject. For both basic and more complex sentences, you need to remember that the verb has to remain the second element in the sentence. This rule holds true with a few exceptions.

We can see how this works using our sentence above. If we want to emphasize the fact that the phone rings loudly, we would say: *Laut **klingelt** das Telefon.* As you can see, the verb remains the second element in the sentence.

1.6 Asking questions

When it comes to asking questions, we can still apply the rule of the verb as the second sentence element. For so-called *w*-questions—named as such because their questions words begin with the letter *w*—the verb is again the second element. A question you most likely heard on the first day of class can serve as a guide: *Wie heißen Sie?* (What is your name?)

The *w*-question words to learn at this point are:

wann	when	wie	how
was	what	wo	where
wer	who	woher	where from

However, not all questions that we ask require a *w*-question word. If we want to inquire about something that can be answered with yes or no, the question is built differently. These yes/no-questions look like inverted basic sentences. Instead of putting the verb in the second position, these types of questions place it in the first position, as in: *Heißen Sie Robert?* (Is your name Robert?) You would answer either ‘*ja*’ or ‘*nein*’, depending on whether your name is actually Robert.

- 2.1-2 Stem-changing verbs
- 2.3 gern
- 2.4 Definite, indefinite and possessive articles
- 2.5 Comparisons

2.1-2 Stem-changing verbs

You have already learned the verbs *sein* and *haben*, which both have irregular conjugated forms. German has countless verbs that follow a very regular pattern for different forms, such as *wohnen* (to live) which becomes, for example: *ich wohne*. The *-e* on the stem *wohn-* indicates the 1st person singular. The stem *wohn-* stays the same throughout the various conjugations, e.g. *du wohnst, wir wohnen*. With stem-changing verbs, the stem itself changes for the 2nd and 3rd person singular. These stem changes are specially marked on your vocabulary lists. Make sure you learn these forms with the verb. Take a look at the verb *lesen* (to read):

ich	lese	wir	lesen
du	liest	ihr	lest
er-sie-es	liest	(S)ie	lesen

Even though stem-changing verbs are difficult at first, there are certain patterns you can follow. Here is a comprehensive list of these patterns:

a → ä au → äu e → i e → ie

In Unit 2, there is one other stem-changing verb to learn: *fahren* (to drive), which also occurs in *Fahrrad fahren* (to ride a bike): *Sie fährt Fahrrad*.

2.3 gern

Gern is a simple, yet effective word that expresses that you like something. You can also use it to express your dislike of something by adding *nicht* to the adverb *gern*.

Take a look at this example: *Er liest **gern** Gedichte*. (He likes to read poems.) If you however do not like to read poems, you can say: *Ich lese **nicht gern** Gedichte*.

The placement of *gern* is fairly straightforward; put it after the verb, as in: *Ich **fahre gern** Ski*. If you want to negate *gern* with *nicht*, place *gern* after *nicht*: *Ich **fahre nicht gern** Ski*.

There is one additional specific word order that is worth remembering when you want to say that you like a book, a film or a class:

<i>Ich habe das Buch gern.</i>	I like the book.
<i>Ich habe den Film gern.</i>	I like the film.
<i>Ich habe den Kurs gern.</i>	I like the class.

As you can see, *gern* goes to the end of the sentence and not after the verb *haben*. The expression '*gern haben*' is a fixed one, and the object that you like goes between the verb and modifier, here *gern*. It is important to learn this exception as it supplies you with the possibility to state your likes or dislikes quickly.

2.4. Definite and indefinite articles

German, just like English, has different types of articles, two of which are: definite (*der, die, das*), and indefinite (*ein, eine, ein*). In English, it is important to differentiate between the different types of articles in order to express different meanings. There is a small, yet important difference between these two sentences:

The man sees **a** mother. **A** man sees **his** mother.

The same holds true for German: **Der** Mann sieht **eine** Mutter. **Ein** Mann sieht **seine** Mutter.

In German, however, you also have to pay attention to the correct gender (masculine, feminine, neuter) and the different cases. At the moment, you use most often the nominative case (the subject case) and the accusative case (the object case). Here is a simple example: *Ich lese ein Buch*. The subject (nominative) is *ich* and the object is *ein Buch*.

Definite and indefinite articles behave in a rather straightforward way for subjects:

	definite	indefinite
masculine	der	ein
feminine	die	eine
neuter	das	ein

Possessive articles

Possessive articles are words that show to whom/what something belongs. Here is a list of German possessive articles and their English counterparts:

mein-	mine	ihr-	her	euer-	your (informal plural)
dein-	your (informal)	sein-	its	ihr-	their
sein-	his	unser-	our	Ihr-	your (formal)

In order to use possessive articles correctly you need to know both the gender of the noun that it refers to and the noun that it precedes:

Ich habe eine Tante. Ihre Schwester hat ein Restaurant. I have an aunt. Her sister has a restaurant.

Ich habe auch einen Onkel. Seine Schwester hat eine Kneipe und sein Bruder hat ein Kino. I also have an uncle. His sister has a bar and his brother has a movie theater.

When you use possessive articles, you must to pay attention to several different things:

- the gender of the person or thing that it refers to,
- the gender of the noun that it modifies (also a person or a thing) and
- the case of the noun that it precedes (more on this in Unit 3).

Take another look at the second set of the two sample sentences above: *Ich habe auch einen Onkel. Seine Schwester hat eine Kneipe und sein Bruder hat ein Kino*.

The possessive articles are *seine* and *sein*, respectively. Both mean 'his' in English. In German, you have to use *sein*, or any other appropriate possessive article, plus an ending, if applicable. The *seine* as in '*seine Schwester*' indicates that the possessive article refers back to a masculine person while it modifies a feminine noun. The *sein* in '*sein Bruder*' indicates that the possessive article refers back to a masculine person while it modifies a masculine noun. Therefore, there is no additional ending.

2.5 Comparisons

When we describe our personal traits or characteristics, we often put them in reference to other people's traits and characteristics. We can go about this in two ways: either we say that we are more or less (adjective) than somebody else or we are equal to that person.

For example: "I am **happier than** he is." or "I am **as successful as** she is."

In German, we say: *Ich bin **glücklicher als** er.* and *Ich bin **so erfolgreich wie** sie,* respectively.

Using these two specific examples, both constructions of *glücklicher als* and *so erfolgreich wie* use the nominative case twice. That means that there are two "I's", so to speak. The comparative in German typically adds an *-er* to the adjective. Using some of the adjectives listed in your vocabulary lists for Units 1 and 2 in *Auf geht's!*, you can see that you only have to add an *-er* to the adjective and you have the comparative form:

Ich bin fröhlich.

I'm happy.

Ich bin fröhlicher als er.

I'm happier than he is.

*Ich bin **so fröhlich wie** er.*

I'm as happy as he is.

*Ich bin **nicht so fröhlich wie** er.*

I'm not as happy as he is.

- 3.1-2 Plural forms
- 3.3 Separable-prefix verbs
- 3.4 möchten
- 3.5 Subjects and objects
- 3.6 Telling time
- 3.7 Accusative prepositions
- 3.8 Negation with nicht and kein

3.1-2 Plural forms

German has a wide variety of plural forms as you can see on your vocabulary sheets. When learning a new noun, you should become familiar with its plural form as well. Luckily, the definite article for the plural form of all nouns in the nominative and accusative case is always the same: *die*.

Even though there is no indefinite article for plurals, there are so-called *ein*-words, which express possession and negation. If you want to say that you can't see your book, you say: *Ich sehe mein Buch nicht*. Or when you want to point out that these are his books, you would say: *Das sind seine Bücher*. The negation works the same way: *Ich sehe kein Buch*. *Das sind keine Bücher*. For both forms—in the nominative and the accusative case—you take the appropriate possessive article (*mein*, *dein*, *sein*, etc.) or the negation *kein*- and add an *-e* on the end. Remember that the accompanying verb has to be in the plural as well.

Here is a comprehensive list of all plural forms in German with an example for each possibility:

Plural change	Singular form + notation	Plural form
plural does not exist	die Musik	die Musik
no change in plural form	der Stiefel, –	die Stiefel
add ending: –e	der Stift, –e	die Stifte
add ending: –en	die Bibliothek, –en	die Bibliotheken
add ending: –er	das Bild, –er	die Bilder
add ending: –n	die Socke, –n	die Socken
add ending: –nen	die Schülerin, –nen	die Schülerinnen
add ending: –s	der Pulli, –s	die Pullis
vowel change: umlaut	die Mutter, – ^ü	die Mütter
vowel change: umlaut; add ending: –e	der Zahn, – ^e	die Zähne
vowel change: umlaut; add ending: –er	das Hauptfach, – ^{er}	die Hauptfächer
reconstruction of the noun	der Hörsaal, –säle	die Hörsäle

There is one additional plural form that is used for those nouns without plural forms, such as *die Musik*. If you want to talk about different types of music, you add *–arten* to the stem: *die Musikarten*. You can also do that for sports: *der Sport*, *die Sportarten*. Or for different types of sausages or cheeses: *die Wurst*, *die Wurstsorten* and *der Käse*, *die Käsesorten*.

3.3 Separable-prefix verbs

In addition to stem-changing verbs, German also has separable-prefix verbs. A prefix is a word part that is added to a word (here a verb) to change or modify its meaning. English has prefixes such as 'over': take → overtake. German uses a great number of prefixes with verbs to modify their meaning: *kommen* (to come) → *ankommen* (to arrive).

A separable prefix is a prefix that detaches from the main part of the verb and moves to the end of the sentence in basic S-V-X or X-V-S sentences. You may think of separable prefixes as prepositional adverbs as in: "I turned the lights on, but she told me to turn them off." If you mix up the adverbs 'on' and 'off', the meaning of the sentence is different.

3.3 Separable-prefix verbs (cont.)

When you look at the verb *einkaufen* on your vocabulary list, you'll see that it's written in a special way: **ein•kaufen**. The dot in the middle indicates that the prefix separates from the verb, which looks like this: *Ich kaufe Milch ein*. (I'm buying milk.) In Unit 4, you will learn more separable-prefix verbs, such as *ausschlafen* [*schläft aus*], *einladen* [*lädt ein*], *stattfinden* and *weggehen*, some of which also happen to be stem-changing verbs, indicated by the brackets.

And since we're calling these separable prefixes, that means of course that there are also inseparable prefixes. We'll deal with those later.

3.4 möchten

Much like the adverb *gern*, the verb *möchten* is often used to express a preference. In English, we say: "I would like to go swimming." In German, we only need one verb for the equivalent of 'would like to': *möchten*. Thus, you would say: *Ich möchte schwimmen*. The verb *möchten* is irregular in the 3rd person singular where the final *-t* is dropped: **er-sie-es möchte**. Otherwise, the verb conjugation follows the pattern of regular verbs as you can see here and on Page 239 of your *Lernbuch*:

ich	möchte	wir	möchten
du	möchtest	ihr	möchtet
er-sie-es	möchte	(S)ie	möchten

3.5 Subjects and objects

You've already seen the words 'subject' and 'object' in Units 1 and 2, when we talked about basic word order. To put it very simply: the subject in a sentence does something, whereas something is being done to the object. In English, we can't tell whether a noun is a subject or an object just by looking at it; word order is the deciding factor. Look at the difference between these two sentences: "The dog bites the man." and "The man bites the dog." Word order tells us who is doing the biting. This is not necessarily the case in German.

The main way to show whether a noun is a subject or an object is case. Different definite articles (*der, die, das*) or different endings on indefinite articles or adjectives are used to show how nouns function in the sentence. This allows us to play around with the word order, yet keep the meaning intact. In the example with the dog, we would express the dog biting the man as: *Der Hund beißt den Mann*. But you could also say: *Den Mann beißt der Hund*. The *den* as in 'den Mann' indicates that this is the object rather than the subject of the sentence, even though it is in the first position.

This example only works with a sentence that has at least one masculine noun, as they are the only nouns that change their article in the accusative case. If we use two feminine nouns, we are faced with the same dilemma as in English: *Die Katze beißt die Frau*. *Die Frau beißt die Katze*.

The basic difference you need to know here is that German has other means besides word order to show whether a noun is a subject or an object.

3.6 Telling time

In English, we commonly use AM and PM to express when something takes place. Germans prefer to use the 24-hour clock to keep AM and PM separate. Unless there is a clear point of reference, such as: *Wann fährst du am Nachmittag zur Uni?* (When do you go to the university in the afternoon?), you should always use the 24-hour clock in German.

In spoken discourse, Germans use the words *Viertel* and *halb* to express times like: *Ich komme um Viertel vor zwei*. (I'll be there at 1:45 PM.) or: *Ich kaufe um halb 4 ein*. (I'll go shopping at 3:30 PM.) When you use *Viertel* and *halb*, you can only use the 12-hour clock, which means that this is a less precise way to tell time. At a train station, for example, you would see: *Der Zug fährt um 14 Uhr 30 ab*. and not: *Der Zug fährt um halb drei ab*. With the latter, nobody would know whether the train is leaving at 2:30 AM or 2:30 PM.

3.7 Accusative prepositions

In German, there are a limited number of prepositions that always use the accusative case. If you want to express: "I go shopping for my father", you would say: *Ich kaufe **für meinen** Vater ein*. For now, the following six prepositions are the most important ones to know, listed here with their English equivalents:

bis	until (temporal); by (temporal); as far as (local)
durch	through (local and causal)
für	for
gegen	against
ohne	without
um	around

3.8 Negation with nicht and kein

In German, there are two types of negations: *nicht* and *kein*. The negation *nicht* is used to negate verbs, adverbs and entire sentences, as well as nouns that use definite articles (*der, die, das*) and possessive articles (*mein, dein, sein*, etc.).

Here are some examples with *nicht*:

<i>Ich möchte nicht mein Auto fahren.</i>	I don't want to drive my car.
<i>Ich harke nicht gern Blätter.</i>	I don't like to rake leaves.
<i>Ich höre nicht die Musik.</i>	I don't hear the music.
<i>Ich sehe nicht den Zettel.</i>	I don't see the piece of paper.

The other negation in German is *kein*, which is an *ein*-word. This means that the ending has to show the appropriate gender and case for the noun that it negates.

Here are several examples with *kein* to illustrate this point:

<i>Ich möchte kein Auto fahren.</i>	I don't want to drive (a car).
<i>Ich harke keine Blätter.</i>	I don't rake leaves.
<i>Ich lese keine Gedichte.</i>	I don't read poetry.
<i>Ich sehe keinen Zettel.</i>	I don't see any piece of paper.

To summarize the correct usage of *nicht* vs. *kein*: Use *nicht* when you are negating a verb, an adverb, a complete sentence or a noun with a possessive article. Use *kein* with the appropriate ending if you are negating a noun with an indefinite article or without an article.

- 4.1 Modal verbs
- 4.2-3 Time expressions
- 4.4 Adjectives
- 4.5 Dative prepositions

4.1 Modal verbs

Modal verbs modify the main verb and add layers of meaning to the action that the verb itself cannot convey. Modal verbs tell others what we can or cannot, want or do not want to do and so on. The modal verbs in German are:

dürfen	to be allowed to
können	can; to be able to
mögen	to like (to)
müssen	must; to have to
sollen	should
wollen	to want (to)
möchten	would like (to)

The verb *möchten* is a special form of *mögen* and behaves a bit differently than the other modal verbs. *Mögen* is mostly used as a full verb without other verbs as in: *Ich mag ihn.* (I like him.) or *Ich mag Eis.* (I like ice cream.). To say that you like to do something, use a verb + *gern* construction: *Ich schwimme gern.*

Modal verbs with an umlaut (*dürfen, können, mögen, müssen*) retain the umlaut in the plural forms, but not in the singular forms:

dürfen				können			
ich	darf	wir	dürfen	ich	kann	wir	können
du	darfst	ihr	dürft	du	kannst	ihr	könnt
er-sie-es	darf	(S)ie	dürfen	er-sie-es	kann	(S)ie	können

mögen				müssen			
ich	mag	wir	mögen	ich	muss	wir	müssen
du	magst	ihr	mögt	du	musst	ihr	müsst
er-sie-es	mag	(S)ie	mögen	er-sie-es	muss	(S)ie	müssen

Note: with modal verbs, the 1st and 3rd person singular are identical.

For those modal verbs that do not have an umlaut in the infinitive (*sollen, wollen*), the conjugated forms are much more regular; *sollen* is the most regular of all modal verbs:

sollen				wollen			
ich	soll	wir	sollen	ich	will	wir	wollen
du	sollst	ihr	sollt	du	willst	ihr	wollt
er-sie-es	soll	(S)ie	sollen	er-sie-es	will	(S)ie	wollen

The special modal *möchten* looks a bit different; however like the other modal verbs, there is no difference between the **ich** and the **er-sie-es** forms:

möchten			
ich	möchte	wir	möchten
du	möchtest	ihr	möchtet
er-sie-es	möchte	(S)ie	möchten

4.2-3 Time expressions

Time expressions help us clarify how often, when, until when or for how long we do something. For now, we will focus on adverbial time expressions. Here is a list of time expressions used frequently:

abends	in the evenings
bald	soon
damals	back then
danach	after that
dann	then
einmal	once
früher	earlier; back then
gestern	yesterday
heute	today
immer	always
jetzt	now
mittags	midday
morgen	tomorrow
morgens	in the morning between 6:00 and 9:00 AM
nachts	at night
nie, niemals	never
oft, oftmals	often; oftentimes
vormittags	in the morning between 9:00 and 11:59 AM
zuerst	first(ly)
zuletzt	last(ly)

Oftentimes, the time expression is at the beginning of the sentence, as it is an important point of reference, and therefore receives special emphasis (remember the correct word order of X-V-S): *Gestern bin ich nicht zur Uni gegangen. Heute gehe ich mal wieder. Übermorgen bleibe ich dann auch Zuhause.*

But you could also say: *Ich gehe heute nicht zur Uni.*

The focus here has been on time expressions as adverbs. However, there are also time expressions that are formed with an adverb and an accusative object. Note how the adverbs used in combination with days of the week, months, etc. are in the accusative case:

jeden Tag	every day
jede Minute	every minute
jedes Mal	every time
letztes Jahr	last year
nächste Woche	next week
letzten Monat	last month

Here is a sample sentence: *Jeden Samstag wollte ich ausgehen, aber jedes Mal hatte sie keine Lust.*

As you can see, there is a basic form of *jed-*, *letz-* and *nächst-*; you will have to add an *-e*, *-en* or *-es* according to the gender and case of the noun.

4.4 Adjectives

In German—just like in English—there is a difference between so-called attributive and predicative adjectives. The important difference is that the attribute adjectives in German have endings particular to the case, gender and number (singular or plural) of the noun that they belong to. The predicative adjectives do not undergo any changes. Here are a couple of sample sentences to illustrate this point. The first sentence uses a predicative adjective, the second one an attributive adjective:

*Das Bier ist **gut**. Ich trinke gern **gutes** Bier.*

The ending of *gut* is *-es* for the attributive adjective because the adjective here has to show that we have a neuter noun without an article in the accusative case. Here is one more example with a masculine noun:

*Der Film ist **spannend**. Ein **spannender** Film macht immer Spaß.*

Here, the ending of *spannend* is *-er* for the attributive adjective because the adjective has to show that we have a masculine noun with an indefinite article in the nominative case.

4.5 Dative prepositions

Previously, you learned about prepositions that use the accusative. Likewise, there are prepositions that use the dative. The main dative prepositions you need to know:

aus	from (local and temporal); of (material)
außer	besides (exception)
bei	at (local); while, during (temporal)
gegenüber	across
mit	with
nach	after (local and temporal)
seit	since
von	from (local and temporal)
zu	to (local); <i>zu</i> is common in idiomatic expressions such as: <i>Ich gehe zu Fuß</i> . (I'm walking.)

- 5.1 war and hatte
- 5.2 The conversational past
- 5.3 Coordinating conjunctions (see IA Grammar 8.3A-C)

5.1 war and hatte

In Unit 1, you learned about two very useful and important words in German: *sein* (to be) and *haben* (to have). It is also important to learn these two verbs in the past tense. German has three past tenses of which the conversational past and the narrative past are the two important ones. In grammatical terms, the conversational past is called the “perfect tense” and the narrative past is referred to as the “past tense”. Please refer to page 232 in your *Lernbuch* for further explanations and sample sentences.

Although German speakers prefer to use the conversational past for most verbs when speaking and writing informally, they do use the narrative past for *sein* and *haben*. Those forms are *war* and *hatte*, respectively. Their forms in the narrative past are listed below. You will notice that they have the same endings as the modal verbs.

sein				haben			
ich	war	wir	waren	ich	hatte	wir	hatten
du	warst	ihr	wart	du	hattest	ihr	hattet
er-sie-es	war	(S)ie	waren	er-sie-es	hatte	(S)ie	hatten

5.2 The conversational past

In informal writing and in spoken German, the conversational past for most verbs is commonly used when speaking about events in the past. Exceptions include the verbs *sein* and *haben*, as well as *werden* and modal verbs. Regular verbs use a *ge-* prefix and a *-t* at the end for the conversational past. Here are a few sample sentences; first comes the present tense, then the conversational past for each set of sentences:

Ich reise gern durch Norddeutschland.

*Letztes Jahr **bin** ich durch Süddeutschland **gereist**.*

Ich esse gern Bratwurst.

*Ich **habe** noch nie Grünkohl mit Pinkel **gegessen**.*

So-called irregular and mixed verbs have a variety of prefixes and endings, so you should make every effort to learn the irregular past tenses with the verb. As you can see on the vocabulary handouts starting in Unit 5, the conversational past of irregular verbs is listed in addition to the infinitive and the stem-changing forms (if applicable). In Unit 5 all verbs listed happen to be irregular. Your *Lernbuch* also has a short list of irregular verbs on pages 234 and 235. The last thing to pay attention to is whether the verb uses the helping verb *sein* or *haben*. The helping verb *haben* is used much more often than the helping verb *sein*. *Sein* is used for verbs that suggest movement (literally and figuratively), as well as for the verbs *sein*, *bleiben* and *werden*. Here are several sample sentences:

*Ich **bin** lange in Deutschland **geblieben**.*

I stayed in Germany for a long time.

*Ich **bin** dort gern **herumgereist**.*

I liked to travel around there.

*Oft **bin** ich nach Berlin **gefahren**.*

I went/drove to Berlin often.

*Ich **bin** in diese Stadt **gezogen**,
als Michael Jackson **gestorben ist**.*

I moved to the city when Michael Jackson died.

5.2 The conversational past (cont.)

In the case of verbs with inseparable prefixes, you don't add a *ge-* to the beginning of the verb, but you do add the *-t* to the stem of the verb. For example with the verb *versuchen*:

*Ich habe versucht, viele Städte
in Deutschland zu sehen.*

I tried to see a lot of cities in Germany.

For verbs with separable prefixes, however, you have to place the *ge-* between the separable prefix and the stem of the verb. Take the verbs *weggehen* and *ausschlafen* for example:

*Ich bin in Berlin oft weggegangen
und jeden Morgen habe ich ausgeschlafen.*

I went out a lot in Berlin and slept in every morning.

5.3 Coordinating conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that connect two sentences that can function independently of each other. A coordinating conjunction does not change the basic word order of S-V-X. These coordinating conjunctions are:

und	and
oder	or
denn	for; because
aber	but
sondern	instead (but)

Here are sample sentences that illustrate the usage of each of these coordinating conjunctions with a brief explanation:

und: Ich besuche den Kölner Dom in Nordrhein-Westfalen **und** ich besichtige die Semper Oper in Dresden.

This means that the conjunction *und* connects two equally important ideas or sentences.

oder: Vielleicht reise ich diesen Sommer nach Österreich **oder** in die Schweiz.

The conjunction *oder* connects two equal ideas or sentences which exclude each other. Because the predicate (subject + verb) is the same in both sentences, it's fine to omit it in the second clause, which is '*vielleicht reise ich diesen Sommer*' in this sentence.

denn: In Bayern trinke ich gerne mal ein Bier, **denn** es schmeckt dort frisch.

Note the difference between *denn* and its more commonly used synonym or alternative *weil*; *denn* keeps the word order of S-V-X in place whereas *weil* changes it to V-S-X.

aber: In Deutschland gibt es sehr viele Dialekte, **aber** viele Deutsche sprechen gar keinen Dialekt.

Aber is used to state a contradiction to a previously made statement.

sondern: Ich reise nicht gern im Winter, **sondern** im Sommer.

Sondern also contradicts a previously made statement, yet that statement has to be a negative one; therefore, *sondern* is used much less frequently than *aber*.

As shown here in these examples, coordinating conjunctions do not change the word order of the second sentence; they violate the rule of the verb in second position, a guideline that you surely worked hard at to master!

- 6.1 wo and wohin
- 6.2 Two-way prepositions
- 6.3 Subordinating conjunctions

6.1 wo and wohin

Both *wo* (where) and *wohin* (where [to]) are question words that deal with a location. *Wo* inquires about a location that is assumed to be static, whereas *wohin* asks about a change in location. As a review, here are two brief sentences:

Wo wohnst du? Where do you live?

Wohin gehst du? Where are you going (to)?

Most often, you will use *wo* and *wohin* as a direct question word. You can also, of course, use both questions words in indirect questions, such as: *Ich weiß nicht, wo du wohnst. Du siehst nicht, wohin er geht.*

6.2 Two-way prepositions

The question words *wo* and *wohin* are an important support tool when looking at two-way prepositions. You have already learned about prepositions that take the accusative case and about those that take the dative case. Two-way prepositions take accusative case when used to indicate movement from one place to another, and the dative case when used to describe a location. These prepositions are listed here and in your *Lernbuch* on page 247:

an	at; up to	in	in; into	unter	under
auf	on top of; up; onto	neben	next to	vor	in front of
hinter	behind	über	over; above	zwischen	between; in between

Take a look at these sample sentences for the two-way prepositions in both cases. Pay particular attention to the change of the definite article:

an	A: <i>Ich laufe an die Ecke.</i> D: <i>Ich warte an der Ecke.</i>	I'm walking to the corner. I'm waiting at the corner.
auf	A: <i>Du steigst auf den Berg.</i> D: <i>Du stehst auf dem Berg.</i>	You're hiking up the mountain. You're standing on top of the mountain.
hinter	A: <i>Wir laufen hinter das Haus.</i> D: <i>Wir stehen hinter dem Haus.</i>	We're walking behind the house. We're standing behind the house.
in	A: <i>Ich gehe in den Laden.</i> D: <i>Ich bin im Laden.</i>	I'm stepping into the store. I'm in the store.
neben	A: <i>Er stellt sich neben die Ampel.</i> D: <i>Er wartet neben der Ampel.</i>	He's stepping next to the traffic light. He's waiting next to the traffic light.
über	A: <i>Der Vogel fliegt über die Brücke.</i> D: <i>Der Vogel schwebt über der Brücke.</i>	The bird is flying over the bridge. The bird is gliding above the bridge.
unter	A: <i>Sie laufen unter den Baum.</i> D: <i>Sie stehen unter dem Baum.</i>	They're walking under the tree. They're standing under the tree.
vor	A: <i>Ich stelle mich vor die Kirche.</i> D: <i>Ich stehe vor der Kirche.</i>	I'm stepping in front of the church. I'm standing in front of the church.
zwischen	A: <i>Sie rennt zwischen das Kind und den Ball.</i> D: <i>Sie ist zwischen dem Kind und dem Ball.</i>	She's running between the child and the ball. She is between the child and the ball.

6.2 Two-way prepositions (cont.)

As you can imagine, these two-way prepositions will take a while to comprehend fully and to use with ease and confidence. The best thing to do at this point is to memorize them, notice them when you read and listen to German and identify whether they are being used in the accusative case or the dative case. This will help you develop an intuitive “feel” that comes only with practice.

6.3 Subordinating conjunctions

Conjunctions are words that connect two sentences that may or may not be able to function independently of each other. A subordinating conjunction changes the basic word order of S-V-X. Here is a short list of common subordinating conjunctions:

als	when (for past events); as	ob	whether; if (for indirect questions)
bevor	before	obwohl	although
damit	so that; in order that	seitdem	since
dass	that	während	while; whereas
indem	while	weil	because
nachdem	after	wenn	when; whenever; if (conditional)

Here are sample sentences to illustrate the usage of each of these subordinating conjunctions with a brief explanation:

als:

Als ich ein Kind war, bin ich oft ins Kino gegangen.
As a child/When I was a child I went to the movies often.

This is a helpful construction when you want to talk about what you did as a child.

bevor:

Bevor ich mit der Uni beginne, habe ich eine große Party.
Before I start college, I'll have a big party.

The conjunction *bevor* differs from the preposition *vor*, although both are translated into English as ‘before’. The difference is that *bevor* is a conjunction used to connect two sentences (here: *Ich bin an die Uni gegangen* and *Ich hatte eine große Party*) into one sentence by adjusting the word order. The preposition *vor* cannot do that, but instead precedes a noun. The sample sentence above would thus be: *Vor Beginn der Uni habe ich eine große Party.*

damit:

Damit ich in Ruhe lernen kann, gehe ich in ein Café.
In order to study peacefully, I go to a coffee place.

dass:

Ich merke bald, dass es dort nicht ruhig ist.
I soon realize that it isn't quiet there.

nachdem:

Nachdem ich einen Kaffee getrunken habe, treffe ich mich mit Freunden.
After I've had a coffee, I met up with friends.

The conjunction *nachdem* is unique with regards to the combination of tenses. For now, keep in mind that you have two options: If you use the conversational past (here: *ich habe getrunken*) in the part with *nachdem*, you'll have to use the present tense (here: *ich treffe mich*) in the other part of the sentence.

6.3 Subordinating conjunctions (cont.)

ob:

*Ich frage ihn, **ob** er Lust auf einen Film hat.*
I ask him whether he was interested in a film.

Ob is only used in one particular construction. When you ask an indirect question that could (theoretically) be answered with *ja*, *nein* or anything related to that, such as: *Ich weiß nicht* (I don't know), you use *ob* to connect the indirect question (here: *er Lust auf einen Film hat*) with the introductory phrase of the questioner (here: *Ich frage ihn*). Do not use *ob* when you mean 'if' in a conditional sense. That would be *wenn* (or *falls*) in German.

obwohl:

*Wir lesen viele Bücher, **obwohl** wir wenig Zeit haben.*
We are reading a lot of books although we don't have a lot of time.

Just like in English, *obwohl* needs a contrasting information.

seit(dem):

***Seit(dem)** ich nicht mehr zuhause wohne, treffe ich mich öfters mit Freunden.*
Since (the time) I'm not living at home anymore, I'm meeting up with friends more often.

Seit and *seitdem* are the same and the usage of either depends on speaker preference.

während:

*Ich treffe viele Bekannte, **während** ich spazieren gehe.*
I meet a lot of acquaintances while I'm taking a walk.

Während in this construction is used as a temporal conjunction to show that two (or more) events are happening simultaneously.

Here, *während* is used to contrast two ideas:

*Ich trinke morgens gern einen starken Kaffee, **während** ich abends lieber Tee trinke.*
I like to drink a cup of coffee in the mornings, whereas I prefer tea in the evenings.

weil:

*Wir gehen oft ins Kino, **weil** wir gerne gutes Popcorn essen.*
We go to the movies often because we like to eat good popcorn.

The conjunction *weil* is the most frequently used and also the most important conjunction when giving a reason for an action, thought, idea and so on.

wenn:

*Gehst du oft ins Kino, **wenn** es einen guten Film gibt?*
Do you go to the movies often, when(ever) a good film is playing?

Wenn is a temporal conjunction that indicates that something is done more than once in the sense of 'whenever'. It can also be used as a conditional conjunction in the sense of 'if'. For example: *Ich gehe nur ins Kino, wenn es einen guten Film gibt.* (I only go to the movies, if/when a good film is playing.)

- 7.1 The narrative past
- 7.2 The dative case
- 7.3 Modals in the narrative past

7.1 The narrative past

The narrative past in German is used for formal written discourse and with a select number of verbs in spoken German. Those verbs are:

sein → *war* (to be → was);

haben → *hatte* (to have → had);

and *werden* → *wurde* (to become → became), as well as the modal verbs.

Unlike the conversational past, the narrative past does not take a helping verb. Therefore, it is actually simpler to use and shorter; nonetheless Germans prefer to use the conversational past for most verbs as pointed out above. The narrative past is also called *das Imperfekt* (the imperfect) or *das Präteritum* (the preterit) in German. To conjugate a regular verb in the narrative past, you have to take the stem of the verb, add a *-te* and then the appropriate ending. Here is an example with *lernen*:

ich	lernte	wir	lernten
du	lernstest	ihr	lerntet
er-sie-es	lernte	(S)ie	lernten

Thus after adding *-te* the subject endings are:

ich	–	wir	–n
du	–st	ihr	–t
er-sie-es	–	(S)ie	–n

As you can see, the 1st and 3rd person singular are identical, and so are the 1st and 3rd person plural. These are the same endings as *möchten*, by the way. There are a few exceptions to this conjugation rule that you can also read about on page 230 in your *Lernbuch*: add an *-e* before the *-te* ending, if the verb stem ends in *-d* or *-t*, or with consonant plus *-n* / *-m*. For example: *du arbeitetest* or *ich rechnete*.

If you are using an irregular verb, the conjugation pattern listed above does not fully apply—at least not for the 1st and 3rd person singular, which are identical. Take a look at the verb *schreiben*, which undergoes a stem change (ei → ie) both in the conversational past and the narrative past (shown here):

ich	schrieb	wir	schrieben
du	schriebst	ihr	schriebt
er-sie-es	schrieb	(S)ie	schrieben

As you already know, German, just like English, has regular (weak) and irregular (strong and mixed) verbs, which means that irregular verbs follow a less predictable conjugation pattern. Therefore, you should learn the past tense and perfect tense along with the infinitive. Here are some examples for both strong and mixed verbs:

wissen → wusste → gewusst	mixed verb; combines elements of regular and irregular (begins with <i>ge-</i> and ends with <i>-t</i>)
laufen → lief → gelaufen	strong verb; perfect tense adds <i>ge-</i> to the infinitive
trinken → trank → getrunken	strong verb; three distinct forms for the infinitive, past tense and perfect tense

7.2 The dative case

In English, we have some remnants left of the dative case, as in: "With whom did you speak?" In German, however, the dative case is very much alive. The question word to use with the dative case—and one that resembles the English 'whom'—is *wem*. The *-m* can be found in other instances with the dative case, for example: *Ich gebe dem Kind einen Kuchen*. Here, the verb *geben* uses the dative case (*dem Kind*) to indicate the receiver of the cake.

German has a number of dative verbs, which means that they have a dative case, as well as a subject and possibly an accusative object. Some examples are:

*Wem gefällt die Uni? **Mir** gefällt die Uni.*

*Wem hilfst du bei den Hausaufgaben? Ich helfe **ihr** bei den Hausaufgaben.*

*Schmeckt **dir** der Kuchen? Ja, er schmeckt **mir**!*

A list of important dative verbs includes:

antworten	to answer	danken	to thank
geben	to give	gefallen	to like
gehören	to belong to	glauben	to believe
gratulieren	to congratulate	helfen	to help
passen	to fit	schmecken	to taste

7.3 Modals in the narrative past

The modal verbs *dürfen*, *können*, *mögen*, *müssen*, *sollen* and *wollen* are used in the narrative past in both spoken and written German when you talk about past events; the conversational past sounds awkward in most instances and is used only in very specific cases, such as: *Ich habe das nicht gewollt*. (I didn't mean to do that.) The first thing to remember when conjugating the modal verbs in the narrative past is to drop any umlaut from the infinitive form. The modal verb *dürfen* is conjugated here as an example. The modal verbs *können*, *müssen*, *sollen* and *wollen* all follow the same pattern as *dürfen*.

ich	durfte	wir	durften
du	durftest	ihr	durftet
er-sie-es	durfte	(S)ie	durften

Mögen (or *möchten*, as you might also remember it) follows a different conjugation pattern provided here:

ich	mochte	wir	mochten
du	mochtest	ihr	mochtet
er-sie-es	mochte	(S)ie	mochten

Here are a couple of sample sentences to help you see the difference between modals in the present tense and in the narrative past:

*Als Kind **durfte** ich nur Fahrrad fahren, aber jetzt **darf** ich auch Auto fahren.*

*In der Schule **musste** ich oft zum Direktor der Schule, aber jetzt **muss** ich das zum Glück nicht mehr.*

7.3 Modals in the narrative past (cont.)

In German, the modal verb stands in for what is often a set of words in English. Looking back at the sample sentences above, the first sentence in English would be:

As a child I was only allowed to ride my bike, but now I'm also allowed to drive a car.

It becomes even more complicated when you use the modal verb *können* in the past tense; think of the English equivalent 'could'. The word 'could' in English can refer to something both in the past and as a (real or unreal) possibility. German differentiates here clearly:

*Als Kind **konnte** man Rad fahren.* vs. *Als Kind **könnte** man Rad fahren.*

You will cover the subjunctive at a later point in detail. Right now, keep in mind that you should always use the narrative past or the conversational past when you describe events that have happened in the past. Do not use the subjunctive in German to describe those, even if it seems like that is common practice in English.

- 8.1 The superlative
- 8.2 wissen and kennen
- 8.3 The genitive case

8.1 The superlative

The superlative in German—the “highest” form of an adjective or adverb—can take two different forms. When you have an attribute adjective, you add *-st* plus the appropriate adjective ending. (Refer back to Unit 4 and the accompanying video to refresh your memory on adjective endings.) If you want to say that the smallest state in Europe is Vatican City, you would say: *Der kleinste Staat in Europa ist Vatikanstadt.* The ending *-st* is the ending of all regular adjectives. However, there are a great number of irregular adjectives. Those adjectives undergo various changes in the comparative and the superlative. They add an umlaut such as: *alt* → *älter* → *am ältesten*. The form *am ältesten* is the predicative form of the adjective. For example: *Deutschland ist alt. Italien ist älter. Frankreich ist am ältesten.* (Germany is old. Italy is older. France is the oldest.)

Adjectives can undergo the following changes in the superlative form:

- add an *-e* before the *-st* when the stem ends in an *-d*, *-t* or *-z* (*wild* → *am wildesten*; *stolz* → *am stolzesten*), and
- drop the *-s* and only add a *-t* if the adjective ends with a *-ss*, *-ß* or *-z* (*groß* → *am größten*).

There are also a number of adjectives that take a completely new form for the comparative and the superlative, such as we see in English with ‘good → better → best’. Important adjectives are:

<i>gern</i> → <i>lieber</i> → <i>am liebsten</i>	<i>like</i> → <i>like better</i> → <i>like the most</i>
<i>gut</i> → <i>besser</i> → <i>am besten</i>	<i>good</i> → <i>better</i> → <i>best</i>
<i>viel</i> → <i>mehr</i> → <i>am meisten</i>	<i>a lot</i> → <i>more</i> → <i>the most</i>

The list of adjectives above includes the form *am meisten*, which is used as a predicative adjective: *Deutschland besuche ich gern. Die Schweiz besuche ich lieber. Österreich besuche ich am liebsten.*

Other adjectives change slightly, such as:

<i>hoch</i> → <i>höher</i> → <i>am höchsten</i>	<i>high</i> → <i>higher</i> → <i>highest</i>
<i>nah</i> → <i>näher</i> → <i>am nächsten</i>	<i>close</i> → <i>closer</i> → <i>closest</i>
<i>teuer</i> → <i>teurer</i> → <i>am teuersten</i>	<i>expensive</i> → <i>more expensive</i> → <i>most expensive</i>

There are, of course, also adjectives that only make sense in the basic adjective form, such as: *tot* (dead) or *schwanger* (pregnant).

8.2 wissen and kennen

The two verbs *wissen* and *kennen* are closely related, so closely in fact that the English equivalent of both words is the same: to know. In German, *wissen* means that you know factual information or about an event, whereas *kennen* means that you know someone or something. The verb *wissen* is often used in the short phrase: *Ich weiß (das).* (I know [that].) Oftentimes, ‘*ich weiß (nicht)*’ is followed by a clause that explains what one knows, preceded by *dass*: *Ich weiß, dass Deutschland in Europa liegt.* (I know that Germany is in Europe.), or by an inverted statement beginning with *ob*: *Ich weiß nicht, ob ich Österreich besuchen werde.* (I don’t know whether I will visit Austria.)

The verb *kennen*, however, simply takes an accusative object, such as: *Ich kenne ihn.* (I know him.) To use *kennen* with a person, you should actually know her or him personally. Don’t say ‘*Ich kenne Angela Merkel*’, unless you have actually met Germany’s chancellor in person; instead say: *Ich weiß, wer Angela Merkel ist.* (I know who Angela Merkel is.)

8.2 wissen and kennen (cont.)

In casual conversation people will say: *Kennst du den Maler Picasso?* (Do you know the painter Picasso?), to which you could answer: *Ja, ich habe schon viele von seinen Bildern gesehen.* (Yes, I have seen many of his paintings.) Of course, Picasso is long dead and we could not possibly know him, but his name has become synonymous with his paintings, so the sentence above would make sense.

8.3 The genitive case

The genitive case is used to show possession. It should be noted that Germans use the genitive case much less frequently in spoken language than they do in written discourse. In dialect, the genitive case is virtually nonexistent. There are several ways to indicate possession in German:

- you can add an –s to the noun (without an apostrophe): *Das ist **Toms** Landkarte.* (This is Tom's map.)
- you can use the preposition *von*: *Ich reise mit **dem** Auto **von** meinem Vater.* (I'm traveling with my father's car.)
- you can use the genitive case: ***Das** Auto **meiner** Mutter ist aber schöner.* (But my mother's car is nicer.)

Most masculine and neuter nouns get a genitive –s. For example: *Das Auto meines Vaters ist schnell. Der Kofferraum des Autos ist auch größer.* (My dad's car is faster. The trunk of the car is also bigger.)

The definite and indefinite articles in the genitive case are as follows:

	definite	indefinite
masculine	des	eines
feminine	der	einer
neuter	des	eines
plural	der	(keiner)

Start practicing the genitive case in your written homework and short responses to get a feel for it. You can also find all the genitive forms in the Adjective Ending Table from the interactive.

- 9.1 Dative expressions
- 9.2 wenn, wann
- 9.3 Reflexive verbs and pronouns

9.1 Dative expressions

There are a number of idiomatic expressions in German that take the dative case. Here are a few common ones, though you may run into others in your reading:

<i>Mir ist schlecht.</i>	I feel ill.
<i>Es geht mir gut.</i>	I'm doing well.
<i>Mir ist heiß.</i>	I feel hot.
<i>Ihm ist kalt.</i>	He feels cold.

9.2 wenn, wann

The German equivalent for 'when' can be *wann*, *wenn* or *als*. We will focus on the difference between *wann* and *wenn*. *Wann* is most often used in direct questions; therefore, it can also be part of an indirect question. For example:

Wann kommst du nach Hause? Ich komme, wenn ich mit der Arbeit fertig bin.

Ich frage ihn, wann er nach Hause kommt.

Wenn is never used as a question word. It is a conjunction and introduces a sentence that is connected to another sentence. Since *wenn* introduces a temporal idea, the correct usage of *wenn* is determined by the grammatical tense. *Wenn* can also be translated as 'whenever', indicating an event that is repeated. Here are a couple of sentences to highlight the usage of *wenn*:

<i>Ich fahre oft in den Urlaub. Wenn ich in den Urlaub fahre, nehme ich meinen Badeanzug mit.</i>	I go on vacation often. When I go on vacation, I take my swimsuit with me.
<i>Ich bin immer schon oft in den Urlaub gefahren. Wenn ich in den Urlaub gefahren bin, habe ich meinen Badeanzug mitgenommen.</i>	I have always gone on vacation often. When(ever) I have gone on vacation, I've taken my swimsuit with me.

To recap the usage of *wann* and *wenn*:

- *wann* is used in direct and indirect questions
- *wenn* is used in a sense of whenever, i.e. with events that are repeated
- *wenn* can therefore be used with all grammatical tenses and modes (past, present, future and subjunctive)

9.3 Reflexive verbs and pronouns

Reflexive verbs are verbs that carry a self-referential *sich*, which means that the reflexive pronoun refers back to the subject of the sentence. In English, we have separated words for those that stress that it was I (or whoever is the subject) did something, as in: "The boy sees himself in the mirror." In German, we say: *Der Junge sieht sich im Spiegel*. The *sich* is connected to the verb and has to be learned with it. The reflexive pronouns in the dative and accusative cases are:

reflexive pronouns		
	accusative	dative
ich	mich	mir
du	dich	dir
er-sie-es	sich	sich
wir	uns	uns
ihr	euch	euch
(S)ie	sich	sich

German also has a number of verbs that are reflexive even though they are not self-referential:

sich treffen (mit jmdm.)	to meet up / to get together (with so.)
sich verabreden (mit jmdm.)	to make an appointment (with so.)
sich verabschieden (von jmdm.)	to say goodbye (to so.)
sich etw. vorstellen	to imagine something
sich jmdm. vorstellen	to introduce yourself to so.

- 10.1 *welch-* and *dies-*
- 10.2 Unpreceded adjectives
- 10.3 Future with *werden*

10.1 *welch-* and *dies-*

Welch- is a question word that inquires about a specific person, thing or concept. Unlike other *w-*question words, *welch-* must take an appropriate ending according to the gender and case of the noun that it modifies. For example:

Welchen Film hast du gestern gesehen? (masculine, accusative) Which film did you see yesterday?
Welche TV-Show siehst du am liebsten? (feminine, accusative) Which TV show do you like best?

Dies- can be seen as the equivalent to *welch-* when used in a statement or as part of a question. *Dies-* is a demonstrative article, which means that it refers to a very specific person, thing or concept. In spoken and written discourse, it is used to differentiate one thing from another, most often for clarification and emphasis. In spoken German, it is often used when someone is talking about a specific object and pointing at it literally. For example:

Hast du **diesen Film** hier gesehen? (pointing at a movie poster) Did you see the film advertised here?
Den hier? (pointing at a different movie poster) This one?

Just like *welch-*, *dies-* must take the appropriate ending according to the gender and case of the noun it modifies.

10.2 Unpreceded adjectives

Returning to adjectives once again, the focus here will be on adjectives that are unpreceded, which means that there is no article before the adjective. Unpreceded adjectives are used commonly with plural nouns. They are also found in announcements, such as advertisements with singular nouns. Just like with preceded adjectives—that is adjectives that follow a definite article (*der, die, das*) or an indefinite article (*ein, eine, ein*)—unpreceded adjectives have to show the gender and case of the noun they modify. For example:

Neuer Film mit Til Schweiger! (masculine, nominative) New movie with Til Schweiger!
 Ich lese nur **spannende Bücher**. (plural, accusative) I only read suspenseful books.

The endings for unpreceded adjectives are:

	nominative	accusative	dative	genitive
masculine	–er	–en	–em	–en
feminine	–e	–e	–er	–er
neuter	–es	–es	–em	–en
plural	–e	–e	–en	–er

10.3 Future with *werden*

In German, you can indicate that an action will take place in the future by using the present tense with an appropriate adverb such as *morgen*, *in zwei Wochen* or *in einem Jahr*. In English, this is accomplished by a gerund, which simply means that the verb ends in *-ing*, indicating an action in progress or an action/event in the future. There is also a “proper” future tense in German, and it is formed by using the verb *werden* + infinitive. The conjugation pattern is:

ich werde **wir** werden
du wirst **ihr** werdet
er–sie–es wird **(S)ie** werden

10.3 Future with werden (cont.)

The reason for having to learn the future tense, instead of only the present tense plus an appropriate adverb, is a stylistic one. When you use *werden* to talk about an event in the future, you can express different ideas. Those ideas may include wishful or hopeful thinking for the future or the present, as well as a sense of determination. It depends greatly on the context in written discourse, as well as on the emphasis and intonation in spoken language to determine the exact meaning of the sentence. For example, if you emphasize *werde* in the following sentences, you are saying that you are determined to do something:

Ich werde dieses Buch zu Ende lesen.

I will finish this book (no matter what).

Nächstes Jahr werde ich nach Deutschland fliegen.

Next year, I will travel to Germany (for sure).

Ich werde wohl ein bisschen später kommen.

I will probably come a little late (but I will surely come nonetheless).

Irgendwann einmal werde ich nach Deutschland fahren.

One day, I will travel to Germany (and I am hopeful that it will happen).

Beware of the false friend *wollen*, which always means ‘to want (to do something)’ and never ‘will (do something)’. You would say ‘*Ich werde dieses Buch lesen*’ in order to express “I **will read** this book.” If you were to say ‘*Ich will dieses Buch lesen*’, then you are saying “I **want to read** this book” and nothing else!

- 11.1 als for past events
- 11.2 nachdem and bevor
- 11.3 Two-way prepositions: idiomatic

11.1 als for past events

In Unit 9, you learned about the question word *wann* and the conjunction *wenn* to talk about information involving time. German has a third word that translates into ‘when’ in English and that is the conjunction *als*. To briefly recap and to set *als* apart from *wann* and *wenn*, take a look at the examples and explanations below:

Wann fährst du in den Urlaub?

When do you go on vacation?

Ich fahre in den Urlaub, **wenn** ich Zeit habe.

I'll go on vacation when I have time.

Meine Familie ist früher immer nach Mexiko gefahren, **wenn** es Sommerferien gab.

My family used to always go to Mexico, when(ever) we were on summer vacation.

Wann is a question word. *Wenn* can be used with both present tense and past tense; with the present tense, it suggests a simply ‘when’. If *wenn* is used with the past tense, it indicates a repeated event in the past in the sense of ‘whenever’.

The conjunction *als* is used to talk about singular events in the past. Therefore, the conjunction *als* is much more restricted in its use than *wenn*. Here are a couple of sample sentences:

Als ich ein Kind war, reiste ich viel mit meinen Eltern.

When I was a child, I traveled a lot with my parents.

Als ich mit der Uni anfang, hatte ich große Angst.

When I started at the university, I was really afraid.

To recap:

- *wann* is used for direct and indirect questions
- *wenn* is used for events in the present and the future; the past if the event occurred repeatedly
- *als* is used for events temporally in the past if the event occurred only once (singular event)

11.2 nachdem and bevor

The subordinating conjunction *nachdem* takes a special place among all other conjunctions in German since it demands a certain order of tenses being used. A subordinating conjunction means that the verb is kicked to the end of the sentence as in:

Nachdem ich die High School **abgeschlossen hatte**, **machte** ich eine Weltreise.

Ich **mache** eine zweite Weltreise, **nachdem** ich den Uniabschluss **bekommen habe**.

In order to use *nachdem* correctly, you have to learn yet another tense in German, the past perfect tense. The past perfect tense is a combination of the past tense of the helping verb *haben* (*hatte*) or *sein* (*war*) and the perfect tense of the main verb:

Nachdem ich einen Reiseführer über Liechtenstein **gelesen hatte**, **wollte** ich unbedingt in dieses Land **fahren**.

When you learn the correct combination of two tenses, keep in mind that only *nachdem* enforces such a rigid setup.

main clause

present tense (*bin, hat, reist*)

past tense (*war, hatte, reiste*)

subordinating clause (with *nachdem*)

perfect tense (*ist gereist*)

past perfect tense (*war gereist, hatte gesehen*)

11.2 nachdem and bevor (cont.)

Here are two more sample sentences for the first and the second tense options:

*Ich gehe in die Stadt, nachdem ich meinen Kaffee **ausgetrunken habe**.*

*Er machte sich sofort auf den Weg, nachdem sie ihn **angerufen hatte**.*

11.3 Two-way prepositions: idiomatic

In Unit 6, you learned about two-way prepositions. Such prepositions take either the accusative case or the dative case, depending on whether they refer to movement (usually accusative) or location (usually dative). These two-way prepositions are:

an	at; up to	über	over; above
auf	on top of; up; onto	unter	under
hinter	behind	vor	in front of
in	in; into	zwischen	between; in between
neben	next to		

However, German also has many verbs, which take a certain preposition. The meaning of the verb depends on the preposition being used. Since these combinations of verb and preposition are not always logical, they have to simply be learned. These include, for example:

an:

denken an etw. / jmdn.	to think of sth. / so.
arbeiten an etw.	to work on sth.

auf:

bestehen auf etw.	to insist on sth.
warten auf etw. / jmdn.	to wait for sth. / so.
sich freuen auf etw. / jmdn.	to look forward to sth. / so.

in:

sich verlieben in jmdn.	to fall in love with so.
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über:

sprechen über etw. / jmdn.	to talk about sth. / so.
sich freuen über etw.	to be excited about sth. / so.

unter:

unter uns gesagt	(that being said) between the two of us
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vor:

Angst haben vor etw. / jmdm.	to be afraid of sth. / so.
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zwischen:

kosten zwischen (\$10 und \$15)	to cost approximately (\$10 to \$15)
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To round things off, we would like to add two more important idiomatic expressions with prepositions (even if not with a two-way preposition). These are: *Ich bin zu Hause. Ich gehe nach Hause.* (I am at home. I'm going home.)

- 12.1 Subjunctive mood using *würden*
- 12.2 *sein*, *haben* and modal verbs in subjunctive mood
- 12.3 Subjunctive with *wenn*

12.1 Subjunctive mood using *würden*

German, just like English, has a number of different tenses: present, past, perfect and future. It also has different moods, namely the indicative and the subjunctive. The indicative mood presents something as an objective fact. For example: *Ich lerne Deutsch.* (I am learning German.)

In the subjunctive mood, the action or event is not presented as a fact, but instead seen as a possibility or a wish. For example: *Ich würde sofort nach Deutschland fahren, wenn ich genug Geld verdienen würde.* (I would travel to Germany right away, if I would earn enough money.) German has a couple of different ways to express the subjunctive mood. The simple option is a combination of *würden* + infinitive as shown in the sample sentence above.

It is important to remember that the subjunctive mood is used solely and exclusively for desired possibilities and wishes. Beware of interference with English! In English, we would say something like: "As a child, I would always read cartoons on Sunday morning." The verb 'would' has nothing to do with the subjunctive to express something that did not happen; in fact, we did read cartoons every Sunday morning. In contrast, it is incorrect to use *würden* as the German equivalent in this sentence. Instead, you have to simply use the past tense: *Als ich ein Kind war, habe ich Sonntagmorgen immer Cartoons gelesen.*

Just remember that *würden* in German is used exclusively to express unfulfilled possibilities and wishes pointing at the future and not to talk about events that happened in the past.

12.2 *sein*, *haben* and modal verbs in subjunctive mood

In spoken German, *würden* + infinitive is used with most verbs with the exception of *haben* and *sein*. With these verbs, you should use *hätte* and *wäre*, respectively, plus the appropriate ending. Another exception is the modal verbs. At this point, you are most likely familiar with the verb *möchten* to express a polite request: *Ich möchte bitte dieses Buch lesen.* (I would like to read this book.)

Here is a helpful hint to keep in mind when using the modal verbs in the subjunctive mood: if the infinitive has an umlaut, so does the subjunctive:

<i>dürfen</i> → <i>ich dürfte</i>	(I would be allowed to)	<i>können</i> → <i>ich könnte</i>	(I could)
<i>mögen</i> → <i>ich möchte</i>	(I would like to)	<i>müssen</i> → <i>ich müsste</i>	(I would have to)

The two modal verbs without an umlaut in the infinitive are *sollen* and *wollen*. Their respective subjunctive *ich*-forms are *sollte* and *wollte*.

12.3 Subjunctive with *wenn*

Since the subjunctive mood expresses an event or act, but only as an assumed possibility or a wish, statements with the subjunctive are often introduced with the subordinating conjunction *wenn*.

Here are a couple of sample sentences for *wenn* with the subjunctive mood:

<i>Wenn ich jemals genug Geld hätte, würde ich eine Weltreise machen.</i>	If I would ever have enough money, I would travel around the globe.
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<i>Wenn ich mein Auf geht's! Buch verlieren würde, müsste ich weinen.</i>	If I were to lose my Auf geht's! book, I would have to cry.
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