

## CHAPTER ONE

### SURVIVAL GERMAN

If you tire of toting around this phrasebook, tear out this chapter. You should be able to navigate your destination with only the terms found in the next 29 pages.

#### BASIC GREETINGS

*For a full list of greetings, see p99.*

Hello.

**Hallo.**

*Hah-LOH.*

How are you?

**Wie geht es Ihnen?**

*Vee GHEHHT as eehnen?*

I'm fine, thanks.

**Mir geht es gut, danke.**

*Mere ghehht as GOOT, dunk-eh.*

And you?

**Und Ihnen?**

*Oonnd EEHNEN?*

My name is \_\_\_\_.

**Ich heie \_\_\_\_.**

*Ee[ch] HYE-sseh \_\_\_\_.*

And yours?

**Wie heien Sie?**

*Vee hye-ssenn ZEE?*

It's a pleasure to meet you.

**Freut mich, Sie kennen zu lernen.**

*Froyd mi[ch], zee CANON tsoo  
lehr-nen.*

Please.

**Bitte.**

*BIT-eh.*

Thank you.

**Danke.**

*DUNK-eh.*

Yes.

**Ja.**

*Yahh.*

No.

**Nein.**

*Nine.*

Okay.

**OK.**

*Okay.*

No problem.

**Kein Problem.**

I'm sorry, I don't understand.

*Kyne proh-BLEHM.*

**Entschuldigung, ich verstehe Sie nicht.**

*Ennt-SHOOLL-dee-ghoong, ee[ch] fair-SHTEH-heh zee ni[ch]t.*

Would you speak slower please?

**Könnten Sie bitte etwas langsamer sprechen?**

*K[oe]nn-ten zee bit-eh at-vahs LUNG-sah-mehr shpre-[ch]en?*

Would you speak louder please?

**Könnten Sie bitte etwas lauter sprechen?**

*K[oe]nn-ten zee bit-eh at-vahs LOU-tehr shpre-[ch]en?*

Do you speak English?

**Sprechen Sie Englisch?**

*Shpre-[ch]en zee ENG-lish?*

Do you speak any other languages?

**Sprechen Sie irgendeine andere Sprache?**

*Shpre-[ch]en zee irr-ghend eye-ne UN-deh-reh shpra-[ch]eh?*

I speak \_\_\_\_ better than German.

**Ich spreche besser \_\_\_\_ als Deutsch.**

*Ee[ch] shpre-[ch]eh bess-er \_\_\_\_ ahlls doytsh.*

Would you spell that?

**Könnten Sie das bitte buchstabieren?**

*K[oe]nn-ten zee dahs bit-eh bu[ch]-shtah-BEE-ren?*

Would you please repeat that?

**Könnten Sie das bitte wiederholen?**

*K[oe]nn-ten zee dahs bit-eh veeder-HOH-len?*

Would you point that out in this dictionary?

**Könnten Sie mir das bitte in diesem Wörterbuch zeigen?**

*K[oe]nn-ten zee mere dahs bit-eh in dee-sem V[OE]R-tehr-boo[ch] tsai-ghen?*

## THE KEY QUESTIONS

With the right hand gestures, you can get a lot of mileage from the following list of single-word questions and answers.

Who?

**Wer?**

What?

*Vehr?*

**Was?**

When?

*Vahs?*

**Wann?**

Where?

*Vahnn?*

**Wo?**

To where?

*Voh?*

**Wohin?**

Why?

*Voh-HINN?*

**Warum?**

How?

*Vah-ROOM?*

**Wie?**

Which?

*Vee?*

**Welcher (m) / Welche (f) / Welches (n)?**

*VELL-[ch]err / VELL-[ch]eh / VELL-*

*[ch]ess?*

How many? / How much?

**Wie viele?**

*Vee FEE-leh?*



## THE ANSWERS: WHO

*For full coverage of pronouns, see p20.*

I

**Ich**

*Ee[ch]*

you

**Sie (formal, sing. + pl.) / du**

**(informal, sing.) / ihr (informal, pl.)**

*zee / doo / eehr*

him

**er**

*air*

her

**sie**

*zee*

us

**wir**

*veer*

them sie (pl.)  
zee

**THE ANSWERS: WHEN**

*For full coverage of time, see p11.*

now	<b>jetzt</b> <i>yetst</i>
later	<b>später</b> <i>SHP[AE]-tehr</i>
in a minute	<b>gleich</b> <i>glye[ch]</i>
today	<b>heute</b> <i>HOY-teh</i>
tomorrow	<b>morgen</b> <i>MORR-ghenn</i>
yesterday	<b>gestern</b> <i>GHESS-tehrn</i>
in a week	<b>in einer Woche</b> <i>in eye-nehr VOH-[ch]eh</i>
next week	<b>nächste Woche</b> <i>n[ae][ch]s-teh VOH-[ch]eh</i>
last week	<b>letzte Woche</b> <i>lets-teh VOH-[ch]eh</i>
next month	<b>nächsten Monat</b> <i>n[ae][ch]s-ten MOH-naht</i>
At _____	<b>Um _____</b> <i>Oomm _____</i>
ten o'clock this morning.	<b>zehn Uhr heute Morgen.</b> <i>TSEHN oohr hoy-teh MORR-ghenn.</i>
two o'clock this afternoon.	<b>zwei Uhr heute Nachmittag.</b> <i>TSVAIH oohr hoy-teh NAH[CH]-mitt-tahhg.</i>
seven o'clock this evening.	<b>sieben Uhr heute Abend.</b> <i>ZEE-ben oohr hoy-teh AHH-bend.</i>

*For full coverage of numbers, see p7.*

## THE ANSWERS: WHERE

here	<b>hier</b>
	<i>hear</i>
there	<b>dort</b>
	<i>dohrrt</i>
near	<b>in der Nähe von</b>
	<i>in dehr N[AE]H-heh fonn</i>
closer	<b>näher</b>
	<i>N[AE]H-herr</i>
closest	<b>am nächsten</b>
	<i>umm N[AE][CH]s-ten</i>
far	<b>weit weg</b>
	<i>VYTE vegg</i>
farther	<b>weiter weg</b>
	<i>VYE-tehr vegg</i>
farthest	<b>am weitesten weg</b>
	<i>umm VYE-tess-ten vegg</i>
across from	<b>gegenüber von</b>
	<i>ghe-ghenn-[UE]H-behr fonn</i>
next to	<b>neben</b>
	<i>NEH-ben</i>
behind	<b>hinter</b>
	<i>HINN-tehr</i>
straight ahead	<b>geradeaus</b>
	<i>ghe-rah-deh-OUS</i>
left	<b>links</b>
	<i>links</i>
right	<b>rechts</b>
	<i>re[ch]ts</i>
up	<b>aufwärts</b>
	<i>OUF-v[ae]rts</i>
down	<b>abwärts</b>
	<i>UPP-v[ae]rts</i>

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lower	<b>niedriger (height) / geringer (price)</b> <i>NEE-drigger / ghe-RING-er</i>
higher	<b>höher</b> <i>H[OE]-hehr</i>
forward	<b>vorwärts</b> <i>FOHR-v[ae]rts</i>
back	<b>zurück</b> <i>tsoo-R[UE]KK</i>
around	<b>herum</b> <i>heh-ROOMM</i>
across the street	<b>auf der anderen Straßenseite</b> <i>ouf dehr UN-deh-renn SHTRAH- ssen-sye-teh</i>
down the street	<b>am Ende der Straße</b> <i>umm enn-deh dehr SHTRAH-sseh</i>
on the corner	<b>an der Ecke</b> <i>unn dehr EKKEH</i>
kitty-corner	<b>schräg gegenüber</b> <i>shr[ae]gg gheh-ghenn-[UE]H-behr</i>
___ blocks from here	<b>___ Straßen von hier</b> <i>SHTRAH-ssen fonn hear</i>

*For a full list of numbers, see the next page.*

### THE ANSWERS: WHICH

this one	<b>dieser (m) / diese (f) / dieses (n)</b> <i>DEE-sehr / DEE-seh / DEE-sess</i>
that (that one, close by)	<b>dieser (m) / diese (f) / dieses (n)</b> <i>DEE-sehr / DEE-seh / DEE-sess</i>
(that one, in the distance)	<b>jener (m) / jene (f) / jenes (n)</b> <i>YEH-nehr / YEH-neh / YEH-ness</i>
these	<b>diese</b> <i>DEE-seh</i>
those (those there, close by)	<b>diese (pl.)</b> <i>DEE-seh</i>

## NUMBERS &amp; COUNTING

one	<b>Eins</b> <i>Aihnts</i>	seventeen	<b>Siebzehn</b> <i>ZEEB-tsehn</i>
two	<b>Zwei</b> <i>Tsvaih</i>	eighteen	<b>Achtzehn</b> <i>A[CH]-tsehn</i>
three	<b>Drei</b> <i>Drrye</i>	nineteen	<b>Neunzehn</b> <i>NOYN-tsehn</i>
four	<b>Vier</b> <i>Feer</i>	twenty	<b>Zwanzig</b> <i>TSVANN-tsigg</i>
five	<b>Fünf</b> <i>F[ue]nff</i>	twenty-one	<b>Einundzwanzig</b> <i>AIHNN-oonnd- tsvann-tsigg</i>
six	<b>Sechs</b> <i>Zeks</i>	thirty	<b>Dreißig</b> <i>DRRYE-sigg</i>
seven	<b>Sieben</b> <i>ZEE-ben</i>	forty	<b>Vierzig</b> <i>FEER-tsigg</i>
eight	<b>Acht</b> <i>A[ch]t</i>	fifty	<b>Fünfzig</b> <i>F[UE]NFF-tsigg</i>
nine	<b>Neun</b> <i>Noyn</i>	sixty	<b>Sechzig</b> <i>ZE[CH]-tsigg</i>
ten	<b>Zehn</b> <i>Tsehn</i>	seventy	<b>Siebzig</b> <i>ZEEB-tsigg</i>
eleven	<b>Elf</b> <i>Elff</i>	eighty	<b>Achtzig</b> <i>A[CH]-tsigg</i>
twelve	<b>Zwölf</b> <i>Tsv[oe]llf</i>	ninety	<b>Neunzig</b> <i>NOYN-tsigg</i>
thirteen	<b>Dreizehn</b> <i>DRRYE-tshen</i>	one hundred	<b>Einhundert</b> <i>AIHN-hoonn- dehrt</i>
fourteen	<b>Vierzehn</b> <i>FEER-tsehn</i>	two hundred	<b>Zweihundert</b> <i>TSVAIH-hoonn- dehrt</i>
fifteen	<b>Fünfzehn</b> <i>F[UE]NFF-tsehn</i>	one thousand	<b>Eintausend</b> <i>aihn-TOWSEND</i>
sixteen	<b>Sechzehn</b> <i>ZE[CH]-tsehn</i>		

**FRACTIONS & DECIMALS**

one eighth	<b>ein Achtel</b> <i>aihn A[CH]-tell</i>
one quarter	<b>ein Viertel</b> <i>aihn FEER-tell</i>
one third	<b>ein Drittel</b> <i>aihn DRITT-tell</i>
one half	<b>die Hälfte</b> <i>dee H[AE]LLF-teh</i>
two thirds	<b>zwei Drittel</b> <i>tsvaih DRITT-tell</i>
three quarters	<b>drei Viertel</b> <i>drrye FEER-tell</i>
double	<b>doppelt</b> <i>DOP-pellt</i>
triple	<b>dreifach</b> <i>DRRYE-fah[ch]</i>
one tenth	<b>ein Zehntel</b> <i>aihn TSEHN-tell</i>
one hundredth	<b>ein Hundertstel</b> <i>aihn HOON-derts-tell</i>
one thousandth	<b>ein Tausendstel</b> <i>aihn TOW-sends-tell</i>

**MATH**

addition	<b>Addition</b> <i>AH-dee-tsee-ohn</i>
2 + 1	<b>zwei plus eins</b> <i>tsvaih plooss aihts</i>
subtraction	<b>Subtraktion</b> <i>ZOBB-trahkk-tsee-ohn</i>
2 - 1	<b>zwei minus eins</b> <i>tsvaih mee-nooss aihts</i>
multiplication	<b>Multiplikation</b> <i>MUHLL-tee-plee-kah-tsee-ohn</i>

2 x 3

zwei mal drei

division

tsvaih mahl drye

Division

6 ÷ 3

DEE-vee-see-ohn

sechs geteilt durch drei

zekks gheh-TYLET doorr[ch] drye

**ORDINAL NUMBERS**

first

erster (m) / erste (f) / erstes (n)

AIHRS-tehr / AIHRS-teh / AIHRS-tess

second

zweiter (m) / zweite (f) / zweites (n)

TSVAIH-tehr / TSVAIH-teh / TSVAIH-

tess

third

dritter (m) / dritte (f) / drittes (n)

DRITT-ehr / DRITT-eh / DRITT-tess

fourth

vierter (m) / vierte (f) / viertes (n)

FEER-tehr / FEER-teh / FEER-tess

fifth

fünfter (m) / fünfte (f) / fünftes (n)

F[UE]NFF-tehr / F[UE]NFF-teh /

F[UE]NFF-tess

sixth

sechster (m) / sechste (f) / sechstes (n)

ZEKS-tehr / ZEKs-teh / ZEKs-tess

seventh

siebter (m) / siebte (f) / siebtes (n)

ZEEB-tehr / ZEEB-teh / ZEEB-tess

eighth

achter (m) / achte (f) / achttes (n)

A[CH]-tehr / A[CH]-teh / A[CH]-tess

ninth

neunter (m) / neunte (f) / neuntes (n)

NOYN-tehr / NOYN-teh / NOYN-tess

tenth

zehnter (m) / zehnte (f) / zehntes (n)

TSEHN-tehr / TSEHN-teh / TSEHN-tess

last

letzter (m) / letzte (f) / letztes (n)

LETS-tehr / LETS-teh / LETS-tess

## MEASUREMENTS

millimeter

**Millimeter**

*MIL-lee-meh-tehr*

centimeter

**Zentimeter**

*TSENN-tee-meh-tehr*

meter

**Meter**

*MEH-tehr*

kilometer

**Kilometer**

*KEE-loh-meh-tehr*

squared

**quadriert**

*kvah-DREEHRT*

short

**kurz**

*koorrts*

long

**lang**

*lahng*

## VOLUME

milliliters

**Milliliter**

*MIL-lee-lee-tehr*

liter

**Liter**

*LEE-tehr*

kilo

**Kilo**

*KEE-loh*

cup

**Tasse**

*TAHSS-eh*

## QUANTITY

some

**etwas**

*AT-vahs*

none

**nichts**

*ni[ch]ts*

all

**alles**

*AHLL-ehs*

many / much

**viele / viel**

*FEEL-eh / feel*

a little bit (can be used for quantity or for time)  
dozen

**etwas**  
*AT-vahs*  
**Dutzend**  
*DUTT-send*

## SIZE

small

**klein**  
*klyne*

the smallest

**der / die / das Kleinste**  
*dehr / dee / dahs KLYNES-teh*

medium

**mittel**  
*MITT-ell*

big

**groß**  
*grohs*

fat

**dick**  
*dick*

wide

**breit**  
*brryte*

narrow

**schmal**  
*shmahl*

## TIME

Time in German is referred to, literally, by the clock. “What time is it?” translates literally as “How much clock is it?”

*For full coverage of number terms, see p7.*

## HOURS OF THE DAY

What time is it?

**Wie spät ist es?**  
*Vee SHP[AE]HT isst as?*

At what time?

**Um wie viel Uhr?**  
*Oomm VEE-feel oohr?*

For how long?

**Wie lange?**  
*Vee LUNG-eh?*

It's one o'clock.

**Es ist ein Uhr.**  
*As isst AIHN oohr.*

It's two o'clock.

**Es ist zwei Uhr.**

*As isst TSVAIH oohr.*

It's two thirty.

**Es ist halb drei.**

*As isst hahlb DRRYE.*

It's two fifteen.

**Es ist Viertel nach zwei.**

*As isst feer-tell nah[ch] TSVAIH.*

It's a quarter to three.

**Es ist Viertel vor drei.**

*As isst feer-tell fohr DRRYE.*

It's noon.

**Es ist Mittag.**

*As isst MITT-tahgg.*

It's midnight.

**Es ist Mitternacht.**

*As isst MITT-ehr-na[ch]t.*

It's early.

**Es ist früh.**

*As isst FR[UE]HH.*

It's late.

**Es ist spät.**

*As isst SHP[AE]HT.*

in the morning

**morgens**

*MORR-ghenns*

in the afternoon

**nachmittags**

*NA[CH]-mitt-tahggs*

at night

**nachts**

*na[ch]ts*

dawn

**Morgendämmerung**

*MORR-ghenn-d[ae]mm-eh-roong*

## DAYS OF THE WEEK

Sunday

**Sonntag**

*ZONN-tahgg*

Monday

**Montag**

*MOHN-tahgg*

Tuesday

**Dienstag**

*DEENS-tahgg*

Wednesday

**Mittwoch**

*MITT-voh[ch]*

Thursday

**Donnerstag**

*DONN-air-s-tahgg*

Friday	<b>Freitag</b> <i>FRYE-tahgg</i>
Saturday	<b>Samstag</b> <i>ZAMMS-tahgg</i>
today	<b>heute</b> <i>HOY-teh</i>
tomorrow	<b>morgen</b> <i>MORR-ghenn</i>
yesterday	<b>gestern</b> <i>GHESS-tehrn</i>
the day before yesterday	<b>vorgestern</b> <i>FOHR-ghess-tehrn</i>
one week	<b>eine Woche</b> <i>eye-neh VOH-[ch]eh</i>
next week	<b>nächste Woche</b> <i>n[ae][ch]s-teh VOH-[ch]eh</i>
last week	<b>letzte Woche</b> <i>lets-teh VOH-[ch]eh</i>

## MONTHS OF THE YEAR

January	<b>Januar</b> <i>YAHNN-oo-ahr</i>
February	<b>Februar</b> <i>FEHH-broo-ahr</i>
March	<b>März</b> <i>M[ae]rts</i>
April	<b>April</b> <i>ah-PRILL</i>
May	<b>Mai</b> <i>Maih</i>
June	<b>Juni</b> <i>YOU-nee</i>
July	<b>Juli</b> <i>YOU-lee</i>
August	<b>August</b> <i>ou-GHOOSST</i>

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September

**September**

*zepp-TEMM-behr*

October

**Oktober**

*okk-TOH-behr*

November

**November**

*no-FEMM-behr*

December

**Dezember**

*deh-TSEMM-behr*

next month

**nächsten Monat**

*n[ae][ch]s-ten MOH-naht*

last month

**letzten Monat**

*lets-ten MOH-naht*

## SEASONS OF THE YEAR

spring

**Frühling**

*FR[UE]H-linng*

summer

**Sommer**

*ZOMM-ehr*

autumn

**Herbst**

*Herrbst*

winter

**Winter**

*VINN-tehr*

## Falsche Freunde

If you try winging it with Denglish, beware of false cognates, known as "*falsche Freunde*" (false friends)—German words that sound like English ones, but with different meanings. Here are some examples of false cognates.

<b>bald</b>	soon
<b>kahl</b>	bald
<b>Menü</b>	today's special
<b>Speisekarte</b>	menu
<b>Gift</b>	poison
<b>Geschenk</b>	gift
<b>Billion</b>	trillion
<b>Milliarde</b>	billion
<b>Puff</b>	bordello
<b>Hauch / Zug</b>	puff
<b>konsequent</b>	consistent(ly)
<b>folglich</b>	consequently
<b>Dom</b>	cathedral
<b>Kuppel</b>	dome
<b>aktuell</b>	current
<b>eigentlich, wirklich</b>	actual
<b>also</b>	thus, therefore
<b>auch</b>	also
<b>Art</b>	kind, type
<b>Kunst</b>	art
<b>Bad</b>	bath, spa
<b>schlecht</b>	bad
<b>blenden</b>	dazzle, blind
<b>mischen</b>	blend
<b>brav</b>	well behaved
<b>tapfer</b>	brave

## GERMAN GRAMMAR BASICS

Like English, German is a Germanic language. Both languages have the same basic alphabet of 26 letters. German has three additional letters with the addition of the umlaut (the two dots over the a, o and u). German is a very phonetic language, meaning words are generally (though not always) pronounced the way they look.

### THE ALPHABET

German is a straightforward language with a simple alphabet. It has 29 letters: all of the same letters found in the English alphabet, plus three additional vowels formed by adding an umlaut (two dots) over a, o and u. The umlaut changes the pronunciation of these vowels in a small but important way.

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
a	a	ah (as in "fAther")
ä	aeh	aeh (as in "hEAven")
b	beh	b (as in "brave")
c	tseh	k (as in "caviar"); ("ch" at beginning of word: hard "k" sound (as in "character"), "ch" in the middle or at the end of a word: softer sound (as in Scottish pronunciation of "Loch"))
d	deh	d (as in "day")
e	ehh	eh (as in "help")
f	eff	f (as in "friend")
g	gheh	gh (as in "ghost")
h	hah	h (as in "hand")
		<i>stresses all vowels; for combinations with "c" see letter "c"</i>
i	eeh	ee (as in "bee")
j	yott	y (as in "yellow")
k	kah	c (as in "can")
l	ell	l (as in "lake")
m	emm	m (as in "mother")

Letter	Name	Pronunciation
n	enn	n (as in "name")
o	ohh	o (as in "often")
ö	oeh	u (as in "burger")
p	peh	p (as in "page"); the combination "ph" is pronounced as "f" (as in "philosophy")
q	coo	q (as in "quest")
r	err	r (as in "ERRor"); however, the German "r" has to be spoken as a rolling "r"
s	ess	s (as in "stay"); the combination "st" at the beginning of a word is pronounced as "sh" (as in "shuttle"), while in the middle or at the end of a word it is pronounced as "st" (as in "stick"); the combination "sch" is pronounced as "sh" (as in "shelf")
t	teh	t (as in "tea"); the combination "tio" is pronounced as "tsee-yoh" (as in the German word "Aktion" - akk-tsee-YOHN)
u	ooh	ooh
ü	ueh	ueh (a slight variant of the "ooh" sound)
v	fauh	f (as in "front")
w	vehh	v (as in "value")
x	ikks	x (as in "extra")
y	YP-see-lohn	ueh (see letter "ü")
z	tsett	ts (as in "iTS")

## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

### Vowels

a	ah as the a in father: Vater (FAH-tehr)
ä	eh like the ea in heaven: hätte (hat-teh)
au	ow as in cow: Haus (hows)
ai	aye as in "All in favor, say aye": Mai (my)
e	long as the a in tame: zehn (tsayn)
eu	oy as in toy: euch (oy[ch])

i	ee as in feed
o	oh as in boat
ö	ew as in blue
u	oo as in coo
ü	like the oo in cool

### Consonants

b	as in bean: Boot ( <i>boht</i> )
ch	like the "ch" in loch (as in Loch Ness)
d	as the d in day
f	as in fox: Feuer ( <i>FOY-er</i> )
g	as in guy: Geist ( <i>guyst</i> )
h	as in hay: hallo ( <i>HALL-oh</i> )
j	pronounced like the "y" as in yes: Ja ( <i>yahh</i> )
k	as in English: Kilometer ( <i>KEE-lo-may-ter</i> )
l	as in English: links
m	as in English: Mai ( <i>my</i> )
n	as in English: nein ( <i>nine</i> )
p	as in English: Pass ( <i>pahs</i> )
q	qu is pronounced as kv: Quittung ( <i>KVih-toong</i> )
r	as in English but more rolled: rot ( <i>rote</i> )
s	at the beginning of words (followed by a vowel) pronounced as z; in the middle and at or near the end of words as in English: selbst ( <i>ZELpst</i> )
st, sch	like the "sh" in shoe: Stein ( <i>shtine</i> ); Schule ( <i>SHOO-la</i> )
ß	like English "s": Straße ( <i>SHTRAH-sseh</i> )
t	as in English: Tee ( <i>tay</i> )
v	like the "f" in fox, but more explosive: verwirrt ( <i>fehr-VIRRT</i> )
w	like the "v" in vase: weiss ( <i>vice</i> )
x	like English x: extra ( <i>EX-tra</i> )
z	like "ts" or the "zz" in pizza: Zoo ( <i>tsoh</i> )

## WORD PRONUNCIATION

Syllables in words are also accented in a standard pattern. Generally, in words with two syllables the first syllable is stressed. For longer words, an accent mark is shown to indicate the stress.

### Ending in -ieren

studieren *shtoo-DEE-ren*

### Loan word

Computer *com-PEW-ter*

### Compound adjective with hin, her, da or wo

damit *da-MIT*

## GENDER, ADJECTIVES, MODIFIERS

Each noun takes a masculine, feminine or neutral gender and is most often accompanied by a masculine, feminine or neutral definite article, like the English “the” (*der, die* or *das*), or by an indefinite article, like the English “a” or “an” (*ein* or *eine*). Definite articles (“the”), indefinite articles (“a,” “an”), and related adjectives change their endings depending on whether they are the subject, direct or indirect object, or possessive. For example, “*Ich bin ein Mann*” (I am a man) becomes “*Ich sehe einen Mann*” (I see a man) because “Mann” is the subject of the first sentence and the direct object of the second. (What is being seen? The man.)

### The Definite Article (“the”)

	Masculine	Feminine	Neutral
Singular	<i>der</i> Hund (the dog)	<i>die</i> Katze (the cat)	<i>das</i> Tier (the animal)
Plural	<i>die</i> Hunde (the dogs)	<i>die</i> Katzen (the cats)	<i>die</i> Tiere (the animals)

### The Indefinite Article (“a” or “an”)

	Masculine	Feminine	Neutral
Singular	<i>ein</i> Hund (a dog)	<i>eine</i> Katze (a cat)	<i>ein</i> Tier (an animal)

## PERSONAL PRONOUNS

### LIEBEN: "to love"

I love.	<i>Ich</i> liebe.	LEE-beh
You (singular familiar) love.	<i>Du</i> liebst.	leebst
He / She / It loves. You (singular formal) love.	<i>Er / Sie / Es</i> liebt. <i>Sie</i> lieben.	leebt / LEE-ben
We love.	<i>Wir</i> lieben.	LEE-ben
You (plural familiar) love.	<i>Ihr</i> liebt.	leebt
They / You (plural formal) love.	<i>Sie / Sie</i> lieben.	LEE-ben

### Hey, you!

German has two words for "you"—*du*, spoken among friends and familiars, and *Sie*, used among strangers or as a sign of respect toward authority figures. When speaking with a stranger, expect to use *Sie*, unless you are invited to do otherwise. The second-person familiar plural form (*ihr*) is used among friends and family. The second-person formal plural is the same as the second-person formal singular: *Sie*. Both the singular and plural forms of the second-person formal are always written with an upper-case S: "*Sie*."

## REGULAR VERB CONJUGATIONS

Most German verbs end in "-en" (*lieben, geben, kommen, etc.*). To conjugate the present tense of regular verbs, drop the -en and add the following endings:

**Present Tense**

<b>Regular verbs</b>	<b>GEHEN "to go"</b>	
<b>I go.</b>	<b>Ich gehe.</b>	<b>GHEH-heh</b>
<b>You (singular familiar) go.</b>	<b>Du gehst.</b>	<b>ghehst</b>
<b>He / She / It goes.</b>	<b>Er / Sie (singular feminine) / Es geht.</b>	<b>gheht</b>
<b>You (singular formal) go.</b>	<b>Sie (singular formal) gehen.</b>	<b>GHEH-hen</b>
<b>We go.</b>	<b>Wir gehen.</b>	<b>GHEH-hen</b>
<b>You (plural familiar) go.</b>	<b>Sie gehen.</b>	<b>GHEH-hen</b>
<b>They / You (plural formal) go.</b>	<b>Sie / Sie gehen.</b>	<b>GHEH-hen</b>

**Simple Past Tense**

These are the simple past tense conjugations for regular verbs.

<b>Regular verbs</b>	<b>LIEBEN "To Live"</b>	
<b>I lived.</b>	<b>Ich lebte.</b>	<b>LEHB-te</b>
<b>You (singular familiar) lived.</b>	<b>Du lebstest.</b>	<b>LAYb-test</b>
<b>He / She / It lived.</b>	<b>Er / Sie / Es lebte.</b>	<b>LAYb-tah</b>
<b>You lived.</b> (singular formal)	<b>Sie lebten.</b>	<b>LAYb-tahn</b>
<b>We lived.</b>	<b>Wir lebten.</b>	<b>LAYb-ten</b>
<b>You (plural familiar) lived.</b>	<b>Ihr lebtet.</b>	<b>LAYb-tet</b>
<b>They / You (plural formal) lived.</b>	<b>Sie / Sie lebten.</b>	<b>LAYb-ten</b>

### The Future

For novice German speakers, the easiest way to express the future is to conjugate the verb WERDEN (to go) + any infinitive (“I am going to speak”, “you are going to speak”, etc.).

I am going to speak.	Ich <i>werde</i> reden.	VER-de
You (singular familiar) are going to speak.	Du <i>wirst</i> reden.	Virrst
He / She / It is going to speak.	Er / Sie / Es <i>wird</i> reden.	Virrd
You (singular formal) are going to speak.	Sie <i>werden</i> reden.	Verr-den
We are going to speak.	Wir <i>werden</i> reden.	Verr-den
You (plural familiar) are going to speak.	Ihr <i>werdet</i> reden.	Verr-det
They / You (plural formal) are going to speak.	Sie / Sie <i>werden</i> reden.	Vehrr-den

**TO BE OR NOT TO BE (SEIN)**

The German verb for “to be,” SEIN, is irregular. It is conjugated as follows:

**Present Tense****SEIN “To Be”**

<b>I am.</b>	<b>Ich <i>bin</i>.</b>	<b>bin</b>
<b>You (singular, familiar) are.</b>	<b>Du <i>bist</i>.</b>	<b>bist</b>
<b>He / She / It is.</b>	<b>Er / Sie / Es <i>ist</i>.</b>	<b>ist</b>
<b>You (singular formal) are.</b>	<b>Sie <i>sind</i>.</b>	<b>zint</b>
<b>We are.</b>	<b>Wir <i>sind</i>.</b>	<b>zint</b>
<b>You (plural familiar) are.</b>	<b>Ihr <i>seid</i>.</b>	<b>zeit</b>
<b>They / You (plural formal) are.</b>	<b>Sie <i>sind</i>.</b>	<b>zint</b>

**Simple Past Tense****SEIN “To Be”**

<b>I was.</b>	<b>Ich <i>war</i>.</b>	<b>vahr</b>
<b>You were.</b>	<b>Du <i>warst</i>.</b>	<b>vahrst</b>
<b>He / She / It was.</b>	<b>Er / Sie / Es <i>war</i>.</b>	<b>vahr</b>
<b>You (formal) were.</b>	<b>Sie <i>waren</i>.</b>	<b>VAHR-en</b>
<b>We were.</b>	<b>Wir <i>waren</i>.</b>	<b>VAHR-en</b>
<b>You were.</b>	<b>Ihr <i>wart</i>.</b>	<b>vahrt</b>
<b>They / You (plural formal) were.</b>	<b>Sie <i>waren</i>.</b>	<b>VAHR-en</b>

## IRREGULAR VERBS

German has numerous irregular verbs that stray from the standard -EN conjugations. Rather than bog you down with too much grammar, we're providing the present tense conjugations for the most commonly used irregular verbs.

### HABEN "To Have"

I have.	Ich <i>habe</i> .	HAH-beh
You (singular familiar) have.	Du <i>hast</i> .	hahsst
He / She / It has.	Er / Sie / Es <i>hat</i> .	haht
You (singular formal) have.	Sie <i>haben</i> .	HAH-ben
We have.	Wir <i>haben</i> .	HAH-ben
You (plural familiar) have.	Ihr <i>habt</i> .	hahbt
They / You (plural formal) have.	Sie / Sie <i>haben</i> .	HAH-ben

## Haben

*Haben* means "to have," but it's also used to describe conditions such as hunger and thirst. For example:

**Ich habe Hunger.** I'm hungry.

(Literally: I have hunger.)

**Ich habe Durst.** I'm thirsty.

(Literally: I have thirst.)

## SPRECHEN "To Speak, To Talk"

<b>I speak.</b>	<b>Ich spreche.</b>	<b>SHPRE[CH]-eh</b>
<b>You (singular familiar) speak.</b>	<b>Du sprichst.</b>	<b>shpri[ch]st</b>
<b>He / She / It speaks.</b>	<b>Er / Sie / Es spricht.</b>	<b>shpri[ch]t</b>
<b>You (singular formal) speak.</b>	<b>Sie sprechen.</b>	<b>SHPRE[CH]-en</b>
<b>We speak.</b>	<b>Wir sprechen.</b>	<b>SHPRE[CH]-en</b>
<b>You (plural familiar) speak.</b>	<b>Ihr sprecht.</b>	<b>shpre[ch]t</b>
<b>They / You (plural formal) speak.</b>	<b>Sie / Sie sprechen.</b>	<b>SHPRE[CH]-en</b>

## WOLLEN "To Want"

<b>I want.</b>	<b>Ich will.</b>	<b>vill</b>
<b>You (singular familiar) want.</b>	<b>Du willst.</b>	<b>villsst</b>
<b>He / She / It wants.</b>	<b>Er / Sie / Es will.</b>	<b>vill</b>
<b>You (singular formal) want.</b>	<b>Sie wollen.</b>	<b>VOHLL-en</b>
<b>We want.</b>	<b>Wir wollen.</b>	<b>VOHLL-en</b>
<b>You (plural familiar) want.</b>	<b>Ihr wollt.</b>	<b>vohllt</b>
<b>They / You (plural formal) want.</b>	<b>Sie / Sie wollen.</b>	<b>VOHLL-en</b>

## KOENNEN "To Be Able"

I can.	Ich kann.	KHANN
You (singular familiar) can.	Du kannst.	khannst
He / She / It can.	Er / Sie / Es kann.	khann
You (singular formal) can.	Sie können.	KH[OE]NN-en
We can.	Wir können.	KH[OE]NN-en
You (plural familiar) can.	Ihr könnt.	kh[oe]nnt
They / You (plural formal) can.	Sie / Sie können.	KH[OE]NN-en

**KENNEN vs. WISSEN:** There are two ways to say "To Know" in German: *kennen* and *wissen*. *Kennen* is to know someone or something, while *wissen* is to know a fact. For example, "*Ich kenne Peter.*" (I know Peter.) BUT "*Ich weiß, wo das Restaurant ist.*" (I know where the restaurant is.)

## KENNEN "To Know" (someone)

I know.	Ich kenne.	KHENN-eh
You (singular familiar) know.	Du kennst.	khennst
He / She / It knows.	Er / Sie / Es kennt.	khennt
You (singular formal) know.	Sie kennen.	KHENN-en
We know.	Wir kennen.	KHENN-en
You (plural familiar) know.	Ihr kennt.	khennt
They / You (plural formal) know.	Sie / Sie kennen.	KHENN-en

## WISSEN "To Know" (something)

I know.	Ich weiß.	vice
You (singular familiar) know.	Du weißt.	vyesst
He / She / It knows.	Er / Sie / Es weiß.	vice
You (singular formal) know.	Sie wissen.	VISS-en
We know.	Wir wissen.	VISS-en
You (plural familiar) know.	Ihr wisst.	visst
They / You (plural formal) know.	Sie / Sie wissen.	VISS-en

### Stem-changing Verbs

Some irregular verbs change their stem in addition to their ending. For example:

#### ESSEN (To Eat)

Ich esse (I eat)

Du isst (You eat)

Er / Sie / Es isst (He / She / It eats)

Wir essen (We eat)

Ihr esst (You eat) (informal)

Sie / Sie essen (You eat / They eat) (formal / pl.)

Notice that the stem only changes in the first three conjugations (I, you, and he/she/it). All of the plural forms are conjugated like regular verbs by adding the correct ending to the stem.

## Gefallen

To say you like something, use the verb *gefallen*. *Gefallen* is different from other verbs because the person doing the liking is the subject of the sentence, not the object. For example, to say you like music, you would say:

**Mir gefällt Musik.** I like music.  
(Literally: Music is pleasing to me.)

When what is liked is plural, the verb is plural:

**Mir gefallen die Blumen.** I like the flowers.  
(Literally: The flowers are pleasing to me.)

The person doing the liking is represented by an indirect object pronoun placed in front of the verb, as illustrated below. Remember, *gefallen* can only be conjugated in two ways: *gefällt* (for singular things that are liked) and *gefallen* (for plural things that are liked). The pronoun changes to reflect who is doing the liking.

### GEFALLEN "To Like"

I like Germany.	<i>Mir gefällt Deutschland.</i>	geh-FELT
You (informal singular) like Germany.	<i>Dir gefällt Deutschland.</i>	geh-FELT
He / She/ It likes Germany.	<i>Ihm / Ihr / Ihm gefällt Deutschland.</i>	geh-FELT
You (formal singular) like Germany.	<i>Ihnen gefällt Deutschland.</i>	geh-FELT
We like Germany.	<i>Uns gefällt Deutschland.</i>	geh-FELT
You (informal plural) like Germany.	<i>Euch gefällt Deutschland.</i>	geh-FELT
They / You (formal plural) like Germany.	<i>Ihnen gefällt Deutschland.</i>	geh-FELT

## REFLEXIVE VERBS

German has many reflexive verbs (when the subject and object both refer to the same person or thing). The following common verbs are used reflexively: *sich anziehen* (to get dressed, literally to dress oneself), *sich rasieren* (to shave, literally to shave oneself), *sich duschen* (to shower, literally to shower oneself), and *sich treffen* (to meet, literally to meet one another).

### SICH ANZIEHEN "To Dress"

<b>I get dressed.</b>	Ich ziehe mich an.	tsee-he mee[ch]UN
<b>You (singular familiar) get dressed.</b>	Du ziehst dich an.	tseeh-st di[ch] UN
<b>He / She / It gets dressed.</b>	Er / Sie / Es zieht sich an.	tseet si[ch] UN
<b>You (singular formal) get dressed.</b>	Sie ziehen sich an.	tsee-hen si[ch] UN
<b>We get dressed.</b>	Wir ziehen -uns an.	tsee-hen oonns UN
<b>You (plural familiar) get dressed.</b>	Ihr zieht euch an.	tseet oy[ch] UN
<b>They / You (plural formal) get dressed.</b>	Sie / Sie ziehen sich an.	tsee-hen si[ch] UN