

A Foundation Course in Reading German

By Howard Martin, revised and expanded as an open online textbook by Alan Ng



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This open textbook is currently maintained by Dr. Alan Ng to support the University of Wisconsin online course German 391.

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This textbook guides a learner who has no previous German experience to gain the ability to accurately understand formal written German prose, aided only by a comprehensive dictionary.

Two Things You Will Need to Succeed

1. You are assumed to have no previous German experience, but thorough competence in English grammar and syntax. If you need help with English grammar while working through this textbook, we recommend, for example,

English Grammar for Students of German, by Cecile Zorach, Charlotte Melin, and Adam Oberlin, Olivia and Hill Press (any edition).

2. You will also need access to a comprehensive, full-sized German-English dictionary to succeed with this material. Students in University of Wisconsin German 391 typically need a dictionary equivalent to the *Oxford-Duden German Dictionary*, which weighs in at over 5 pounds with over 1,700 full-size pages.

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Howard Martin's "Preface" to the last print edition, 2001

This book's third edition is a field-tested manual designed to give individuals, no matter what their field of interest, the basic tools and knowledge to read German. It does not pretend to cover all of the rules of German grammar and syntax nor to address in detail exceptions to those rules. Rather it focuses on the essential elements of grammar, syntax and word formation drawing on similarities to and differences from English. With this focus, it aims to enable individuals to read and translate materials related to their interests with the aid of a dictionary or dictionaries in specialized fields. The material in this manual is suitable for use in distance learning courses. The format of the book owes much to the late Hubert Jannach's (Professor Emeritus, Purdue University) book, *German for Reading Knowledge*, which I used for many years to teach graduate students from humanities, social studies, and natural sciences departments. Its style, I believe, is my peculiar own. The motivation to write it came from my students and particularly from Professors Lester Seifert and Richard Ringler who stimulated my interest in investigating the many similarities between English and the other Germanic languages. Further, I owe much to Carol Crary and Kris Falk, who typed, retyped and formatted the first edition. My thanks go to former graduate students Friedemann Weidauer and Sue Tyson for developing many of the exercises, to the latter for her field testing and editing the second edition, and more recently to graduate students Hope Hague, for her suggestions, and Alan Ng, for incorporating them in this third edition. Last but not least, my thanks go to my wife, Cathie, who sacrificed much to enable me to continue my schooling.

Unit: Introduction

1. Introduction

Objectives

As you work through this textbook you will:

- Gain enough grammatical and syntactical information about the German language to enable you to read any desired text with the aid of a dictionary.
- Apply patterns of word formation to accelerate the process of learning vocabulary.
- Practice small-scale translation as the necessary foundation for dealing with more complex readings.

Relationship between German and English

Both of these languages belong to the Germanic family of languages. They share an evolutionary origin and have many common features, although just like their relatives Danish, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish, they have since diverged in various ways.

These examples show how close the vocabulary relationship can be:

Eng. *sing*, Dutch *zingen*, Ger. *singen*, Dan. *synge*, Sw. *sjunga*

Eng. *broad*, Dutch *breed*, Ger. *breit*, Dan. *bred*, Sw. *bred*, Nor. *breid*

You can see that **some** vocabulary will be easy to learn. The **syntactical** differences between modern German and modern English will be more challenging, and they will occupy us for most of this textbook.

Learning Vocabulary

For some individuals, this is perhaps the most difficult of tasks, and it is one that many perceive as particularly difficult with German. The following points are made to counter that perception:

- Like English, German borrows words from other languages, and often either from the same source that English does, or directly from English:

Auto, Hotel, Manager, Orange, Handling

- There are many easily recognizable words, called cognates, such as:

Musik, Literatur, Maschine, Kaffee, Tee, Bier, Traktion

These words have the same meaning as their English cognates, and indeed there are historical relationships between them, but over time they have become spelled and pronounced slightly differently in the two languages.

- Then there are cognates which have undergone considerable sound changes but the meaning of which can often be guessed correctly:

Pfeffer, Apfel, helfen, Wasser, tanzen, trinken, Bett, machen, and Ralleystreifen!

- German also builds words from roots or stems of common words just as we do in English to a lesser extent. For example, in English, these two series of words all share the same roots:

bind, bound, binder, bindery, band, binding

flow, influence, confluence, fluent, flowing, float

German has similar examples but you will find many more examples of this way of word building as you learn more about the language. Let's use the German equivalents of the above:

binden, gebunden, Binder, Binderei, Band, Bindung

fließen, Einfluß, Zusammenfluß, fließend (for both fluent and flowing), Floß and we can add: Flüssigkeit (the liquid) or flüssig (liquid) and beeinflussen (to influence)!

- German also uses many compound nouns, more than English does. You will find that there is a logic to this compounding, even though some of the long words in German often cause consternation. Examples:

Unterseeboot = submarine (undersea boat)

Arbeitsmethode = work method

Jahreszeit = season (year's time)

Vorderradantrieb = front wheel drive

(*Vorder* = front / fore, *Rad* = wheel, *Antrieb* = drive).

And how about this?

Flugzeugabwehrkanone = Flak!

(*Flugzeug* = airplane; *Abwehr* = defense; *Kanone* = cannon/gun, hence: air defense artillery)

We will be dealing with word formation in a number of the chapters in this book in order to help you learn vocabulary and understand how German builds much of its vocabulary.

Unit: Introduction

2. Tips for Using this Textbook

A few tips to help you make the most of this open, online textbook:

1. Familiarize yourself with the Contents links on the right side of this page. Learn the difference between a **unit** and the multiple **sections** within each unit.
 - Click the gray triangle ► next to each unit heading to open up the sections within that unit. Click a section title to go directly to that section.
 - Click a unit heading to reach the printer-friendly compilation of that entire unit. To print that unit then, simply use your browser's "Print" command to get a print-optimized edition of the entire unit.
2. For reading online, the best way to read is to read each section separately. You can use either the section-specific links in the Contents menu (see above), or use the "Next" and "Previous" links at the top and bottom of every section to move through the sections in sequence.
3. Make note of the big white "Search" box above, and note that that is always available. This feature may come in very handy as you work through this material.
4. Note the "Recent Changes" link above, also always available. That will show you an automatically-generated list of textbook sections that have been recently revised, so that you can occasionally check there to see if something you already studied has since been revised.
5. Make sure you noticed the "Two Things You Will Need to Succeed" described on the "**About this Book**" "cover" of this book.

Unit: 1: Basics

1. Objectives

In this unit, in the context of simple sentences that only involve the nominative and accusative cases, you will learn how to:

- Identify the case, number and gender of nouns, pronouns, definite articles, and indefinite articles.
- Identify the subject, verb, and object.
- Decide whether a sentence is a statement, a yes/no question, or a question-word question.
- Select the appropriate English verb tense to use to translate various German present-tense and simple-past verb tense usages.

Unit: 1: Basics

2. Nouns

Unlike English nouns, all German nouns are capitalized. This is very useful as you learn to read German. You can easily identify the nouns in these two sentences:

Der Mann hat einen Bruder und eine Schwester, aber keine Eltern mehr. Die Frau hat keine Schwestern und keine Brüder, aber zwei Tanten.

Of course, the first words of each sentence are also capitalized. *Der* and *Die* are articles, not nouns.

Unit: 1: Basics

3. Noun Gender and the Nominative Case

German nouns have gender, i.e., they are masculine, feminine or neuter, but memorizing the gender of every noun is not particularly important for reading German. What is of significance is that the definite articles (the words for “the”) differ according to gender and undergo changes according to the role the word plays in a sentence. (More on this later.)

For example, in the **nominative** case (used when nouns are sentence subjects), the articles are:

Masculine:	der Tisch (the table)
Feminine:	die Feder (the feather, quill pen)
Neuter:	das Bett (the bed)

It is recommended that, as you learn the nouns you choose to memorize, you learn each noun **with its definite article**, because there are only a few cases when you can determine what the gender is by simply looking at the noun. Some of these exceptions are:

- Nouns that end in **-chen** or **-lein** are neuter. These suffixes denote diminutives, e.g. *das Städtchen* (little town).
- Humans and animals that are obviously male or female **usually** have the equivalent gender. For example,

<i>der Mann</i> (the man)	<i>die Frau</i> (the woman)
<i>der Bulle</i> (the bull)	<i>die Kuh</i> (the cow)
<i>der Vater</i> (the father)	<i>die Mutter</i> (the mother)

- All nouns that end in **-ei**, **-heit**, **-ie**, **-in**, **-keit**, **-schaft**, **-tät**, **-ung** are feminine. For example:

<i>die Bäckerei</i> (bakery)	<i>die Freundlichkeit</i> (friendliness)
<i>die Tragödie</i> (tragedy)	<i>die Landschaft</i> (landscape)
<i>die Gesundheit</i> (health)	<i>die Zeitung</i> (the newspaper)
<i>die Lehrerin</i> (woman teacher)	<i>die Universität</i> (university)

Unit: 1: Basics

4. Noun Plurals

The most important thing to learn about German noun plurals is that, unlike in English, how a noun is spelled is neither an easy nor a reliable way to tell whether it

is singular or plural. Instead you will need to rely on other reading cues introduced over the first four units of this textbook.

In English, noun plurals are generally formed by adding **-s** or **-es**, but there are some exceptions such as **men, geese, oxen, children, fish, and deer** where respectively we have: changed a stem vowel; added **-en**; added **-ren**; or – as in the last two examples – where we have made no change at all. Whereas in German, very few nouns form their plurals with an **-s**. Those that do are usually borrowed foreign words such as *Hotel, Auto, Restaurant*; these have plural forms ending with **-s**: *zwei Hotels*.

German nouns use a very wide range of plural forms, much wider than the range of the English "exceptions" given above. And what's more fundamentally disturbing to our English habit of relying on noun spellings is the fact that German nouns change their spelling for more reasons than just their singular or plural status. (You'll learn about other reasons for noun spelling changes in upcoming units). So the bottom line for readers of German is that you cannot simply rely on a noun's spelling. Instead you must learn to pay attention to the context of the noun, for example the particular form of the noun's article, whether a verb is conjugated for a singular or plural subject, etc. By Unit 4 of this course you will have learned all the possible clues you can look for to determine whether a noun is singular or plural. You will also discover that it is faster and easier to "read" the surrounding articles and word endings that modify a noun (since there are only a handful of articles and endings to learn) than it is to consult your dictionary for every single noun to check what the noun's spelling might be telling you. Use your dictionary for this purpose only as a last resort, because that is the source most likely to mislead you.

However, it is important to gradually become familiar with the types of German spelling changes that happen to plural nouns so that you can look up nouns in your dictionary, where nouns are listed only under their singular spelling. German-English dictionaries conventionally display two spelling variants or endings for every noun: the first is typically the genitive-case spelling (more about that in Unit 2), and the second is the plural spelling. Consult your dictionary to check its formatting conventions.

Compare:

der Mann (man)

die Männer (men)

die Frau (woman)

die Frauen (women)

das Ergebnis (result)

die Ergebnisse (results)

Note: The definite article in the plural (nominative case) is *die*, regardless of the gender of the noun.

Unit: 1: Basics

5. The Verbs *Haben* and *Sein*

The verbs *sein* (to be) and *haben* (to have) are two of the most common verbs in German and therefore you must memorize their forms. *Sein* and *haben* are the infinitive forms of the verbs. "Infinitive forms" are important to know since dictionaries list verbs in that form.

Present Tense Forms

The verb *sein* is highly irregular in its forms, just as is its English counterpart "to be." In the present tense it is conjugated as follows:

SINGULAR	PLURAL
<i>ich bin</i> (I am)	<i>wir sind</i> (we are)
<i>du bist</i> (you are)	<i>ihr seid</i> (you are)
<i>er ist</i> (he is)	<i>sie sind</i> (they are)
<i>sie ist</i> (she is)	<i>Sie sind</i> (you are)
<i>es ist</i> (it is)	

NOTE:

- du* and *ihr* are the informal pronouns for "you" and are used only with family and friends. *Sie* (always capitalized) is the formal "you" and is used for **both** the singular and plural meanings of formal "you." Be sure to clarify in your translation that you understood which "you" meaning was conveyed in the German original in terms of both number and social level.
- Unlike English, which always uses the pronoun "it" for objects that are not equivalent to people, in German the third person singular pronouns, *er*, *sie* and *es*, are also used to refer to masculine, feminine, or neuter nouns. For example: *der Tisch* (table) would be referred to as *er*, or *die Wand* (wall) as *sie*.
- It is helpful to remember that *ist* is always singular. And *sind* is always plural, although remember that the pronoun *Sie* can refer to one or more people. These rules let you quickly identify whether the subject of the sentence is singular or plural, simply by looking at the verb conjugation.

In the present tense, the verb *haben* is conjugated as follows:

SINGULAR

ich habe (I have)
du hast (you have)
er hat (he has)
sie hat (she has)
es hat (it has)

PLURAL

wir haben (we have)
ihr habt (you have)
sie haben (they have)
Sie haben (you have)

Note: Verb forms ending in **-en** are always plural (although *Sie* sometimes refers to a single person). This applies for all verbs except *sein*, so it is useful to memorize this right away.

Simple Past Forms

sein (to be)

SINGULAR

ich war (was)
du warst
er war
sie war
es war

PLURAL

wir waren (were)
ihr wart
sie waren
Sie waren

haben (to have)

SINGULAR

ich hatte (had)
du hattest
er hatte
sie hatte
es hatte

PLURAL

wir hatten
ihr hattet
sie hatten
Sie hatten

Unit: 1: Basics

6. Understanding Present Tense

Translating the German present tense is not always straightforward, because in English we express present tense in a variety of subtly different ways. Let's take the

sentence, "*Das Kind hat eine Krankheit,*" as our example. In English this may be translated in three different ways, depending on the larger context of the statement: "The child has an illness," "The child does have an illness," or "The child is having an illness." As you progress to translating sentences with more context provided, be sure to keep in mind that English present tense is more complicated than German, and thus you should consider which of the English options is the most suitable for each particular sentence.

Furthermore, in a German present-tense sentence, time information might be provided that calls for a different English verb tense in your translation. For example:

Das Kind hat ab morgen Fieber.

The child will have a fever starting tomorrow.

Das Kind hat seit gestern Fieber.

The child has had a fever since yesterday.

The additional time information "*ab morgen*" (starting tomorrow) or "*seit gestern*" (since yesterday) is the key to deciding whether a form of English present tense, English future tense, or English present-perfect tense is the appropriate translation of the German present-tense verb.

German present tense **never** conveys a past, completed event. Therefore English past tense is never a translation option for German present tense. Note that in the second example above, which calls for English present-perfect tense, the child still has a fever in the **present** moment.

Unit: 1: Basics

7. The Accusative Case of Nouns

The concept of cases such as nominative and accusative, etc. is actually familiar to English speakers, although many are often not conscious of it. Note, for example, how our nominative pronouns "he" and "she" change to "him" and "her" when they are used in the accusative case. If you would like more explanation of the concept of cases (or other grammatical concepts), it often helps students to review English grammar using any English grammar reference book.

In German, just as in English, the accusative case is used primarily for the direct objects of sentences. For example, in "They hit the ball," the direct object is "the

ball.” The German definite article changes in accusative case **only** for those direct objects which are masculine, as the following chart indicates:

CASE	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE (SUBJECT)	<i>der</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>die</i>
ACCUSATIVE (DIRECT OBJECT)	<i>den</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>die</i>

Our sentence in German then is: *Sie schlagen **den** Ball* (They hit the ball). In vocabulary lists you will often see that *Ball* is listed as ***der* Ball**, which is its nominative-case singular form.

Unit: 1: Basics

8. The Indefinite Article *ein*

The German word for “a,” “an,” or “one” is *ein*, and like the definite article, the various endings it takes can help you identify case, gender, and number of the following **noun phrase**. Thus, taking the examples *Tisch*, *Feder* and *Bett*, we have in the nominative and accusative cases:

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	<i>ein Tisch</i>	<i>eine Feder</i>	<i>ein Bett</i>	<i>keine Tische</i>
ACCUSATIVE	<i>einen Tisch</i>	<i>eine Feder</i>	<i>ein Bett</i>	<i>keine Federn</i>

There is no plural of *ein*, obviously, but to use *kein-* (“no”, “not a”) shows us that the *-e* ending on indefinite articles can indicate either a plural or feminine status. For example: *keine Betten* (no beds).

Unit: 1: Basics

9. Word Order

The various forms of the articles, both definite and indefinite, are important indicators of the function a noun plays in a given sentence. Consider that in English we use only one form for all cases (“a”, “an”, “the”). This allows German to have a **more flexible word order** (syntax) than English. In English we usually begin sentences with the subject, e.g. “The dog has the ball,” and that English word-order rule is necessary for us to understand that “the dog” is the subject and “the ball” is what is being hit.

However, in German, there is no expectation at all that the subject must come first (although it often does). These two German sentences share the same meaning:

Der Hund hat **den** Ball.

Den Ball hat **der** Hund.

The reader (and listener) does notice the word order, but first pays attention to the articles in order to understand the sentence. In this case the article *der* for *Mann* indicates that *der Mann* must be the subject, and likewise the article *den* for *Ball* indicates that *den Ball* must be the direct object. Changing the word order in English fundamentally changes the meaning, but not so in German.

Take another example: “*Erst die Frau, dann den Mann beißt der böse Hund.*” If you ignore the case signals given to you by the definite articles and rely on standard English word order, then you come up with the amusingly ridiculous meaning: “First the woman, then the man bites the bad dog.” In fact the sentence means “The bad dog bites the woman first, then the man.”

Side note: A subtle difference in emphasis is expressed between the two variants of the first example above:

Der Hund hat den Ball.

The dog has the ball. [without a particular emphasis]

Den Ball hat der Hund.

The **ball** is what the dog has.

[or:] The dog has the **ball**.

[or:] The dog has **this** ball.

Any of those four translations could be acceptable for the above two German sentences, given no further context, but once you begin working with longer passages that provide more context, your sensitivity to differences like this can help you make better sense of a text.

Verb in Second Position

In German, the main verb in a statement is always in second position, no matter how we begin the sentence: *Morgen früh lande ich in Frankfurt* (Tomorrow morning I will land in Frankfurt).

This absolute rule becomes a very powerful tool for you once you begin encountering longer sentences. Practice the skill of marking up German sentences you encounter to recognize 1) the part before the verb, which therefore must be a **single** unit of meaning, 2) the verb, which – also usefully for you – will always be a verb form appropriately conjugated to match the sentence subject, and 3) the part after the verb, which may include **several** units of meaning.

Yes / No Questions

Yes / no questions always begin with the verb:

Sind Sie gesund? (Are you healthy?)

Remember that sometimes English uses the verb “do”:

Hat er Fieber? (Does he have a fever?)

Hatte er Fieber? (Did he have a fever?)

English also complicates matters by using “do” to negate simple statements and questions. German’s straightforward “*Haben Sie keine Schuhe?*” is expressed in English as “Do you not have any shoes?” or “Don’t you have any shoes?” or “Do you have no shoes?”

Unit: 1: Basics

10. Question Words

Important question words are *wer* – who, *wen* – whom (accusative) and *was* – what. More on such pronouns will come in the next unit. Note that some books refer to question words as “interrogative pronouns.”

Examples:

Wer kennt den Hund?

Who knows this dog?

Wen beißt der Hund?

Whom is the dog biting?

Was weiß ich?

What do I know?

Unit: 1: Basics

11. Common Abbreviations

For reading German, it is useful to remember the following common abbreviations: *z.B.* = *zum Beispiel* (for example); *usw.* or *usf.* = *und so weiter* and *und so fort* (et cetera); *d.h.* = *das heißt* (in other words / that means); *bzw.* = *beziehungsweise* (respectively / that is to say).

Now that you have studied two of the noun cases (nominative and accusative), noun plurals, the present and past tenses of *sein* and *haben*, and German word order, you are ready to apply these skills by translating simple sentences.

A good practice opportunity is to play the [Unit 1 Syntax Untangler](#) activity at this point. (Link opens in new window.)

Unit: 2: Cases, present tense

1. Objectives

In this unit, in the context of simple sentences that involve all four German cases, you will learn how to:

- Identify the case, number and gender of nouns, pronouns, definite articles, indefinite articles, and question words.
- Identify and translate genitive-case noun chains.
- Identify and translate dative-case objects.
- Use present-tense verb forms to identify whether the corresponding subject must be first, second, or third person, and singular or plural.
- Translate sentences that use *es gibt* or *man*.
- Translate nouns that are formed from adjectives.

Unit: 2: Cases, present tense

2. Genitive and Dative Cases

Whereas English has only tiny traces of three noun cases (**nominative, objective, and possessive** – [link opens in new window](#)), German is thoroughly dependent on four noun cases. Beyond nominative and accusative, which were covered in Unit 1, we now add the genitive and dative cases.

Genitive

Genitive case signals a relationship of possession or “belonging to.” An example translation of this case into English might be from *das Buch des Mannes* to “the man’s book” or “the book of the man.” In English, possession is usually shown by either an ending (apostrophe + **s**) or with the preposition “of.” In German, the genitive case is primarily recognized from article forms and sometimes from noun endings.

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
DEFINITE	<i>das Buch des Mannes</i>	<i>das Buch der Frau</i>	<i>das Buch des</i>
ARTICLE	(the man’s book)	(the woman’s book)	<i>Mädchens</i> (the girl’s book)
INDEFINITE	<i>das Buch eines</i>	<i>das Buch einer</i>	<i>das Buch eines</i>
ARTICLE	<i>Mannes</i> (a man’s book)	<i>Frau</i> (a woman’s book)	<i>Mädchens</i> (a girl’s book)
	PLURAL		
DEFINITE	<i>die Bücher der Frauen</i>		
ARTICLE	(the women’s books)		
INDEFINITE	<i>die Bücher keiner</i>		
ARTICLE	<i>Frauen</i> (no women’s books)		

Note:

1. The noun in the genitive case **follows** the noun which it modifies.
2. *des* and *eines* are useful forms to remember because they are completely unique to the singular genitive case and are thus helpful as starting points to figure out the grammatical structure of a sentence.
3. Masculine and neuter nouns change forms in the genitive case (when singular). The noun endings **-s** or **-es** are added (**-s** for polysyllabic nouns, **-es** for monosyllabic).

Genitive Noun Chains

In formal or scientific German you will sometimes encounter chains of genitive-case **noun phrases** which are straightforward to read, but can be awkward to translate into smooth English. For example:

die Bücher der Professorinnen der Universität
(the books of the women professors of the university)

Use sentence diagramming to help you keep the relationships straight when working with long genitive noun chains:

main noun: *die Bücher*
modified by: *der Professorinnen*
modified by: *der Universität*

Dative

Dative case is used for the indirect object of sentences and with certain prepositions (prepositions are covered in Unit 5). First review the concept of “indirect object” in English. An example is: “The woman (subject) gives the man (indirect object) the book (direct object).” Here we can see that English relies on the order of those two nouns to signal which noun is the direct vs. indirect object. Or consider: “The woman gives the book to the man,” in which English relies on the preposition “to” to signal that the man is getting the book, not the book getting the man!

In German, word order is much more flexible. You need to be able to distinguish which phrases are in dative case and which are in accusative case, because this – rather than word order or prepositions as in English – is often what communicates the meaning of the sentence to the reader. Case distinctions can in fact communicate a variety of meanings, as you will learn throughout this course.

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER
DEFINITE	dem Mann	der Frau	dem Mädchen
INDEFINITE	einem Mann	einer Frau	einem Mädchen
	PLURAL		
DEFINITE	den Männern		
INDEFINITE	keinen Männern		

Some sample sentences:

Masculine	<i>Die Frau gibt dem Mann das Buch.</i> The woman gives the book to the man . (or:) The woman gives the man the book.
Feminine	<i>Der Mann gibt der Frau das Buch.</i>
Neuter	<i>Die Frau gibt dem Mädchen das Buch.</i>
Plural	<i>Die Frauen geben den Männern die Bücher.</i>

Don't forget the **word-order rules** from Unit 1. The first example sentence above may also appear in the following forms, but will still have the exact same meaning, although a subtle emphasis is slightly different in each sentence.

Dem Mann gibt die Frau das Buch.
Das Buch gibt die Frau dem Mann.

Think of this as German taking advantage of the expressive freedom granted by the use of cases and endings, a freedom we don't have in English.

Points to remember:

1. *dem* and *einem* (i.e., the **-m** ending) are unique to dative singular, and are thus useful anchors when reading a sentence.
2. Dative plural always adds an **-n** to the plural form of the noun if one does not already exist, e.g., *den Männern* (dative **n**) but *den Frauen*
3. Many singular nouns appear sometimes with an optional **-e** ending in the dative case only. Examples: *dem Staate*, *nach Hause*, *im Grunde*
4. When grammar and real-world sense are insufficient to clarify which parts of a sentence are nominative or accusative, you can assume that the subject of the sentence will be the one positioned closer to the verb than the object or indirect object. See for example the first example of the pair above, "*Dem Mann gibt*"

Memorization

Now is a good time to begin memorizing the article forms for all four cases, three genders, and plural. You will find that it's much, much simpler to memorize the meanings of the handful of different articles than to learn to recognize the multiple unique forms (plural, genitive, etc.) of every noun in the German language. By Unit 4 you will have finished learning about all the types of word endings associated with

the four noun cases, three genders, and singular/plural status. Article forms and word endings give you essential information about a German sentence even before you recognize what individual words mean. **Section 3 of this unit** gives you a handy chart. As soon as you have these internalized, you'll start saving yourself a lot of dictionary time and mental work.

Dative Verbs

Some frequently used verbs whose objects always appear in the dative case are:

antworten (to answer)

Der Junge antwortet dem Polizisten mit "Ja."

The boy answers the policeman with "Yes."

danken (to thank)

Das Kind dankt seiner Großmutter.

The child thanks its grandmother.

glauben (to believe)

Die Frau glaubt dem Mann nicht.

The woman does not believe the man.

helfen (to help)

Dem Passagier hilft die Flugbegleiterin.

The woman flight attendant helps the male passenger.

gehören (to belong to)

Das Geld gehört dem Staate.

The money belongs to the state.

gefallen (literally "to be pleasing to," but often translated as "to like")

Shakespeares Schauspiele gefallen mir sehr.

(informal context:) I really like Shakespeare's plays.

(formal context:) I enjoy Shakespeare's plays very much.

Familiarize yourself, by looking up the example verbs above, with how your dictionary indicates when verbs take a dative object. How can you tell which English translation you should use, and what special abbreviations does your dictionary use in these cases?

Common Nouns with Endings in the Singular

The singular forms of certain masculine nouns (such as *Mensch*, *Student*, *Herr*, *Nachbar*, *Polizist*, and *Junge*) will take an *-n* or an *-en* on the end in all cases but the nominative. These special nouns are sometimes called "n" nouns. Thus, for example, *Student* becomes *Studenten* in sentences such as *Ich glaube dem Studenten* and *Das ist das Buch des Studenten*. Because these singular nouns can be easily confused with their plural forms (which are often exactly the same: for example, the plural of *der Student* is *die Studenten*), you can see why your reading success is dependent on paying close attention to all the case markers on display in every sentence.

Unit: 2: Cases, present tense

3. Definite and Indefinite Article (All Cases)

The following charts summarize the article forms and noun spelling changes across all four cases. What you need to memorize is the "range of meanings" of each article. For example: Whenever you encounter *der*, you need to know that you are dealing with either nominative masculine, dative feminine, genitive feminine, or genitive plural. This reading skill is sometimes going to be crucial for understanding the structure of German sentences.

Definite Article

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	<i>der</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>die</i>
ACCUSATIVE	<i>den</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>die</i>
DATIVE	<i>dem</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>dem</i>	<i>den + n</i>
GENITIVE	<i>des + s/es</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>des + s/es</i>	<i>der</i>

Indefinite Article

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	<i>ein</i>	<i>eine</i>	<i>ein</i>	<i>keine</i>
ACCUSATIVE	<i>einen</i>	<i>eine</i>	<i>ein</i>	<i>keine</i>
DATIVE	<i>einem</i>	<i>einer</i>	<i>einem</i>	<i>keinen + n</i>

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
GENITIVE	<i>eines + s/es</i>	<i>einer</i>	<i>eines + s/es</i>	<i>keiner</i>

Remember:

1. *das* and *ein* always indicate singular.
2. *des* and *eines* are unique to singular genitive.
3. *dem* and *einem* are unique to singular dative.
4. *die* with nouns ending in **-en** is always plural.

Difference from English Usage

As you can see, German definite articles – in all their variety – carry a lot more information than does our one-size-fits-all, English "the." Accordingly, German uses definite articles more often than English does. This is particularly important for you to consider when a German sentence makes a universal statement. In English we signal a universal statement by avoiding "the" and/or using plural forms of nouns. German, however, often still needs the noun articles in order to clarify the sentence syntax. So it is up to you to interpret whether a statement is universal or not from the context and sense of the sentence.

Der Katzenschwanz ist ein Indikator für die unterschiedlichen Stimmungen der Katze.

The tail of a cat is an indicator of the various moods of a cat.

[or:] Tails of cats are indicators of the various moods of cats.

Die Freiheit der Meinung erlaubt aber nicht die Verächtlichmachung von Religionen.

Freedom of thought does not, however, permit the disparagement of religions.

The second example is a quotation from an online discussion forum in Germany. Your own knowledge of English tells you that translating the first phrase as "The freedom of the thought" would be inappropriate (because it doesn't make sense, right?).

Similarly, German speakers may use definite articles with proper nouns or specific individuals (which we don't do in English) in order to clarify sentence syntax. This usually occurs in more informal situations. For example:

Nein, Willi, das gehört der Mutter.

No, Willi, that belongs to Mom (or: to your mother).

Dem Karl verdanke ich die blauen Flecken hier.

I owe these bruises here to Karl.

The reverse is **not** true, however. You must always understand a German noun that has **no** article just as you would an English noun that has no article (like *Religionen* in the earlier example above).

Finally, do not over-apply this rule. When inclusion of the definite article in German **does** make sense to carry over in to your English translation, you must do that. Imagine if the German sentence had omitted the definite article: if that would give you a different meaning, then clearly you need to respect the fact that the German sentence chose to include the definite article.

Unit: 2: Cases, present tense

4. Pronouns (All Cases)

As you begin memorizing the articles for the four German cases, it may help to simultaneously be memorizing the pronouns for the four cases, since articles and pronouns share some patterns of case and gender-specific spellings. It may all "make sense" as you begin to recognize the spelling patterns. Memorizing the articles and pronouns for the four cases, three genders, and plural is a tedious but necessary and relatively small-scale task for learning to read German.

You should be able to find complete charts of all the article and pronoun forms in a reference section within your German-English dictionary. Meanwhile, here is a pronoun chart:

	NOMINATIVE		ACCUSATIVE		DATIVE
SINGULAR	<i>ich</i>	I	<i>mich</i>	me	<i>mir</i>
	<i>du</i>	you	<i>dich</i>	you	<i>dir</i>
	<i>er</i>	he / it	<i>ihn</i>	him / it	<i>ihm</i>
	<i>sie</i>	she / it	<i>sie</i>	her / it	<i>ihr</i>
	<i>es</i>	it	<i>es</i>	it	<i>ihm</i>
PLURAL	<i>wir</i>	we	<i>uns</i>	us	<i>uns</i>
	<i>ihr</i>	you	<i>euch</i>	you	<i>euch</i>
	<i>sie</i>	they	<i>sie</i>	them	<i>ihnen</i>
SING./PLURAL	<i>Sie</i>	you	<i>Sie</i>	you	<i>Ihnen</i>

NOMINATIVE

ACCUSATIVE

DATIVE

Compare the **article charts**. Some example similarities to note which aid your memorization task: **-m** as in *ihm* is always dative singular, **-r** as in *ihr* dative singular, **-en** as in *ihnen* and *Ihnen* dative plural.

Points to remember:

1. Remember the tip from **Unit 1, section 5**: that German is very consistent about using the appropriate, gendered pronoun to refer to inanimate nouns, not just for people and animals. That's why all of the third person singular pronouns can mean "it" as well as "him" and "her".
2. Pronouns agree in gender and number with the noun to which they refer, and are therefore useful clues for understanding sentences and especially for shared references across multiple sentences. Let pronouns be an easy, reliable way for you to get case, gender, and number information.

Unit: 2: Cases, present tense

5. Present Tense of Regular Verbs

"Regular" verbs are simply those which follow the most common pattern of conjugation. Some grammar books refer to these verbs as "weak" verbs. Thus, using *spielen* (to play) as our model the present tense is formed as follows:

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>spiele</i> (I play)	<i>wir</i>	<i>spielen</i> (we play)
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>spielst</i> (you play)	<i>ihr</i>	<i>spielt</i> (you play)
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>spielt</i> (he/she/it plays)	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>spielen</i> (they/you play)

For our purposes the third person singular and plural forms are the main ones. Thus, the ending **-t** indicates singular and the ending **-en** plural.

Should the stem of the verb end in **-t** or **-d**, for example, *warten* (to wait) and *finden* (to find), the stems of which are *wart-* and *find-*, then the verb is conjugated as follows:

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
--------	----------	--------

PERSON		SINGULAR		PLURAL
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>warte/finde</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>warten/finden</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>wartest/findest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>wartet/findet</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>wartet/findet</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>warten/finden</i>

The only differences then are in the singular, second and third person, where an **-e** is added so that we can append the personal endings **-st** and **-t**.

Note: The majority of verbs in German form their present tense in the way shown for our example *spielen*.

Remember that the German present tense can be translated variously: "he does play," "he is playing," "he plays," or even – depending on time information given in context – "he will play," "he has played," or "he has been playing." Note that all of these translations still share the meaning that the action is taking place at the "present moment" (although that can be defined by a specific future time reference) – whether the action is ongoing, starting, finishing, or only momentary is what you need to interpret from context. In any case, German present tense never indicates a completed, past event.

Unit: 2: Cases, present tense

6. Present Tense of Irregular Verbs

Irregular verbs (also called "strong" verbs) change their root form as they are conjugated. For the most part, they form their present tense in exactly the same way as regular verbs. Thus "he swims" is *er schwimmt*, "they swim" *sie schwimmen*.

Some irregular verbs, however, will undergo a change in the stem vowel in the present tense singular, second and third person, for example: *du gibst* (you give) and *er gibt* (he gives) are conjugations of *geben* (to give). The importance of this change to the reader of German is that you will have to recognize that the meaning of, for example, *gibst*, will be found under the dictionary entry for *geben*. You should remember that there are four patterns of vowel changes in case you need to look up a verb in the dictionary:

EXAMPLE VERBS

INFINITIVE > 3RD PERSON SING.

VOWEL CHANGE

*geben > gibt**e > i**stehlen > stiehlt**e > ie**halten > hält**a > ä**laufen > läuft**au > äu*

A list of the most common irregular verbs (strong verbs) is included in most dictionaries and grammar books. You do not have to memorize all the verb changes for reading purposes. The present tense singular, both second and third person, of these verbs will still carry the endings described above for weak verbs, ending in **-st** or **-t**.

There is one notable exception: the modal verbs, which are covered in Unit 10, and the verb *wissen* (to know a fact). The latter is conjugated in the present tense as:

PERSON SINGULAR

PLURAL

1ST *ich* *weiß* *wir* *wissen*2ND *du* *weißt* *ihr* *wißt*3RD *er/sie/es* *weiß* *sie/Sie* *wissen*

Unit: 2: Cases, present tense

7. More Question Words

The genitive and dative forms of *wer* (who) are *wessen* (genitive: "whose") and *wem* (dative: "to/for whom"). Examples:

Wessen Hund ist das?

Whose dog is that?

Wem gehört der Hund?

To whom does the dog belong?

Unit: 2: Cases, present tense

8. "es gibt" and "man"

es gibt

es gibt = "there is" **and** "there are." Example:

Es gibt jetzt zwei Zeitungen in Darmstadt.
There are now two newspapers in Darmstadt.

man

The pronoun *man* can be translated directly as "people," "they," and "one".

Man sagt, es regnet.
They (people) say it is raining.

Sometimes it makes more sense in English to use an even more abstract way to translate *man*, by using English passive voice. For example:

In schlechten Zeiten kürzt man die Budgets.
In bad times, budgets are reduced.

Keep in mind that the essential meaning of *man* is that the speaker cannot or does not want to specify a subject for the sentence's main verb. The next two examples contrast a situation calling for direct translation with one requiring a more abstract translation:

Wie sagt man "Hund" auf Englisch?
How does one say "Hund" in English?

Man sagt, daß Deutsche pünktlich sind.
It is said that Germans are punctual.

Unit: 2: Cases, present tense

9. Adjectival Nouns

WORD FORMATION

These sections of the textbook help improve your speed during the skimming phase of reading and gradually build vocabulary.

Many adjectives, particularly those expressing abstract ideas, can be formed into neuter nouns according to the pattern which follows below. These adjectival nouns get modified by adverbs rather than by adjectives, in agreement with the normal relationship of adverbs to adjectives, including adverbial usages of words such as *viel* (much) and *nichts* (nothing).

<i>nichts Gutes</i>	nothing that (is / was) good
<i>viel Interessantes</i>	(much / a lot) that (is / was) interesting
<i>wenig Schönes</i>	little that (is / was) (beautiful / pretty / nice)
<i>etwas Neues</i>	something that (is / was) new

The original adjectives, “*gut*,” “*interessant*,” “*schön*,” and “*neu*”, are capitalized and appear (for our current purposes) with an **-es** ending. By Unit 4 you’ll learn to recognize the other endings these adjectival nouns will get when they’re used in genitive and dative cases. Just remember that adjectival nouns are spelled – and take their own modifiers – as if they were modifying some (absent) neuter noun, but otherwise they function **as** that neuter noun.

Unit: 3: Articles, simple past

1. Objectives

In this unit, in the context of simple sentences that involve all four German cases, you will learn how to:

- Identify and translate *der*-words and *ein*-words.
- Decide whether a conjugated verb is in present tense or simple-past tense, and use its endings to predict what the corresponding subject must be.
- Locate the infinitive form of a verb in a dictionary given only its simple-past, conjugated form.
- Translate compound nouns, including when they appear in hyphenated lists of related nouns.
- Translate German number formats.

Unit: 3: Articles, simple past

2. *Der*- words

These are the words that function like the definite article in that they share the same endings with articles. The stems of these words are:

<i>dies-</i>	this
<i>jen-</i>	that
<i>jed-</i>	every / each
<i>manch-</i>	(many a) (plural = some, many)
<i>solch-</i>	such, so, those, etc. Consult your dictionary.
<i>welch-</i>	which / what
<i>all-</i>	all

Using *dies-* as our example *der*-word, our chart looks as follows (compare with the [chart of definite articles in Unit 2](#)):

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	<i>dieser</i>	<i>diese</i>	<i>dieses</i>	<i>diese</i>
ACCUSATIVE	<i>diesen</i>	<i>diese</i>	<i>dieses</i>	<i>diese</i>
DATIVE	<i>diesem</i>	<i>dieser</i>	<i>diesem</i>	<i>diesen</i> (Noun + n)
GENITIVE	<i>dieses</i> (Noun + s/es)	<i>dieser</i>	<i>dieses</i> (Noun + s/es)	<i>dieser</i>

Points to remember:

1. **Der-** words share the same endings as the definite article.
2. **All-** will only appear in plural usages.
3. **Dies-** and **jen-** when used alone can mean “the latter” and “the former” respectively. Example:

Die Eltern meiner Frau heißen Johann und Margarete. Diese ist 62 Jahre alt, jener 65 Jahre alt.

The parents of my wife are named Johann and Margarete. The latter is 62 years old, the former 65 years old.

Note that your cue for this special meaning is that *diese* and *jener* in the second sentence do not "belong to" – or modify – a noun. They are standing alone. Normally you expect a noun (possibly with that noun's other modifiers) to follow any *der*-word.

Unit: 3: Articles, simple past

3. *Ein*- words (including possessive pronouns)

These are the words similar to the indefinite article in the way they take or do not take endings. They are:

<i>mein</i>	my
<i>dein</i>	your (singular and familiar)
<i>sein</i>	his / its
<i>ihr</i>	her / its / their
<i>unser</i>	our
<i>euer</i>	your (plural and familiar)
<i>Ihr</i>	your (formal)
<i>kein</i>	not a, no, not any

Using *mein* as our example *ein*-word our chart looks as follows (compare with the indefinite article chart in Unit 2):

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	<i>mein</i>	<i>meine</i>	<i>mein</i>	<i>meine</i>
ACCUSATIVE	<i>meinen</i>	<i>meine</i>	<i>mein</i>	<i>meine</i>
DATIVE	<i>meinem</i>	<i>meiner</i>	<i>meinem</i>	<i>meinen</i> (Noun + n)
GENITIVE	<i>meines</i> (Noun + s/es)	<i>meiner</i>	<i>meines</i> (Noun + s/es)	<i>meiner</i>

Points to remember:

1. *Ein-* words with no endings are always either nominative singular or accusative singular.
2. The ending **-em** on both *ein-* words and *der-* words is unique to dative singular.
3. The ending **-es** with the noun adding an **-s** or **-es** is unique to genitive singular.
4. When **euer** has an ending, the stem changes to **eur-**. Examples:

Euer Kind bekommt gute Noten.
Your child gets good grades.

Eure Freunde kommen bald.
Your friends are coming soon.

5. Because German nouns are gendered, pronouns referring to them are also gendered. Review [Unit 1, section 5](#), note "b)" and keep in mind that *sein/ihr* references might best be translated as "its."

Take the [memorization advice from Unit 2](#) and expand your memorization task to include possessive pronouns. You should be noticing that the possessive pronouns, too, fit the general German spelling patterns for gender, case, and number distinctions.

Unit: 3: Articles, simple past

4. Simple Past Tense of Verbs

Keep in mind that English's past-tense complexity leaves you with a choice of various English ways to translate German's straightforward past tense. Given *ich hatte*, you will need to consider context in order to choose from: "I had," "I was having," or "I did have." In any case, German past tense always indicates that the action or status is completed and done.

Regular Verbs

Most English verbs form their past tense by adding the suffix **-ed** (example: played), and German regular verbs behave similarly, by adding the suffix **-t-** (or, when pronounceability requires it, **-et-**). However, unlike English verbs, which lose their person/number verb suffixes in past tense (example: I played**ed**, she played**ed**)

German verbs **do** carry person/number suffixes: They are simply appended to the past-tense suffix. Compare the person/number suffixes you already learned in Unit 2 on p. 12, and note the similarities between those present-tense endings and these past-tense endings. Thus, using *spielen* (to play) and *warten* (to wait) as our examples:

PERSON		SINGULAR		PLURAL
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>spielte</i> (I played)	<i>wir</i>	<i>spielten</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>spieltest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>spieltet</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>spielte</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>spielten</i>
PERSON		SINGULAR		PLURAL
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>wartete</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>warteten</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>wartetest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>wartetet</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>wartete</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>warteten</i>

NOTES

1. The third person singular past tense is the same as the first person singular.
2. Watch out for potential confusion between present-tense and past-tense forms of regular verbs. Consider:

Wartest du? (Are you waiting?)

Wartetest du? (Did you wait?)

Let's examine *wartetest*: First you can recognize the ending *-est* as the person/number marker, since it matches the subject *du*. That leaves you with a stem of *wartet-*. Your dictionary will tell you that there is no such infinitive-form verb as *warteten*, and there is such a word as *warten*, so therefore the root of this word must be **wart-**, and the **-et-** suffix must be a past-tense marker.

Irregular Verbs

These verbs form their simple past tense by undergoing a vowel change just as "swim" and "give" do in English (swam, gave). The changes are always indicated in the list of irregular verbs in your dictionary. With a few exceptions, these verbs all share the same pattern of endings. Let us use *schwimmen* (to swim) as our typical example:

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>schwamm</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>schwammen</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>schwammst</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>schwammt</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>schwamm</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>schwammen</i>

Note: Both the first and third person singular past tense forms of irregular verbs have **no** endings.

Exceptions to the Rule

There are a few common verbs in German that do not follow the general rule in the formation of their simple past forms. These are listed in the list of irregular verbs, because they have a change of vowel in the past tenses. Some common examples are:

INFINITIVE		PAST TENSE 3RD PERSON SINGULAR
<i>brennen</i>	(to burn)	<i>brannte</i>
<i>bringen</i>	(to bring)	<i>brachte</i>
<i>denken</i>	(to think)	<i>dachte</i>
<i>senden</i>	(to send)	<i>sandte</i>
<i>wenden</i>	(to turn	<i>wandte</i>
<i>wissen</i>	(to know a fact)	<i>wußte</i>
<i>kennen</i>	(to know a person/object	<i>kannte</i>

Finally, note that “simple past” is called “preterite” in some grammar reference works.

Unit: 3: Articles, simple past

5. Verbal Prefixes and Compound Nouns

WORD FORMATION

These sections of the textbook help improve your speed during the skimming phase of reading and gradually build vocabulary.

Verbs with Prefixes

As you encounter verbs in German texts, they will of course usually be in a conjugated form, rather than their infinitive form, which is the form you need in order to find the verb in your dictionary. Now that you have learned about both regular and irregular verbs, and furthermore those in two different tenses, you have become quite dependent on the "irregular verb" or "strong verb" chart in your dictionary. In particular, keep in mind that you will need to recognize the root verb within a verb.

For example, when you encounter a verb form such as *verbrachte*, you won't find that in your dictionary. Instead, you must recognize that *ver-* is a prefix and that *-brachte* is the part you can find in your irregular verb chart, which in turn will tell you that it is the simple-past, 3rd-person, singular, form of the verb *bringen*. Then you know to look for the infinitive form *verbringen* in your dictionary to find out what it means.

The most common verbal prefixes are *be-*, *ent-*, and *ver-*.

Compound Nouns

As shown in the introduction, German has a propensity to form compound nouns such as *Unterseeboot* (submarine) and *Arbeitsmethode* (work method). Not all compound nouns are listed in dictionaries. Hence it is useful to understand how such nouns are formed and how we might best translate them.

Often a compound noun has an **s** after the first component. This shows possession as in *Arbeits**s**methode* (method of work, or work method) and *Entwicklungs**s**zentrum* (development center). The last component of a compound noun is usually the key word with the preceding component(s) being modifiers (descriptors) of the last as in *Unterseeboot* (undersea boat = submarine).

Sometimes the occurrence of consonants next to one another which would be difficult to pronounce will indicate the dividing point between the components as in *Computer**b**auer* (computer builder) and *Test**st**recke* (testing ground), i.e., **rb** and **tst** respectively.

The gender of compound nouns is always determined by the **last** component. Thus, *Teststrecke* is *die Teststrecke* because *Strecke* is feminine.

Look at the following compounds and by using your dictionary and the guidelines above determine their component parts and their meanings.

1. *Durchrostung*
2. *Fahrstil*
3. *Flugmanager*
4. *Grundmodell*
5. *Kernkraftwerk*
6. *Kommunikationssystem*
7. *Sicherheitsfunktion*
8. *Staubproblem*
9. *Vorstandschef*
10. *Weltraumtechnologie*
11. *Weltunternehmen*
12. *Zeitungsanzeigen*

Finally, since compound nouns are so common in German, you will often see compound nouns that are related printed in a hyphenated, abbreviated form, such as:

Der Windsturm verursachte Dach-, Auto- und Baumschäden.
The wind storm caused damage to roofs, cars, and trees.

Weltraumraketen und -satelliten benutzen diese Technologie.
Space rockets and space satellites use this technology.

Unit: 3: Articles, simple past

6. Number Formats

It is very important to remember a few small but crucial differences between printed numbers in German and English. Compare:

GERMAN	ENGLISH
12.000	12,000
10,354%	10.354%
1 353 432	1,353,432
SF 5.000,-	5,000.00 Swiss franc
€235.500,34	€235,500.34
1,3 Millionen	1.3 million
3 Milliarden	3 billion

GERMAN	ENGLISH
2 Billionen	2 trillion

See the [Reference](#) section for more information about numbers in German.

Unit: 4: Verbs with prefixes; adjective endings

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Identify when a separable-prefix verb is being used, and translate it.
- Decide whether a verb in use is a separable-prefix or an inseparable-prefix verb.
- Use adjective endings to identify the case, gender, and number of noun phrases.
- Distinguish adverbs from adjectives within a noun phrase.
- Identify and translate adjectives and verbs being used as nouns.
- Identify and translate place names being used as adjectives.

Unit: 4: Verbs with prefixes; adjective endings

2. Verbs with Inseparable Prefixes

Some verbs appear both with and without prefixes, and the meanings of the verb change quite considerably with the prefix. The inseparable prefixes are: **be-**, **ent-**, **emp-**, **er-**, **ge-**, **miß-**, **ver-**, and **zer-**. Examples of some verbs in this category are:

WITH PREFIX		WITHOUT PREFIX	
<i>begehen</i>	(to commit)	<i>gehen</i>	(to go)
<i>empfangen</i>	(to receive)	<i>fangen</i>	(to catch)
<i>enthaltēn</i>	(to contain)	<i>halten</i>	(to hold)
<i>erhalten</i>	(to receive)	<i>halten</i>	(to hold)
<i>gefallen</i>	(to please)	<i>fallen</i>	(to fall)

WITH PREFIX		WITHOUT PREFIX	
<i>mißverstehen</i>	(to misunderstand)	<i>stehen</i>	(to stand)
<i>verstehen</i>	(to understand)	<i>stehen</i>	(to stand)
<i>zerfallen</i>	(to fall to pieces)	<i>fallen</i>	(to fall)

Note how the prefix has changed the meaning. Only in the case of **miß-** and **zer-** can we **always** attach a meaning to the inseparable prefix, i.e., “**mis-**” and “to pieces” respectively. Quite often however the addition of **ent-** to a verb lends the meaning “away from,” e.g. *entnehmen* = to take away, remove; *entkleiden* = to remove clothes, undress. And often the addition of a **be-** turns an intransitive verb transitive, e.g., *bewohnen* = to inhabit (something).

As mentioned **at the end of Unit 3**, the conjugations of verbs with inseparable prefixes simply follow the same forms as the root verb. For example, *verstehen* (to understand), *bestehen* (to exist; to insist), *gestehen* (to confess), and *entstehen* (to be created, to develop, to form) all share the same endings and forms as *stehen* (to stand):

Die Frau versteht die Kinder.

The woman understands the children.

Die Frauen verstanden die Kinder.

The women understood the children.

These prefixed verbs are found in dictionaries as separate entries, **not** under the root verb.

Unit: 4: Verbs with prefixes; adjective endings

3. Verbs with Separable Prefixes

The number of separable prefixes is far greater than that of inseparable prefixes. Separable prefix verbs, as the name implies, separate into two parts when used in any way other than in their infinitive form. Let us consider two examples: *aufgehen* (to rise, go up) and *untergehen* (to descend, go down):

Die Sonne geht um sechs Uhr auf.

The sun rises at 6 o'clock.

Die Sonne **geht** am Abend **unter**.

The sun sets in the evening.

Here is a list of common separable prefixes:

<i>ab</i>	off, down, away	<i>über</i>	over
<i>auf</i>	up, open	<i>um</i>	around
<i>aus</i>	out	<i>umher</i>	around
<i>ein</i>	in	<i>unter</i>	down
<i>empor</i>	up	<i>vor</i>	ahead, forward
<i>entgegen</i>	toward, to	<i>vorbei</i>	past, by
<i>fest</i>	fast, firm	<i>vorüber</i>	past
<i>fort</i>	away	<i>weg</i>	away
<i>heim</i>	home	<i>weiter</i>	on, farther
<i>her</i>	here, towards	<i>wieder</i>	back, again
<i>hin</i>	there, away from	<i>zu</i>	to, toward; shut
<i>mit</i>	along, with	<i>zurück</i>	back
<i>nieder</i>	down	<i>zusammen</i>	together

You can see that prepositions are the most common separable prefix, and some are not prepositions at all. Your challenge is to use what you've learned so far about German syntax to recognize when a word is apparently functioning as a separated verbal prefix.

Points to remember:

1. The prefix appears **after** the predicate. From now on you will need to finish reading to the end of each sentence or clause before you can be certain about the meaning of any conjugated verb. If you find a prefix there, you must associate it with the conjugated verb and consider the meaning of, for example, *aufgehen*, not of *gehen*. If you are trying to locate the verb in a dictionary, this can be a very important difference.
2. Likewise, you can decide whether a word appearing in the middle of a sentence is a verbal prefix or not by identifying the roles of the words after it – if they start a whole new statement, then perhaps this word is indeed a verbal prefix. Here's an example in which a single subject is shared between two statements, both using a separable-prefix verb:

Das Schiff saß auf der Sandbank fest und ging nicht weiter.

The ship was stuck on the sandbar and went no further.

Keep in mind that German punctuation rules do not call for a comma as often as English does, so you may not see a comma to help you decide whether the predicate has ended.

3. Most of the separable prefixes can be translated literally and will give you a simple meaning to a verb, e.g., *ausgehen* = to go out, to exit; *vorübergehen* = to go past, to pass by.
4. Sometimes verbs will have different meanings dependent upon whether the prefix is separable or not. The most common prefixes to play this double role are *durch*, *über* and *unter*. Your dictionary will indicate which verbs have this double role. Compare:

Das Schiff setzt die Autos nach Japan über.

The ship is transporting the cars to Japan.

Er übersetzt das Buch ins Englische.

He is translating the book into English.

Look up *übersetzen* in your dictionary to see how it describes the difference between the separable and the inseparable verbs.

Unit: 4: Verbs with prefixes; adjective endings

4. Adjective Endings

You learned in Unit 3 how endings are added to the **der-** and **ein-** words. In addition, German adds endings to regular attributive adjectives when they are modifying a noun. Recognizing these endings can sometimes be a crucial reading skill in order to detect the case and number of a noun.

Noun Phrases without an Article

When a **noun phrase** does **not** begin with either a **der-** word or an **ein-** word, then essentially any adjectives have to take their place as far as providing signals to you about the case, number, and gender of the noun they are modifying. The chart or “paradigm” below shows what happens to the adjectives if we take the three nouns *der Wein*, *die Milch*, and *das Bier* and describe them with the simple adjectives *rot* (red), *frisch* (fresh) and *kalt* (cold):

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	<i>roter Wein</i>	<i>frische Milch</i>	<i>kaltes Bier</i>	<i>rote Weine</i>
ACCUSATIVE	<i>roten Wein</i>	<i>frische Milch</i>	<i>kaltes Bier</i>	<i>rote Weine</i>
DATIVE	<i>rotem Wein</i>	<i>frischer Milch</i>	<i>kaltem Bier</i>	<i>roten Weinen</i>
GENITIVE	<i>roten Weines</i>	<i>frischer Milch</i>	<i>kalten Bieres</i>	<i>roter Weine</i>

Compare this to the **der-** word chart in Unit 2 and you will notice only one difference; the genitive singular (masculine and neuter) ends in **-en** rather than **-es**. Otherwise the endings are the same. In other words, you will be able to apply that same skill from Unit 2 to this kind of noun phrase, so that you can use the above adjective endings to help you identify the case, number, and gender of the noun being modified.

Noun Phrases with an Article

When articles (**der-** and **ein-** words) begin the noun phrase, than any adjectives modifying a noun show a different pattern of endings than above. It is not necessary to memorize these declensions in order to read and comprehend German. Remember that it is the **article** that begins the noun phrase that best helps you identify the role the noun is playing in a sentence.

Nevertheless, it is often useful to recognize that **some** ending has been added:

1. To help you distinguish adjectives from other kinds of modifiers within the noun phrase which, naturally, do not appear with "adjective endings." We'll return to this in the next section.
2. To give you confidence when looking up adjectives in the dictionary, knowing what letters at the end will not be included in the dictionary listing.
3. In the case of some **ein-** word phrases, the endings immediately give you more information about the noun than the **ein-** word does alone.

So, here are the adjective endings when an article is present:

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
N.				

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
	der alte Mann ein alter Mann	die alte Frau eine alte Frau	das junge Mädchen ein junges Mädchen	die alten Frauen keine alten Frauen
A.	den alten Mann einen alten Mann	die alte Frau eine alte Frau	das junge Mädchen ein junges Mädchen	die alten Frauen keine alten Frauen
D.	dem alten Mann einem alten Mann	der alten Frau einer alten Frau	dem jungen Mädchen einem jungen Mädchen	den alten Frauen keinen alten Frauen
G.	des alten Mannes eines alten Mannes	der alten Frau einer alten Frau	des jungen Mädchens eines jungen Mädchens	der alten Frauen keiner alten Frauen

Points to remember:

1. The first word in the noun phrase indicates in most instances the role the noun plays in the sentence, i.e., its case and its number.
2. No ending on an **ein-** word is unique to singular nominative and singular accusative.
3. The ending **-em** is unique to dative singular.
4. **die** or an **ein-** word ending in **-e** (e.g. *keine*) followed by an adjective which ends in **-en** is always plural.
5. Note the significance of adjective endings on number words. See the end of [Reference section 1](#).

Unit: 4: Verbs with prefixes; adjective endings

5. Recognizing Adverbs vs. Adjectives

Any German adverb/adjective, for example *gut*, appears identically whether used as an adjective (meaning "good") or as an adverb (meaning "well" or "in a good way"). Often you have to decide from context how the German word is functioning—unless it is an adjective modifying a noun. That case is simpler: as you learned above, it then **must** have the appropriate adjective ending. This is crucial for you to learn

how to use for determining whether a word is being used adverbially or adjectivally within **noun phrases**. Adverbs, of course, never have an adjective ending.

Der gute, dicke Kuchen schmeckt.

The good, thick cake is tasty.

In the above example, the presence of the endings on both *gut* and *dick* reveal that they are both adjectives which modify the noun *Kuchen*.

Der gut dicke Kuchen schmeckt.

The nicely thick cake is tasty.

In the above example, the **lack** of any ending on *gut* and its position relative to the words around it reveal that it is an adverb which modifies the adjective *dick*. It cannot possibly be an adjective modifying the noun *Kuchen* because it lacks the ending which would have been required. And the position of *gut* **inside** the noun phrase for *Kuchen* clarifies that it modifies *dick*, as opposed to modifying the main verb of the entire sentence as it would if it were located outside the noun phrase. And yes, the presence or absence of that comma can be a helpful clue, as well.

However, it is possible for German adjectives to appear without any endings. Like in English, an adjective can be the predicate of a statement with the verb "to be." In German, then, the adjective would take no ending, since it is not modifying a particular noun. Example:

Das ist gut.

That is good.

Unit: 4: Verbs with prefixes; adjective endings

6. Adjectives as Nouns

In English we sometimes use adjectives as nouns, e.g., "the rich and the poor," and German does the same. In both languages, essentially the adjective is standing for a missing, unspecified noun which this adjective would be modifying. For example: "the rich (people) and the poor (people)" or "I'll take the blue (one) and the green (one)". But you'll note two differences in how such words appear in German: they are capitalized like all other nouns, and they also carry the meaningful adjectival ending they would have **as if** they were modifying a noun. For example, in nominative case, referring to the plural idea of "rich (people)" and "poor (people)":

"the rich" = **die Reichen**, "the poor" = **die Armen**. Such adjectival nouns are far more common in German than in English. Here are several more examples:

der Alte (nominative case, singular) "the old man" or some other masculine being, depending on context

die Alte (nominative or accusative case, singular) "the old woman" or some other female being, depending on context

einen Grünen (accusative case, singular) could refer to "a person associated with the Green party" or in a more general context, simply "a green one"

das Alte (nominative or accusative case, singular) "the old one" (given the neuter gender, it presumably refers to an object) or more abstractly, "that which is old"

das Gebaute (nominative or accusative case, singular) "that which was built" or "what was built" or perhaps "the buildings" – as always, adjust to the context

das Beste an der Sache (nominative or accusative case, singular) "the best part of the affair/story" or "what was best about this" (where *Sache* would be referring back to something previously explained)

As you can see, you must have mastered the meanings of the adjectival endings you learned in section 3 above, and you will need to pay attention to the form of any definite or indefinite articles which belong to this noun, in order to figure out this noun's role and number within the sentence.

Also keep in mind that such nouns would be modified by adverbs rather than by other adjectives, in agreement with what you learned in the **preceding section**, and like the **adjectival nouns** you learned about in Unit 2. The third example below includes this situation.

Examples:

Ich tue immer mein Bestes.

I always do my best.

Vermeers Gemälde zeigen oft das Schöne in dem Häuslichen.

Vermeer's paintings often reveal the beautiful in the household sphere.

Ich suche immer stark Überraschendes als Geburtstagsgeschenk für meine Schwester.

I always look for something really surprising as a birthday present for my sister. [or:]

I always look for really surprising things as a birthday present for my sister.

Unit: 4: Verbs with prefixes; adjective endings

7. Place Names as Adjectives

German has a very simple way of using place names as adjectives: add the ending **-er**. Note that no other adjective endings are added, regardless of case or number.

<i>das Genfer Abkommen</i>	the Geneva Convention
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<i>der Hamburger Flughafen</i>	the Hamburg airport
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These adjectives can also be used as nouns:

<i>der Berliner</i>	the Berliner (male from Berlin)
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<i>die Berlinerin</i>	the Berliner (female from Berlin)
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Unit: 4: Verbs with prefixes; adjective endings

8. Verbs as Nouns

You can recognize verbs functioning as nouns by their capitalization and their grammatical behavior as nouns. All such nouns are neuter. Thus, *das Schwimmen* means "the activity of swimming," *das Schreiben* "writing," *das Lernen* "learning." You will often see these words used without an article. Examples:

Im tiefen Schnee ist das Gehen sehr schwierig.

In deep snow, walking is very difficult.

(a more natural translation:) It is very difficult to walk in deep snow.

Wo lernt man Segelfliegen in Deutschland?

Where does one learn hang-gliding in Germany?

(a more natural translation:) Where does one learn to hang-glide in Germany?

Ich lernte das Schwimmen.

I learned how to swim.

Das Schwimmen in der See ist nicht leicht.

Swimming in the ocean is not easy.

To practice some key skills covered in this unit, play the [Unit 4 Syntax Untangler](#) activity. (Link opens in a new window.)

You may find the [Review Units 1-4](#) exercise more valuable now or as a later review opportunity.

Unit: 5: Prepositions, reflexives

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Translate prepositions.
- Identify and translate prepositional phrases.
- Translate adverbs correctly based on German word order.
- Identify and translate reflexive pronouns and reflexive verbs.
- Identify relationships between certain categories of nouns and their root word.

Unit: 5: Prepositions, reflexives

2. Prepositions

Almost all of the prepositions you will encounter in German are listed here with their most common meanings:

<i>an</i>	at	<i>nach</i>	to (with place names), after, according to
<i>(an)statt</i>	instead of	<i>neben</i>	next to
<i>auf</i>	up, on	<i>ohne</i>	without

<i>aus</i>	out of, from	<i>seit</i>	since, for (with time)
<i>außer</i>	except	<i>trotz</i>	in spite of
<i>bei</i>	with, in the case of, at	<i>über</i>	over, about / concerning
<i>durch</i>	through, by means of	<i>um</i>	around, at (with time)
<i>entlang</i>	along	<i>unter</i>	under, among
<i>für</i>	for (on behalf of)	<i>von</i>	from, of, by (means of)
<i>gegen</i>	against, towards	<i>vor</i>	in front of / before, ago
<i>gegenüber</i>	opposite	<i>während</i>	during
<i>gemäß</i>	according to	<i>wegen</i>	on account of / because of
<i>hinter</i>	behind	<i>wider</i>	against
<i>in</i>	in	<i>zu</i>	to
<i>mit</i>	with	<i>zwischen</i>	between

Meaning

It is advisable to learn the above list of prepositions and their common meanings because, as in English, they occur frequently, and in German many of them are used in the formation of other words (for example, as **verb prefixes**).

Just be careful to not count on any German prepositions equating to any single English preposition. As your dictionary will show you (for both English and German!), the meanings of prepositions are very context-dependent.

Sometimes the combination of particular prepositions with certain verbs or adjectives will determine the meaning of the preposition involved, as in the idioms: *denken an* (to think of or about), *glauben an* (to believe in), *stolz auf* (proud of), *warten auf* (to wait for), or *sich fürchten vor* (to be afraid of).

Therefore, when consulting your dictionary for verbs and nouns generally, pay attention to how particular word + preposition combinations can determine very different directions for the meaning of the main word. For example, compare your dictionary entries for *bestehen + aus* vs. *bestehen + auf*. Dictionaries explain such prepositional combinations within the entry for the main word, not under the preposition's own entry.

In other words, it's often best to translate prepositions last, after you've analyzed the sentence structure and after understanding the surrounding context. Always start with the meaning of the entire construction, rather than how you would

translate the preposition if it stood on its own, and only then express that meaning using English.

Unit: 5: Prepositions, reflexives

3. Prepositional Phrases

Prepositional Phrases

“Pre-positions,” as their name suggests, usually appear **before** nouns, pronouns, and sometimes adjectives. They mark the beginning of a prepositional phrase, and the corresponding noun marks the end of that phrase. Examples:

*Der Junge steht **hinter dem Stuhl**.*

The boy is standing **behind the chair**.

*Sie fährt in die Stadt **mit ihrer Freundin**.*

She is travelling to town **with her girlfriend**.

***Trotz schweren Unwetters** kam das Flugzeug pünktlich an.*

Despite bad weather, the airplane arrived on time.

As you begin to read longer German sentences, it becomes very useful to recognize prepositional phrases and remember the **absolutely reliable** law that prepositional phrases are stand-alone, self-enclosed units of meaning (just as in English). All of the words enclosed between a preposition and its object (usually a noun) all belong within that phrase – and thus are **not** modifiers of anything outside of that phrase! Consider, for example:

Lange sinnte sie über seine frühen Gedichte in der Zeitschrift nach.

First you can easily identify *über seine frühen Gedichte* and *in der Zeitschrift* as two prepositional phrases. That leaves you with a much simpler sentence skeleton to work on: *Lange sinnte sie ... nach*, or roughly: “For a long while she pondered” Next, moving your attention to the prepositional phrases, you can confidently take as an absolute law that, for example, *seine frühen* are words applying **only** to *Gedichte*. Even as you then add in the prepositional phrases, respect the solid work you’ve done so far on the skeleton; don’t let the addition of the prepositional phrases corrupt it. Likewise, as you add on the prepositional phrases to your skeleton, respect the integrity of the prepositional phrases. Thus: “For a long while

she pondered his early poems in the journal," or, equivalently: "She meditated for a long time on his early poems in the magazine."

Handy tip: Sometimes the object of a preposition is a noun that itself has further genitive-case nouns modifying it. The above rule still holds: all of the genitive-case nouns tied to the actual prepositional object are still just modifiers of that object, so they also belong inside of the prepositional phrase. Example:

*Hegels Vorlesungen **über die Philosophie der Geschichte***

Object: *die Philosophie*, which is modified by *der Geschichte*

Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of history

Now play the [Syntax Untangler activity with prepositional phrases](#) to practice this skill. (Link opens in a new window.)

Word Order Exceptions

Notable exceptions to the "pre"-position placement of prepositions are – in certain situations – the prepositions *entlang* (along), *gegenüber* (opposite), *gemäß* (according to), and in even rarer cases *nach* (according to), and *wegen* (on account of / because of). Examples:

*Er läuft **die Straße entlang**.*

He runs along the street.

*Diese Familie wohnt **dem Hotel gegenüber**.*

This family lives opposite the hotel.

***Meiner Meinung nach** ist diese Aufgabe schwierig.*

In my opinion this exercise is difficult.

***Des Wetters wegen** bleiben sie zu Hause.*

Because of the weather, they are staying at home.

The reliability of prepositional phrases as inviolable units of meaning still applies in these cases, too. The boldface above demonstrates where the prepositional phrases begin and end.

Unit: 5: Prepositions, reflexives

4. Prepositional Cases

Cases

German prepositions govern different cases. That is, the phrase that follows them will be in either the accusative case, the dative case, or the genitive case. Memorizing which case each preposition governs is not critical for reading comprehension, but you should be aware that articles, pronouns, and adjectives will change form after the preposition. If you wish to know which case(s) a preposition governs, refer to your dictionary.

Rarely, you may encounter situations where case does matter for reading comprehension. The meaning of a certain group of prepositions – the so-called "two-way prepositions" (an, auf, hinter, neben, in, über, unter, vor and zwischen) – changes subtly depending on whether the accusative or dative case is used after them. If you see accusative case, then a changing condition is being described. If dative case, then a static, unchanging condition. Normally the rest of the sentence will clarify the preposition's meaning for you, but in a few circumstances, mainly relating to physical movement or location, you may be left unsure, and you will need to consider the case as useful information. For example:

Er geht in das Haus.

He walks into the house.

Note the accusative case. Here a change is being described, from "not in the house" (before) to "in the house" (afterwards). Compare to:

Er geht in dem Haus.

He is walking, in the house.

Note the dative case. Here there is **no** change regarding the state of being "in the house." In English we don't have this clarity, so you may need to take extra care to communicate this in your translation. The second sentence could also be translated as: "He is in the house, walking," or, using parentheses to acknowledge that we're embellishing the sentence: "He walks (around) in the house."

Unit: 5: Prepositions, reflexives

5. Reflexive Pronouns

A reflexive pronoun is a reference back to the subject. In the English sentence, "I dress myself," the reflexive pronoun is "myself." In German, just as with other pronouns, reflexive pronouns come in a greater variety than they do in English, and they reflect the case and number of the subject.

First let's consider a third-person example, because in this case the distinctive word *sich* will be the reflexive pronoun. The separable-prefix verb *anziehen* is a verb that – **only** when used reflexively – means "to dress oneself / to get dressed."

Er zieht sich an.

He dresses himself. / He gets dressed.

Jeden morgen ziehen sie sich an.

Every morning they dress themselves.

Contrast this with the non-reflexive use of *anziehen* (to put on an article of clothing):

Er zieht die Jacke an.

He puts on the jacket.

Because the meanings of verbs can be quite different when used reflexively, it is important to recognize when pronouns are reflexive or not.

The only instantly recognizable reflexive pronoun is *sich*. This pronoun is used for all third-person singular and third-person plural reflexive references. English equivalents of *sich* are: "himself," "herself," "itself," "themselves," and "yourself" (formal only). Whereas the German reflexive pronoun for all other situations is simply the **normal pronoun** for that subject as you learned them in Unit 2.

For example, *mich* and *uns* are reflexive pronouns in the next two sentences, corresponding in each case to the sentence subjects *ich* and *wir*:

Ich ziehe mich an.

I get dressed.

Wir ziehen uns an.

We get dressed.

If a direct object is also present in the sentence, the reflexive pronoun will appear in the dative form instead of the accusative form. Example:

Ich kaufe mir einen Hut.
I am buying myself a hat.

Kaufst du dir morgen eine neue Armbanduhr?
Are you going to buy yourself a new watch tomorrow?

Unit: 5: Prepositions, reflexives

6. Reflexive Verbs

There are some verbs in German that are always used with a reflexive pronoun and it may not be appropriate to translate that pronoun literally. Such verbs are indicated in dictionaries with a "sich" or "v.r.," or "refl." which means that the verb is used with a reflexive pronoun. Familiarize yourself with how your dictionary describes these two common examples: *sich + interessieren + für* (to be interested in) and *sich + erinnern + an* (to remember).

Die Studenten interessieren sich für die Musik.
The students are interested in music.

Ich erinnere mich immer an den Geburtstag meiner Mutter.
I always remember my mother's birthday.

Note that many German verbs are only sometimes used reflexively, and then they have slightly different meanings accordingly. One example is *anziehen*, as demonstrated in the preceding section. German-English dictionaries will usually give translations of the reflexive meanings separately from the non-reflexive meanings of these verbs. Watch out for abbreviations such as *refl.* in your dictionary, and remember in any case that the German reflexive pronoun in the sentence will often not correspond to an English word – it is instead primarily a signal that the German verb is being used reflexively.

Unit: 5: Prepositions, reflexives

7. Position of *nicht* and other adverbs

Like all adverbs, and as with English adverbs, *nicht* modifies the sentence's main verb unless it appears within a particular phrase, such as within a prepositional phrase, a **noun phrase**, etc. Also, like in English, adverbs in German placed **before** a word or phrase are thereby given emphasis that they modify that following word or phrase. Thus you can generally rely on your English-language sensibilities to interpret the role of German adverbs.

In German we do encounter a few uses of multiple, neighboring adverbs which we aren't familiar with in English. When you do, keep the above word-order rule in mind. This can be particularly crucial with the adverb *nicht* when it precedes another adverb.

Die Stadt fühlt sich nicht besonders für Radfahrer verantwortlich.

The city does not feel particularly responsible for bicyclists.

In the above example, *nicht* is placed to emphasize that it modifies *besonders*. That leaves the meaning "not particularly" as the adverbial modifier of "for bicyclists." Compare when the order of *nicht* and *besonders* is reversed, so that *besonders* now modifies *nicht*, which in turn modifies *für Radfahrer*:

Die Stadt fühlt sich besonders nicht für Radfahrer verantwortlich.

The city feels not responsible for bicyclists in particular.

(Literally: "especially not for bicyclists," a phrase which would be clumsy in English in the context of this whole sentence.)

In summary: Remember to first determine what an adverb is modifying, by using this word-order rule, before translating. Adverbs modify their following word or phrase, if there is one and if that's possible. Otherwise, it modifies the main verb of the entire sentence.

Unit: 5: Prepositions, reflexives

8. Noun Formation

WORD FORMATION

These sections of the textbook help improve your speed during the skimming phase of reading and help you gradually build vocabulary.

Knowing how words are formed is most helpful in learning vocabulary and preparing yourself to be able to determine the meaning of new vocabulary. It is very useful to

know that German forms nouns from verbs, from adjectives, and from adding suffixes to other nouns and adjectives among other ways. Study the following examples of word relationships, and as you work on translating the exercises in this book, look for possible connections between words. Check your guesses in the dictionary and list related words together for purposes of learning them more quickly. Remember, these are just some examples; there are thousands of words formed in these various ways.

Noun – Verb Relationships

Related to simple verbs:

NOUN	VERB
<i>das Band</i> (string / band)	<i>binden</i>
<i>die Bindung</i> (bond / binding)	<i>binden</i>
<i>die Fahrt</i> (drive / ride)	<i>fahren</i>
<i>die Reise</i> (journey)	<i>reisen</i>
<i>der Spruch</i> (saying)	<i>sprechen</i>

Related to verbs with prefixes:

NOUN	VERB
<i>die Abfahrt</i> (departure)	<i>abfahren</i>
<i>der Ausgang</i> (exit)	<i>ausgehen</i>
<i>der Eingang</i> (entrance)	<i>eingehen</i>
<i>der Gewinn</i> (gain / winning)	<i>gewinnen</i>
<i>der Niedergang</i> (decline)	<i>niedergehen</i>
<i>der Übergang</i> (crossing)	<i>übergehen</i>
<i>der Umgang</i> (circuit)	<i>umgehen</i>
<i>der Verstand</i> (reason)	<i>verstehen</i>
<i>der Widerstand</i> (resistance)	<i>widerstehen</i>

Noun – Adjective Relationships

NOUN	ADJECTIVE
<i>die Breite</i> (breadth)	<i>breit</i>
<i>die Dicke</i> (thickness)	<i>dick</i>
<i>die Größe</i> (size)	<i>groß</i>
<i>die Länge</i> (length)	<i>lang</i>
<i>die Kälte</i> (cold)	<i>kalt</i>
<i>die Röte</i> (redness)	<i>rot</i>

Noun Suffixes

1. **-chen** and **-lein** (diminutives, always neuter)

<i>Bettchen</i> (little bed)	<i>Bett</i>
<i>Städtlein</i> (little town)	<i>Stadt</i>

2. **-er** denotes "doer" or "that which does"

These are always masculine, but can take feminine form with **-in** ending if appropriate (see number 4 below).

<i>Musiker</i> (musician)	<i>Musik</i>
<i>Tänzer</i> (dancer)	<i>tanzen</i>
<i>Zeiger</i> (pointer / indicator)	<i>zeigen</i>

3. **-heit** and **-keit** denotes "state of being" (always feminine)

<i>Abhängigkeit</i> (dependence)	<i>abhängig</i>
<i>Aufmerksamkeit</i> (attentiveness)	<i>aufmerksam</i>
<i>Freiheit</i> (freedom)	<i>frei</i>
<i>Gesundheit</i> (health)	<i>gesund</i>
<i>Schönheit</i> (beauty)	<i>schön</i>

4. **-in** denotes females

<i>Lehrerin</i> (female teacher)	<i>Lehrer</i>
<i>Professorin</i> (female professor)	<i>Professor</i>

5. **-schaft** denotes "relationship," "collective state" (always feminine)

<i>Bruderschaft</i> (brotherhood)	<i>Bruder</i>
<i>Freundschaft</i> (friendship)	<i>Freund</i>
<i>Landschaft</i> (landscape)	<i>Land</i>
<i>Wissenschaft</i> (science)	<i>wissen</i>

6. **-tum** denotes "condition"

<i>der Reichtum</i> (wealth / richness)	<i>reich</i>
<i>das Wachstum</i> (growth)	<i>wachsen</i>

7. **-ung** (always feminine)

<i>Sammlung</i> (collection)	<i>sammeln</i>
<i>Vergrößerung</i> (enlargement)	<i>vergrößern</i>
<i>Zeitung</i> (newspaper)	<i>Zeit</i>

The topic of word formation will continue to be covered throughout later units to help you both with building vocabulary and with quickly guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Unit: 6: Conjunctions, comparatives

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Translate sentences that use coordinating or subordinating conjunctions.

- Explain the differences in meaning between *als*, *wenn*, and *wann*.
- Identify when an adjective appears with a comparative or superlative ending and translate it appropriately.
- Identify whether a word is being used as an adverb or adjective and translate it appropriately.
- Identify relationships between verbs and their related words for some verbs.

Unit: 6: Conjunctions, comparatives

2. Conjunctions

Conjunctions are those words that connect other words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. English examples include: "and," "but," "because," and "although."

These words fall into two categories: coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. In German, these two categories are important to be aware of because of their differing effect on sentence word order.

Coordinating Conjunctions

These conjunctions do **not** alter the word order of a sentence. The most common German coordinating conjunctions are:

<i>aber</i>	but, however
<i>denn</i>	for / because
<i>entweder . . . oder</i>	either . . . or
<i>oder</i>	or
<i>sondern</i>	but rather (used after a negative)
<i>sowohl . . . als</i>	as well as
<i>und</i>	and
<i>weder . . . noch</i>	neither . . . nor

Examples of their use:

Er lernt fleißig, denn er findet Deutsch schwer.
He studies hard because he finds German difficult.

Sie geht in den Laden und kauft ein neues Fahrrad.

She goes into the shop and buys a new bicycle.

Wir gehen nicht ins Kino, sondern in die Bibliothek.

We are not going to the cinema but (rather) to the library.

Entweder wir fahren mit dem Bus, oder wir gehen zu Fuß.

Either we take the bus, or we walk.

You can use the “**verb in second position**” rule from Unit 1 to help you identify the core elements of subject, verb, and object in these sentences. For example, if, after a coordinating conjunction, the first word is a conjugated verb, then you know the missing “first position” element must be implied (carried over) from the preceding clause.

Subordinating Conjunctions

These conjunctions **do** affect the sentence word order. The verb in a subordinate clause stands in final position within that clause. Note the locations of the verb *waren* and its subject *ihre Eltern* in this example, using the conjunction *als* (when / while):

Sie wohnte in Berlin, als ihre Eltern noch Studenten waren.

She lived in Berlin while her parents were still students.

When a subordinate clause is first in a sentence, then the finite verb of the main clause immediately follows the subordinate clause. Note the locations of the verb *wohnte* and its subject *sie* (its second occurrence in this sentence) in the next example, which simply follows the basic rule that the main verb of a German statement always comes in second position.

Als sie jung war, wohnte sie in Berlin.

When she was young she lived in Berlin.

A subordinate clause is also called a dependent clause because it does not make sense by itself. In German all dependent clauses are separated from main clauses by commas and the verb or verbs of the dependent clause stand at the end of that clause. This is an important punctuation practice worth remembering since it will enable you to split longer sentences apart when reading and translating.

The most common German subordinating conjunctions are:

als when (referring to past events)

Als er in Deutschland war, sah er seinen Bruder.
When he was in Germany, he saw his brother.

Caution: this word also has uses as an adverb, in which case it behaves like a normal adverb:

- "than." Example: *besser als* – "better than"
- "as." Example: *als Ingenieur* – "as an engineer"

als ob as if
(see Unit 15 for examples)

bis until

Bis es regnet, bleibt es trocken.
Until it rains, it will remain dry.

da since (because)

Ich gehe nicht ins Kino, da ich kein Geld habe.
I don't go to movies because I have no money.

Caution: This word can also be used as an adverb ("there") and is used in *da*-compounds where it means "it" (see Unit 12). Those uses appear with standard word order.

damit so that

Damit Sie das Examen bestehen, sollen Sie fleißig studieren.
So that you pass the exam, you should study hard.

Caution: Not to be confused with the *da*-compound meaning "with it" (see above).

daß that

Die Kinder wußten sehr wohl, daß Feuer gefährlich ist.
The children knew very well that fire is dangerous.

Note that the current German spelling of *daß* is *dass*, which you will see in 21st-century newspapers and other mass-media publications.

Like English, German sometimes omits this very common conjunction. You can tell this has happened because then the word order of the subordinate clause appears in normal German statement order. And more helpfully than in English, such sentences in German will always use a comma to signal where one clause ends and the next one begins. For example:

Ich glaube, ich kriege ein Fahrrad zum Geburtstag!
I think I'm getting a bicycle for my birthday!

Just for illustration, this is how the same sentence would look if the speaker bothered to use the *daß* conjunction:

Ich glaube, daß ich ein Fahrrad zum Geburtstag kriege!

bevor before

Bevor es regnete, sahen wir Wolken.
Before it rained we saw clouds.

nachdem after

Erst nachdem der Schnee schmilzt, sieht man Tulpen.
Not until after the snow melts does one see tulips.

ob whether / if (only used for true/false possibilities)

Wir wissen nicht, ob er kommt.
We don't know if he's coming.

obwohl / obgleich although

Obwohl zwei fertig waren, blieben noch drei in Arbeit.
Although two were done, three were still being worked on.

seitdem since (the time when) / ever since

Seitdem sie heirateten, reisen sie jedes Jahr nach Mallorca.
Ever since they got married, they travel to Mallorca every year.

sobald as soon as

Wir fliegen, sobald das Unwetter vorbei ist.
We will fly as soon as the storm has passed.

solange as long as

Solange es so stark regnet, starten wir nicht.
As long as it rains this hard we won't take off.

während while / whereas

Während er auf der Universität studierte, lernte er seine Frau kennen.
While he was a university student, he got to know his wife.

Caution: Not to be confused with its use as a preposition meaning "during," with normal prepositional word order.

weil because

Ich trinke nachmittags Kaffee, weil ich dann schläfrig bin.
I drink coffee in the afternoon because that's when I'm sleepy.

wenn when(ever) / if (used to set a condition)

Wenn es regnet, fährt sie mit dem Bus, nicht mit dem Fahrrad.
When it rains, she takes the bus, not her bike.

Unit: 6: Conjunctions, comparatives

3. *Als*, *Wenn*, and *Wann* in Expressing Time

When used to express time relationships (like the English word “when”), *als*, *wenn*, and *wann* have quite different meanings, and they are not at all interchangeable.

The first two, *als* and *wenn*, are subordinating conjunctions as described in the previous section, and they are each used for different senses of time. *Wenn* carries the meaning of “when” in the sense of “whenever” or “if” when describing either the past or the present. *Als* is used to refer to a single event or block of time when referring to the past.

Wenn ich krank bin, bleibe ich zu Hause.

When(ever) I am sick, I stay at home. [or:] If I am sick, I stay at home.

Wenn ich krank war, blieb ich zu Hause.

When(ever) I was sick, I stayed at home.

Als ich krank war, blieb ich zu Hause.

When I was sick, I stayed at home.

The first sentence denotes repeated occurrences in the past or present, as well as potential occurrences in the future. The second sentence covers only repeated occurrences in the past, while the third refers to a particular single event in the past, in this case a particular bout with an illness.

Als sie Studentin war, war sie immer gut vorbereitet.

When she was a student she was always well prepared.

This usage of “als” refers to a single block of time in the past: one’s time as a student, one’s childhood, etc.

The question word *wann* is used solely in forming direct or indirect questions. Study the examples below:

Wann kommt der Bus? Ich weiß nicht, wann der Bus kommt.

When is the bus coming? I don’t know when the bus is coming.

Note that here the use of “*wann*” indicates either a direct or an indirect question.

Unit: 6: Conjunctions, comparatives

4. Comparison of Adjectives

Up to this point we have only dealt with adjectives in the positive form, e.g., *klein* – “small,” *rot* – “red,” etc. Now we shall consider the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives, e.g., “smaller,” “redder,” and “smallest,” “reddest.”

Comparative

The German form of the comparative is more consistent than that of English. In English, sometimes we use the word “more” to signal a comparison (example: “more consistent”), and sometimes we add a suffix **-er** (example: greener). German simply adds an **-er-** to all its adjectives. Thus, the comparative of *grün* (green) is *grüner*, that of *konsequent* (consistent) is *konsequenter*. Note that on adjectives with the vowels **a**, **o** and **u**, an umlaut is usually added in the comparative form. For example, *groß* (big) becomes *größer* (bigger), *schwarz* (black) becomes *schwärzer* (blacker).

As far as sentence constructions go, German uses the comparative form of adjectives in much the same way as English. For example:

With *als* (than):

Der Stille Ozean ist größer als die Atlantik.

The Pacific Ocean is bigger than the Atlantic.

With *je* and *desto* or *umso*:

Je älter ich werde, desto weiser bin ich.

The older I become, the wiser I am.

Je reicher er wird, umso öfter fährt er in Urlaub.

The richer he gets, the more often he travels on vacation.

But it has some other uses, too:

With *immer*:

Er läuft immer schneller.

He runs faster and faster. (*immer* is translated as another "faster.")

As an adjective modifying a noun:

Diese Familie verbrachte eine längere Zeit in Rußland.

This family spent a rather long time in Russia.

When comparative forms of adjectives are used in front of nouns, they must, like all other adjectives, have the appropriate endings. Consequently, in order to translate / read correctly, one must look closely at the form of the adjective(s) preceding a noun. Consider the following:

Gestern war ein schöner Tag.

Yesterday was a beautiful day.

Vorgestern war ein schönerer Tag.

The day before yesterday was a more beautiful day.

In the first example, read *schöner* as (*schön* + adjectival ending **-er**). In the second, read *schönerer* as (*schön* + comparative suffix **-er-** + adjectival ending **-er**).

Thus, when translating, you must analyze any **adjective endings** before rendering your translation into English. Otherwise you may mistake a normal adjective ending for a comparative suffix or vice versa.

Superlative

In English, superlative adjectives are either prefaced by "most" (as in "most beautiful") or carry the suffix **-est** (as in "biggest"). Whereas in German, you will always see the suffix **-est** or **-st** on the adjective as the **only** way to indicate superlative meaning. A general rule is: if the root adjective ends in **-d** or **-t**, then **-est** is added, otherwise **-st**.

klein- (small)

kleinst- (smallest)

rot- (red)

rötest- (reddest)

Usually you will see superlatives as modifiers of a noun, with the appropriate adjective ending appended **after** the superlative suffix. Take the superlative adjective *ältest-* (oldest):

Das ist das älteste Buch in unserer Bibliothek.

That is the oldest book in our library.

German uses this superlative form in a different way when the adjective is not modifying a noun:

Der Mercedes ist am teuersten.

The Mercedes is the most expensive.

This form is always *am* (contraction of *an + dem*, see your dictionary) followed by the superlative form of the adjective plus the grammatically appropriate adjective ending **-en**.

Unit: 6: Conjunctions, comparatives

5. Adjectives as Adverbs

In English, we generally differentiate adverbs and adjectives by adding the ending **-ly** to adjectives to form adverbs (for example: "hot", "hotly"). In German, there is no such visible difference when a word is used either as an adverb or as an adjective. (Recall, however, **Recognizing Adverbs vs. Adjectives** in Unit 4.) This applies even for comparative and superlative adjectives. In all cases you can tell from the context which meaning is being used.

Das Kind liest gut.

The child reads well.

Er läuft schneller.

He runs more quickly.

Sie läuft am schnellsten.

She runs fastest.

There are a few commonly used superlative words that are used only as adverbs such as *höchst* (highly), *äußerst* (extremely), and *meistens* (mostly). For instance,

Dieses Buch ist höchst interessant.

This book is (highly / most) interesting.

You will often see superlative constructions with *am* used in an adverbial sense, especially based on the adverbial meanings of the superlative adjectives *best-* (best), *meist-* (most), and *wenigst-* (least):

Meine Freunde haben gute Boote, aber mein Boot ist am besten ausgestattet.
My friends have good boats, but my boat is best equipped.

Sylvias Boot ist am wenigsten ausgestattet.
Sylvia's boat is the least equipped.

Sylvia brauchte am meisten unsere Hilfe.
Sylvia needed our help the most.

If you are curious about the relation between *gut* and *best*, bear with us until **the next unit**.

Unit: 6: Conjunctions, comparatives

6. *So . . . Wie . . .* Construction

The construction *so* + (adjective or adverb) + *wie* expresses a comparison of equation, equivalent to the English expression "as . . . as . . ." These two examples demonstrate an adverbial and an adjectival use:

Sie läuft so schnell wie er.
She runs as (fast / quickly) as he does.

Ihre Wohnung ist so groß wie die Wohnung ihrer Freundin.
Her apartment is as large as her friend's apartment.

Unit: 6: Conjunctions, comparatives

7. Verb Formation

WORD FORMATION

These sections of the textbook help improve your speed during the skimming phase of reading and help you gradually build vocabulary.

In Unit 5 we dealt with the formation of nouns from verbs and common adjectives. Now we will look at **the formation of verbs from adjectives and their different forms**. For example:

<i>breit</i> (broad, wide)	<i>verbreiten</i> (to broaden, widen)
<i>ganz</i> (whole)	<i>ergänzen</i> (to make whole, complete)
<i>größer</i> (bigger)	<i>vergrößern</i> (to make bigger, increase)
<i>länger</i> (longer)	<i>verlängern</i> (to make larger, lengthen)
<i>klar</i> (clear)	<i>erklären</i> (to make clear, explain)
<i>rot</i> (red)	<i>erröten</i> (to make red, blush)

As you can see we have used a simple adjective in its comparative form to make a verb by adding a prefix and the infinitive ending **-n** or **-en**.

Formation of Nouns from More Verbs

German also changes verbs into nouns by capitalizing the word and adding a noun ending. Thus, using some of our examples from above:

<i>verbreiten</i> (to broaden)	<i>Verbreiterung</i> (widening)
<i>ergänzen</i> (to make whole)	<i>Ergänzung</i> (completion)
<i>vergrößern</i> (to make bigger)	<i>Vergrößerung</i> (enlargement)
<i>verlängern</i> (to make larger)	<i>Verlängerung</i> (lengthening)
<i>erklären</i> (to make clear)	<i>Erklärung</i> (explanation)

Compare these *-ung* nouns with the kind of nouns you learned how to read in Unit 4, **Verbs as Nouns**, which were nouns formed directly from infinitive verb forms. For example, whereas *Vergrößerung* (feminine) refers to a photographic enlargement as an object – thus as the **end product** of the act –, *Vergrößern* (neuter) refers to the **act** of enlarging a photo. The neuter, infinitive-form nouns always refer specifically to the act, action, or process itself. Similarly, compare *Erklären* (the act of explaining) with *Erklärung* (the explanation itself).

As you seek to expand your vocabulary, always look closely at a word to see if a part of it is familiar to you. This will give you some indication as to the word's

general meaning, and often the context in which it appears will enable you to choose a precise meaning.

One way to increase your vocabulary is to group related words together. Thus, using one of our examples, *breit* (broad, wide), we would group it with *die Breite* (breadth, width), *verbreitern* (to make broader / to widen), and *Verbreiterung* (widening) etc. This can be one of the more stimulating ways of learning vocabulary.

Unit: 7: Perfect tenses and participles

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Identify and translate present-perfect and past-perfect tenses.
- Identify and translate participles used as adjectives or as nouns.
- Identify and translate present participles used as adjectives or adverbs.
- Analyze and translate participial phrases.

Unit: 7: Perfect tenses and participles

2. Present Perfect Tense

In English, present perfect tense is formed with the auxiliary verb "have" plus the past participle of the main verb, for example: "He **has studied** for a month." German present perfect tense likewise relies on an auxiliary verb plus the main verb's past participle. The three main differences are: 1) German allows for **two** possible auxiliary verbs: *haben* or *sein*, 2) the word order is different, and 3) their meanings are usually not the same (as discussed below).

Formation of Past Participles

German past participles are generally more instantly recognizable than English participles thanks to most of them using a **ge-** prefix. The participles of German **regular** (also called "weak") verbs are usually formed simply by adding **ge-** before the stem of the infinitive and ending with **-t** or **-et**. Thus, *gesagt* is the past participle of *sagen*, *gewartet* is that of *warten*. You will not find regular-verb participles listed separately in your dictionary, so you must be able to figure out the corresponding infinitive form on your own in order to look up the meaning.

The past participle of **irregular** (also called “strong”) verbs usually ends in **-en** and also begins with **ge-**. Thus, *geschwommen* is the participle of *schwimmen*, *geworfen* is that of *werfen*. Note the vowel change. Irregular-verb participles **are** listed with their own entries in your dictionary, so you don’t necessarily need to memorize them. Your dictionary may also have a section listing a large number of irregular verbs in all their forms.

There are exceptions to these rules for verbs with:

1. Inseparable prefixes (see Unit 4): no **ge-** is added. Thus, *verkaufen* (to sell) – *verkauft* (sold) and *verstehen* (to understand) – *verstanden* (understood).
2. Separable prefixes (see Unit 4): the **ge-** appears between the prefix and the stem of the verb e.g., *einkaufen* (to shop) becomes *eingekauft*, *aufgehen* (to rise) becomes *aufgegangen*.
3. Verbs ending in **-ieren**, e.g., *studieren*: all of these verbs are regular and therefore end in **-t**, but they never add **ge-**. Thus, the past participle of *studieren* is *studiert*, that of *interessieren*, *interessiert*. (Caution: the inseparable-prefix verb *verlieren*, the past participle of which is *verloren*, is not an **-ieren** verb.)

Syntax

As mentioned, either *haben* and *sein* may appear as the auxiliary verb in German, whereas English only ever uses “to have”. Examples:

<i>Er hat ein Buch gekauft.</i>	He bought a book.
<i>Wir haben in München studiert.</i>	We studied in Munich.
<i>Er ist in die Stadt gegangen.</i>	He went to town.
<i>Wann seid ihr nach Hause gefahren?</i>	When did you drive home?

When is *sein* the auxiliary? *Sein* is the auxiliary for many intransitive verbs, i.e., verbs that do not take a direct object. These verbs are usually verbs of motion (*gehen*) or those depicting a change of state, such as *werden* (to become) or *verschwinden* (to disappear).

The basic law of German word order covered in Unit 1, “**verb in second position**,” explains why you see the auxiliary verb – the part of the verb that is conjugated to match the subject – take the second position, while the participle appears at the end of the clause.

The position of the participle is a useful reading cue that we don't get to enjoy in English. Everything between the helping verb and the participle is the predicate of that sentence or clause. Of course, in **subordinate clauses**, as you learned in Unit 6, the auxiliary verb will appear at the very end of that clause, thus immediately **after** the participle.

Nachdem sie in den Laden gegangen ist, ist sie gleich wieder herausgekommen.

After she went into the store, she came right back out again.

Meaning

In German, unlike in English, the meaning of present-perfect tense is not different than **simple past tense**. Accordingly, it's usually more naturally translated using English **simple past tense**: "*Er hat gelernt.*" > "He studied." Other time information in the context of the text you are reading will allow you to select the best tense to use for an English translation.

Keep in mind that the term "present-perfect tense" is just a linguistic term describing **how** this tense is built, not what it **means**. The term "present-perfect tense" merely describes the technique of using a **present**-tense helping verb combined with the main verb's **perfect** (participle) form. You may find it useful to review your English grammar to become conscious of what exactly English present-perfect tense means.

- If an action is complete, i.e., "over and done with," then use the English simple past tense:

Österreich ist 1995 Mitglied der EU geworden.

Austria became a member of the EU in 1995.

Er ist eine halbe Stunde Richtung Norden gefahren.

He drove northwards for half an hour.

- Whereas if the action is still continuing from the past into the present, then use English present-perfect tense:

Österreich hat in diesem Jahr vorläufig mehr an das Ausland geliefert als vom Ausland angekauft.

So far this year, Austria has shipped more to foreign countries than it has purchased from foreign countries.

It may help to review the meaning of **German present tense** at this point. German **present** tense is actually closer to the meaning of English present-perfect tense, because English present-perfect tense expresses that the action is continuing from the past into the present, quite specifically **including the present**. Compare:

Ich bin seit sechs Jahren Student. (German present tense)

I have been a student for six years. (English present-perfect tense)

Ich bin Student gewesen. (German present-perfect tense)

Ich war Student. (German simple-past tense – exactly the same meaning)

I was a student. (English past tense)

Again, pay attention to additional time information given in the sentence when deciding how to translate German present and present-perfect verb tenses. And in the absence of additional time information, understand German present-perfect tense as English past tense.

Unit: 7: Perfect tenses and participles

3. Past Perfect Tense

German past perfect (also called pluperfect) visually differs from the German present perfect only in the tense of the auxiliary verb. The meaning of German past-perfect tense is identical to English past-perfect tense. Compare these examples:

PAST PERFECT

PRESENT PERFECT

*Er **hatte** ein Buch gekauft.*

He **had** bought a book.

*Er **hat** ein Buch gekauft.*

He **has** bought a book.

*Er **war** in die Stadt gegangen.*

He **had** gone to town.

*Er **ist** in die Stadt gegangen.*

He **has** gone to town.

The past perfect has only this one use. Just as is in the present perfect, note that the past participle appears in final position.

Unit: 7: Perfect tenses and participles

4. Word Formation from Past Participles

1. Past participles may also be used as adjectives, just as they can in English. You will usually not find these adjectives listed separately in your dictionary; you are responsible for recognizing them as participles functioning as adjectives, and for using the dictionary entry for the infinitive form of the verb to look up their meaning.

Das Fenster ist geschlossen.

The window is closed.

ein gekochtes Ei

a boiled egg

The first example should not be confused with the present perfect tense. Keep in mind that the verb *schließen* uses *haben* as a helping verb, not *sein*, to form present perfect tense. Since it is grammatically (and sensibly) impossible to read this as a verb, it is apparently being used as an adjective; it tells you the condition of the window, **not** what is happening to it.

2. Past participles may also be used as adjectival nouns.

As you learned in Unit 4, you can recognize **adjectival nouns** from their normal noun capitalization and syntax position, but with the addition of an appropriate adjective ending. Thus, for example, in nominative case:

das Geschriebene (from *schreiben* – to write)

[literally:] the written / [usually:] that which was written / [or:] what was written

das Gesagte (from *sagen* – to say)

[literally:] the said / [usually:] that which was said / [or:] what was said

In the next example, you should recognize nouns formed from the verbs *fangen* and *sagen*:

Der Gefangene entnahm dem Gesagten, daß es spät war.

The prisoner gathered from what was said that it was late.

Unit: 7: Perfect tenses and participles

5. Present Participles

Present participles are easily recognized by the addition of a **-d** to the infinitive form of the verb. Thus *schwimmend* = swimming, *laufend* = running, etc.

German uses present participles primarily as adjectives and adverbs, **not** as verbs. Remember that English present tense, "he is running," "she is swimming" etc., is expressed in German with the **present tense**: *er läuft, sie schwimmt*.

Examples of present participles as adjectives and adverbs:

Adjectives:

das spielende Kind

the playing child [or, more naturally in English:] the child who is playing

der singende Vogel

the singing bird

Adverbs:

Das Spiel ging enttäuschend aus.

The game ended disappointingly.

Der Hund stand bellend am Fenster.

The dog stood at the window barking.

Unit: 7: Perfect tenses and participles

6. Translating Participial Adjectives and Adverbs

As demonstrated previously, adjectives can be used as adverbs in German (**Unit 4**, **Unit 6**). When participial adjectives or adverbs are involved, it is common to see an adverb modifying an adjective, which can extend the complexity within a **noun phrase**.

das schnell steigende Flugzeug

the rapidly climbing airplane

das siedend heiße Wasser

the boiling-hot water

ein hart gekochtes Ei
the hard-boiled egg

die gestern gekochten Eier
the eggs boiled yesterday

mein brauner, schon gepackter Koffer
my brown suitcase, already packed

These complex noun phrases are a good opportunity to see the value in first marking off **where each noun phrase begins and ends** before attempting to translate a long sentence. It simplifies your task to know that everything inside a noun phrase can only be modifying the noun, not anything outside of the noun phrase. **Remember** that you can easily see which are adverbs and which are adjectives by simply noting which have adjective endings and which do not.

Unit: 7: Perfect tenses and participles

7. Participial Phrases

Both present and past participles are used in participial phrases.

Example using a present participle:

Im Garten spielend, sang das Kind.
Playing in the garden, the child sang.

Example using a past participle:

Immer an die Musik interessiert, ging der Student oft in die Oper.
Always interested in music, the student went to the opera often.

Note that the participle is functioning (and is located in final position) as if it were the main verb in a **subordinate clause**. Here's how you could diagram the syntax of the above participial phrases:

Verb: *spielend*
Predicate (a prepositional phrase): *im Garten*

Verb: *interessiert*

Predicate (a prepositional phrase): *an die Musik*

Which is modified by an adverb: *immer*

This highlights a fundamental reading skill: how to mentally re-order German phrases so that they make sense to you in English. The various verb tenses covered in this unit all require you to look for a participle as marking the end of a phrase, and then to work backwards from that participle in order to find the object or predicate of the phrase. In the two examples above, see the pattern of word-order shifts between the German and English renditions of the participial phrases. You will find this re-ordering skill useful throughout this course.

Try solving this more complex example yourself:

Sein Handy in der linken Hand noch am Ohr haltend, reicht mir Thomas seine rechte Hand.

Diagram of the participial phrase:

Verb: *haltend*

Object: *sein Handy*

Prepositional phrase: *in der linken Hand*

Prepositional phrase: *am Ohr*

Which is modified by an adverb: *noch*

Unit: 7: Perfect tenses and participles

8. Irregularities in the Comparative and Superlative

WORD FORMATION

These sections of the textbook help improve your speed during the skimming phase of reading and help you gradually build vocabulary.

Like English, German has some irregular forms of the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs. Consider the irregular forms "good," "better," "best," compared to the regular forms "red," "redder," "reddest." (See Unit 6.)

The most common of the adjectives and adverbs with irregular forms are:

ROOT	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
<i>gern</i> (gladly)	<i>lieber</i> (preferably)	<i>am liebsten</i> (to like most of all)
<i>gut</i> (good)	<i>besser</i>	<i>best-, am besten</i>
<i>hoch</i> or <i>hoh-</i> (high)	<i>höher</i>	<i>höchst-, am höchsten</i>
<i>nah</i> (near)	<i>näher</i>	<i>nächst-, am nächsten</i> (next, nearest)
<i>oft</i> (often)	<i>öfter</i>	<i>häufigst-, am häufigsten</i>
<i>viel</i> (much)	<i>mehr</i>	<i>meist-, am meisten</i>

Unit: 8: Werden, relative clauses

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Identify whether *werden* is being used in its root meaning or as a future-tense indicator.
- Identify and translate sentences using future or future-perfect tenses.
- Identify and translate probability statements.
- Identify and translate relative clauses.

Unit: 8: Werden, relative clauses

2. The Verb *Werden*

This verb is one of the most important verbs in the German language to master because it has a range of quite different uses and meanings. Three are covered in this unit, another (passive voice) in the next unit, and another in Unit 15 (subjunctive). So it is important for you to practice distinguishing the different usages.

When used by itself as a simple, “full” verb, *werden* means “to become,” “to turn into,” or in colloquial English, “to get,” as in:

Wir werden nicht älter, wir werden nur besser.

We don’t get older, we just get better.

It has an irregular conjugation:

Present tense:

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>werde</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>werden</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>wirst</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>werdet</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>wird</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>werden</i>

Simple past tense:

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>wurde</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>wurden</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>wurdest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>wurdet</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>wurde</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>wurden</i>

Perfect Tenses

Werden uses the auxiliary verb *sein* and the past participle *geworden*. Examples using the third person singular and plural are:

Present perfect:

Er ist alt geworden.

He has become old. / He became old.

Sie sind alt geworden.

They have become old. / They became old.

Past perfect:

Diese Maschine war zu alt geworden.

This machine had become too old.

Diese Maschinen waren zu alt geworden.

These machines had become too old.

Unit: 8: Werden, relative clauses

3. Future and Future Perfect Tenses

Werden and its present tense forms can also be used with an infinitive of a verb to form the future tense in German. For example:

Dieses Auto wird sicher schneller fahren.

This car will surely go faster.

Sie weiß nicht, ob sie heute abend kommen werden.

She doesn't know if they will come this evening.

Note: The dependent infinitive (*fahren* and *kommen* in these examples) stands in final position.

Future perfect tense is not used frequently but it is wise to be aware of it. Examples of it are:

Unser Direktor wird eine Reise um die Welt gemacht haben.

Our director will have travelled around the world.

Wir werden über 15.000 km geflogen sein.

We will have flown over 15,000 kilometers.

Note: The auxiliary verb (*haben* or *sein*) that accompanies the dependent infinitive appears **after** the past participle. To summarize: future perfect is composed of a present tense form of *werden* plus a past participle and its auxiliary:

werden + past participle + *haben* or *sein*

Unit: 8: Werden, relative clauses

4. *Werden* in Probability Statements

The verb *werden* can furthermore be used with an infinitive and usually the word *wohl*, but sometimes *doch* or *schon*, to express probability. As you will see, the examples look exactly like future tense and future perfect statements. The difference is the addition of *wohl*, *doch*, or *schon*, which can change the meaning dramatically.

A **present tense** probability statement:

Er wird wohl Deutsch studieren.

He is probably studying German. [or:] He is probably a German major.

A **past tense** probability statement:

Er wird wohl Deutsch studiert haben.

He probably (studied / has studied) German.

Follow these steps whenever you see a sentence that looks like a future or future perfect statement that contains *wohl*, *doch* or *schon* as an adverb:

1. Attempt to translate the sentence with both the verb tense (future or future perfect) and *wohl/doch/schon* in their "normal" meanings.
2. Compare that result with when you attempt to translate the sentence as a probability statement, in which case two meanings change:
 - A. Understand the verb tense as present instead of what looks like future, or as past instead of what looks like future perfect.
 - B. Understand *wohl/doch/schon* as the "probability" adverb: "probably / surely / likely" etc.
3. Pick the reading (step #1 or #2) that makes more sense. If they both could make sense, then pick #2. In other words, generally *werden + doch/schon/wohl* indicates a probability statement (option #2), unless that doesn't make real-world sense.

Work out your own translations of the five examples on this page to experience this decision-making process.

More examples:

Der spricht aber fließend! Er wird doch Deutsch studieren!?

Wow, that guy speaks fluently! Surely he's a German major!?

Sie werden dir schon die Wahrheit sagen.

I'm confident they will tell you the truth. (Note: **not** a probability statement, just regular future tense and regular *schon*.)

Sie werden dir schon viel Geld gekostet haben.

They likely cost you a lot of money.

Unit: 8: Werden, relative clauses

5. Relative Pronouns and Relative Clauses

In Unit 6, we dealt with dependent clauses as introduced by subordinating conjunctions. Now we will deal with another type of dependent clause, the relative clause which is introduced with the German equivalent of “which,” “that,” “who,” “whom,” etc. Examples in English:

I saw the cat **which** my dog hates.

I saw the cat **that** ate the mouse.

I saw the man **who** owns the cat.

I saw the house **in which** they live.

The German relative pronouns in the different cases are exactly the same as the definite article, except for those bolded below. They are translated either as “who” and its forms (“whose”, “whom”) or as “which,” “that,” and “what”:

	MASCULINE	FEMININE	NEUTER	PLURAL
NOMINATIVE	<i>der</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>die</i>
ACCUSATIVE	<i>den</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>die</i>
DATIVE	<i>dem</i>	<i>der</i>	<i>dem</i>	<i>denen</i>
GENITIVE	<i>dessen</i>	<i>deren</i>	<i>dessen</i>	<i>deren</i>

Compare these with the **definite articles** in Unit 2. The differences are in the genitive (“of which,” “whose”), where we see *dessen* and *deren*, and in the dative plural (“to which,” “to whom”), where we see *denen*.

In much older German texts, we will find another form of the relative pronoun, *welch-*, which is declined like the *der-* words as shown in Unit 3. There is **no** genitive form of *welch-* as a relative pronoun.

Relative pronouns are used to introduce relative clauses. In the English sentence, “The book that he is reading is very interesting,” the relative clause is, “that he is reading,” and the main sentence is: “The book is very interesting.” The meaning of a relative clause is to modify the item in the main sentence to which the entire relative clause refers – in this case, “book.”

There are two rules in German that make recognizing relative clauses easier than in English:

1. German only rarely omits the relative pronoun as we often do in English: "The book he is reading is interesting." Thus, normally, the relative pronoun will be the first word in the clause, unless it is used with a preposition, which will precede it – see example #6 below.
2. German marks both the beginning and the end of the relative clause with commas.

Examples of relative pronouns and clauses:

1. *Der Computer, **der** [nominative case-masculine] in diesem Zimmer steht, ist neu.*

The computer (which is) standing in this room is new.

2. *Der Computer, **den** [accusative-masculine] ich habe, ist neu.*
The computer (which) I have is new.
3. *Der Professor, **dessen** [genitive-masculine] Buch ich lese, ist wohlbekannt.*
The professor whose book I am reading is well-known.
4. *Der Student, **dem** [dative-masculine] ich das Buch gebe, heißt Hans.*
The student to whom I give the book is called Hans.
5. *Die Arbeiter, **denen** [dative-plural] wir Computer geben, sind intelligent.*
The workers to whom we give computers are intelligent.
6. *Die Maschine, mit **der** [dative-feminine] ich arbeite, ist komplex.*
The machine with which I am working is complex.

The meaning of a relative pronoun can be determined if you note the following:

1. The relative pronoun agrees in both **gender and number** with the word it refers to. Therefore, in our examples, if the noun in the main sentence is masculine and singular then the relative pronoun is masculine and singular, etc.
2. The **case** of the relative pronoun agrees with the role it plays within the relative clause, **not** by the role of the word in the main sentence to which it refers.
3. When you are in doubt about which item the clause is referring back to, assume the nearest preceding noun (whether implied or stated) that meets the first rule above.

Thus, in example #1 it is nominative since it is the subject, in #2 accusative since it is the direct object, in #3 the genitive, in #4, #5, and #6 the dative since it is the indirect object or is governed by a dative preposition or verb.

Paying attention to the agreement of gender and number can be crucial for reading comprehension. German can be much clearer and more efficient than English since one can (and sometimes must) rely on this agreement to determine exactly what is referring to what.

Unit: 8: Werden, relative clauses

6. Question Words as Relative Pronouns

Just as in English, question words such as *wo*, *was*, and *wie* sometimes function as unspecific relative pronouns, and in this case they do not signal a question. Recognize how word order signals to you that this is a relative clause and not a question:

*Sie ist sich unsicher, **was** sie bestellen wird.*
She is not sure **what** she will order.

*Ich weiß, **wo** Franz Kafka geboren ist.*
I know **where** Franz Kafka was born.

These express a less specific kind of relationship between the two phrases than a relative pronoun does. Compare the second example above with:

*Ich sah das Haus, **in dem** Franz Kafka geboren ist.*
I saw the house **in which** Franz Kafka was born.

A famous example of this kind of question-word usage is in the first line of a Goethe poem: *Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen, ...*

You may find the [Review Units 5-8](#) exercise more valuable now or as a later review opportunity.

Unit: 9: Passive voice

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Identify and translate sentences using the passive voice, in any tense.
- Identify and translate demonstrative pronouns.
- Identify and translate uses of *selbst* and *selber*.

Unit: 9: Passive voice

2. Passive Voice

So far we have been limiting ourselves to the active voice, in which a subject commits an action as, for example, in “The boy **kicks** the ball.” But you will encounter passive voice quite frequently in formal German prose. Passive voice expresses that something is done **to** the grammatical subject by someone or something. A past tense example is, “The ball **was kicked** by the boy,” or even just, “The ball **was kicked**,” which doesn’t specify who did the kicking at all. A present tense example is: “The election results **are counted** before the winners **are announced**.” As you can see, English expresses passive voice by using the verb “to be” plus the past participle of the action verb.

German expresses the passive voice by using the verb *werden* plus the past participle of the action verb. Passive voice in the various tenses is simple enough, following the rules you have learned so far, but the results are uniquely recognizable as passive voice, because *werden* is the verb that changes tense, while the action verb(s) remain as past participles:

Present tense

Dieses Schiff wird von der neuen Firma gebaut.

This ship is being built by the new company.

[or:] This ship is going to be built by the new company. (Review the **basics of present tense**.)

Past tense

Dieses Schiff wurde von der neuen Firma gebaut.

This ship was being built by the new company.

[or:] This ship was built by the new company.

Present perfect

Dieses Schiff ist von der neuen Firma gebaut worden.

This ship was built by the new firm.

Note: The auxiliary verb for *werden* is *sein*. The past participle of *werden* becomes *worden* only in passive voice (instead of the normal *geworden*).

Past perfect

Dieses Schiff war von der neuen Firma gebaut worden.

This ship had been built by the new company.

Future

Dieses Schiff wird von der neuen Firma gebaut werden.

This ship will be built by the new company.

Future perfect

Dieses Schiff wird von der neuen Firma gebaut worden sein.

This ship will have been built by the new company.

Points to remember:

1. In the passive voice, *werden* and its parts correspond to English "to be" and its parts.
2. The past participle of the action verb stands in final position within the clause or sentence (but before any parts of verbs that were sent to the end by larger-scale changes such as perfect tenses or subordinating conjunctions).
3. *worden* corresponds to English "been": Almost without exception when you see *worden* you are dealing with the passive voice in one of the perfect tenses (present or past or future). The exception is in older poetry, where *worden* may also appear as an alternative form of *geworden* generally, not just in passive voice.
4. The prepositions *von*, *durch* and *mit* are translated in the passive voice to English "by" or "with." *Von* is used to refer to agents (people, companies), *durch* to refer to means, e.g. *Das Haus wurde durch eine Bombe zerstört* (The house was destroyed by a bomb) and *mit* for instruments, e.g., *Spaghetti wird oft mit Gabel und Löffel gegessen* (Spaghetti is often eaten with a fork and spoon).
5. Passive voice, as you'll be able to tell from context, is occasionally used to express an unfriendly, commanding tone or an impersonal, bureaucratic tone.

Examples:

Stille! Hier wird jetzt gearbeitet!

Silence! Get to work now (everyone)!

Sie sagen nichts. Alle Fragen werden vom Direktor beantwortet.
You will say nothing. The director shall answer all questions.

Review the other usages of *werden* covered in **Unit 8** and then practice identifying what role *werden* is playing whenever you encounter it.

Unit: 9: Passive voice

3. Demonstrative Pronouns

The relative pronouns listed in the chart in Unit 8 may also be used as demonstrative pronouns, which are generally translated as “that one,” “the one,” or “those.” The most common uses of demonstrative pronouns which are of significance for reading and understanding written German are as follows:

1. Introducing a relative clause:

*Diese Werkzeuge sind **die**, die wir in Deutschland kauften.*
These tools are the ones (those) which we bought in Germany.

Here a demonstrative pronoun (in bold) acts as the antecedent of a relative clause, which begins after the comma. Note that the demonstrative pronoun does not change word order. The demonstrative pronoun here acts as a link between the relative clause and the subject *Diese Werkzeuge*, allowing the entire relative clause to modify *Diese Werkzeuge*, without having to appear awkwardly immediately after the word *Werkzeuge*.

Another example of this usage:

*Der Kuchen auf dem Tisch ist **der**, den ich gebacken habe.*
The cake on the table is the one I baked.

2. As a reference back to a preceding noun, without requiring a relative clause:

*Ich finde die Regeln deutscher Schulen und **die** der amerikanischen Schulen ganz anders.*
I find the rules of German schools and those of the American schools quite different.

Here the demonstrative pronoun (in bold) refers back to “*die Regeln*,” allowing a genitive relationship, *die Regeln der amerikanischen Schulen* to be expressed

without having to restate *die Regeln*. Note that the demonstrative pronoun *die* agrees in number with *die Regeln* (plural).

Another example of this usage:

*Die Computer von gestern sind kaum zu vergleichen mit **denen** von heute.*

The computers of yesterday can hardly be compared with those of today.

3. As a reference to a noun in a preceding sentence:

*Der Porsche ist ein Sportwagen. **Der** ist wirklich ein Wunderauto.*

The Porsche is a sports car. It is truly a miracle car. [or:] That is truly a miracle car.

Here the demonstrative pronoun (in bold) is used to refer back to the masculine singular subject (*der Porsche*) of the previous sentence.

Another example of this usage:

*Rosen riechen am besten. **Deren** Duft ist wunderbar.*

Roses smell the best. Their aroma is wonderful.

Special demonstrative pronouns

1. *derjenige, diejenige, dasjenige, diejenigen*

These mean "that one" or "those." As you can see, these are just the definite articles combined with "-jenige." Both parts are declined just like any other combination of article and adjective (see Unit 4) and therefore reflect the different cases.

Ich werde demjenigen wärmstens danken, der mir jetzt hilft.

I will thank most warmly whomever helps me now.

Unter eingeborenen US-Amerikanern ist der Anteil derjenigen, die eine andere Sprache sprechen, äußerst gering.

The fraction of US-born Americans who can speak another language is extremely small. (literally: Among US-born Americans, the fraction of those who speak another language is extremely small.)

Biographien können das Leben sowohl als die Umwelt desjenigen beschreiben, über den die Biographie berichtet.

Biographies can describe the life as well as the environment of their subjects. (literally: Biographies can describe the life as well of the environment of the one about whom the biography reports.)

Latein war geprägt von deutlichen Unterschieden zwischen den Varietäten der ungebildeten Bevölkerung und denjenigen der "High Society".

Latin was marked by distinct differences between the varieties spoken by the uneducated population and those of "high society."

2. *derselbe, dieselbe, dasselbe, dieselben*

Usually translatable as "the same," and function just as the words above:

Ich mag es nicht, wenn mein Chef dieselbe Krawatte trägt, die ich trage.
I don't like it when my boss wears the same tie I'm wearing.

Die Sonne kann nicht zweimal an demselben Tag aufgehen.
The sun cannot rise twice in the same day.

Unit: 9: Passive voice

4. ***Selbst*** and ***Selber***

Be careful not to confuse these two words with the similar-looking demonstrative pronouns *dieselbe* etc. described in the previous section. The meaning of either word is determined by its position in the sentence.

When *selbst* precedes the noun or phrase to which it relates, then it has the emphatic meaning "even", as an adverb:

Selbst der Direktor hat das nicht gemerkt.
Even the director did not notice that.

Selbst Haifische fressen Quallen nicht.
Even sharks don't eat jellyfish.

Ich kaufe mir keine Lotteriekarten, selbst wenn der Jackpot groß ist.
I won't buy lottery tickets even if the jackpot is big.

In other positions, *selbst* is completely equivalent to *selber*, that is, a demonstrative pronoun translated as a “-self” word. In this meaning, you again need to pay close attention to position in the German sentence. When it immediately follows an object, then it’s emphasizing that object, just like in English when you place a “-self” word immediately after an object:

Die Lehrerin selber hat das Buch geschrieben.

The teacher herself wrote the book. (This emphasizes that the teacher wrote it).

Die Lehrerin hat das Buch selber geschrieben.

The teacher wrote the book herself. (This emphasizes that the teacher wrote it herself.)

Den Kuchen habe ich selbst gebacken.

I baked the cake myself.

Unit: 9: Passive voice

5. Compound Nouns with Shared Parts

You will sometimes encounter a peculiar efficiency when a German sentence contains two or more compound nouns which share a word part. The clue to watch for is a hanging hyphen at the beginning or end of a word. Examples:

Dabei werden Ursachen von Kinderarmut in Ost- und Westdeutschland verglichen.

In the process, causes of child poverty in East and West Germany are compared.

The above example saves the writer or speaker from the tedious phrase *Ostdeutschland und Westdeutschland*.

Vorgang zum Richten insbesondere der Bandanfänge und -enden von gewalzten Metallbändern.

Procedure for straightening especially the ribbon beginnings and ends of rolled metal ribbons.

This example uses a shorter way of writing *Bandanfänge und Bandenden*. (You were introduced to this practice previously at the end of [Unit 3, section 5](#).) Just make sure your English translation clearly communicates the intended compound

meaning, given that English lacks the clarity of that hyphen. You may need to write out each compound in English.

Unit: 9: Passive voice

6. Pronoun *es* Referring to Clauses

Both German and English sometimes use the neuter pronoun "it" or *es* without referring to any specific noun in the surrounding text, but German expands that usage beyond the needs of English. In particular, German will use *es* to refer to an entire clause, particularly as a way to tie together clauses within a complex sentence, and especially when German syntax "inconveniently" wants a verbal subject or object. In the next example, *es* is referring forward to the entire *daß* clause, as a way of satisfying the German desire to have a properly located direct object for the verb *ansehen*:

Ich sehe es als unser Versagen an, daß diese alten Leute so arm sind.

I see the fact that these old people are so poor as our failure.

In the next sentence, *es* refers forward to the *daß* clause, so that the verb *stören* can have a grammatical subject, and to obey the German rule that the verb must be in second position (as covered in [Unit 1, section 9](#)):

Es störte Ingrid, daß er sein Zimmer nicht zuerst aufräumte.

It bothered Ingrid that he didn't first tidy up his room.

[or:] The fact that he didn't first tidy up his room bothered Ingrid.

How you translate such uses of *es* may vary: first you must understand its function in the German sentence, and that should guide you to an English expression of the same meaning.

Unit: 9: Passive voice

7. More Prefixes and Suffixes

WORD FORMATION

These sections of the textbook help improve your speed during the skimming phase of reading and help you gradually build vocabulary.

Adjectival Suffixes

A large number of adjectives/adverbs can be quickly recognized as the addition of a certain suffix to a noun or to the root of a verb, like in English. Some of the most common such German suffixes are:

–**bar** as in *eßbar* (edible), from *essen* (to eat); *sichtbar* (visible, seeable), from *Sicht*(sight)

–**haft** as in *lebhaft* (lively), from *leben* (to live); *zweifelhaft* (doubtful) from *Zweifel* (doubt)

–**ig** as in *mächtig* (mighty, powerful) from *Macht* (power); *krustig* (crusty) from *Kruste* (crust)

–**isch** as in *künstlerisch* (artistic) from *Künstler* (artist); *politisch* (political) from *Politik* (politics); *kindisch* (childish) from *Kind* (child)

–**lich** as in *tödlich* (deadly) from *Tod* (death) or *kindlich* (childlike) from *Kind* (child)

–**los** as in *endlos* (endless) from *Ende* (end); *erfolglos* (unsuccessful, “successless”) from *Erfolg* (success)

–**reich** as in *erfolgreich* (successful, “rich in success”) from *Erfolg* (success); *ergebnisreich* (fruitful, “rich in results”) from *Ergebnis* (result)

–**voll** as in *kraftvoll* (powerful) from *Kraft* (power); *geheimnisvoll* (mysterious, “full of secret”) from *Geheimnis* (secret)

The Noun Prefix Ge–

Examples:

Gebäck (baked goods) from *backen* (to bake)

Gebirge (mountain chain) from *Berg* (mountain)

Gedanke (thought) from *denken* (to think)

Gepäck (luggage) from *packen* (to pack)

Gespräch (conversation) from *sprechen* (to speak)

This prefix gives a collective sense to a word root.

Unit: 10: Modal verbs

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Identify and translate modal verbs, in any tense, and in a variety of their usages.
- Identify and translate sentences in which a subordinate clause is acting as the subject.

Unit: 10: Modal verbs

2. Modal Verbs

The modal verbs are those verbs which express a mood, such as “like to” or “want to.” The German modal verbs and their **basic** meanings are:

dürfen to be allowed to (in the sense of permission)

können to be able to (in the sense of ability)

müssen to have to

mögen to like to

sollen to be supposed to

wollen to want to

Present Tense

The modal verbs are irregular in the **present** tense singular but act like any other verb in the plural. Thus, for example, *dürfen* conjugates as:

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>darf</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>dürfen</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>darfst</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>dürft</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>darf</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>dürfen</i>

Similarly, the other modal verbs also change their stem in the singular conjugations (except for *sollen*). In the list below, you will also note that all modal verbs also have **no verb ending** in the first and third person singular present-tense forms (*ich / er / sie / es*). As you may recall from Unit 2, *wissen* is the only non-modal verb that shares this pattern.

The following list demonstrates the irregular singular root of each modal verb and also provides typical translations of each verb:

INFINITIVE	EXAMPLE	TYPICAL TRANSLATIONS
<i>dürfen</i>	<i>er darf</i>	he is allowed to / he may / he can
<i>können</i>	<i>er kann</i>	he is able to / he can
<i>müssen</i>	<i>er muß</i>	he has to / he must / he is required to
<i>mögen</i>	<i>er mag</i>	he likes to / he enjoys
<i>sollen</i>	<i>er soll</i>	he is supposed to / he should
<i>wollen</i>	<i>er will</i>	he wants to

Example sentences:

Amerikaner unter 21 Jahren dürfen keine alkoholischen Getränke kaufen.
Americans under 21 years may not buy alcoholic drinks.

Wer kann mir helfen?
Who can help me?

Der Student muß fleißig lernen.
The student has to study hard.

Meine Töchter mögen nicht laute Musik hören.
My daughters don't like to listen to loud music.

Was soll man mit diesem Gerät tun können?
What is one supposed to be able to do with this device?

Mein Sohn will ins Kino gehen.
My son wants to go to the cinema.

In the example above for “sollen,” you can see three verbs. *Sollen* is conjugated, but *tun können* are two infinitives. This construction is often called a “double-infinitive.” Translating this into English is simple enough, since the infinitives remain infinitives in English, too.

In general, the dependent infinitive, such as *aufräumen* or *gehen* in the examples above, appears in final position in the clause. Note the position of the infinitives in the following example:

Er will nicht sagen, ob er morgen zur Schule gehen muß.

He doesn't want to say whether he has to go to school tomorrow.

Simple Past Tense

The simple past forms of the modals are formed like regular verbs except that they drop their umlaut. Using the third person singular and plural as our examples:

INFINITIVE	3RD-PERSON		GENERAL TRANSLATIONS
	SINGULAR,	PLURAL	
<i>dürfen</i>	<i>durfte,</i>	<i>durften</i>	(was / were) allowed to
<i>können</i>	<i>konnte,</i>	<i>konnten</i>	(was / were) able to
<i>müssen</i>	<i>mußte,</i>	<i>mußten</i>	had to
<i>mögen</i>	<i>mochte,</i>	<i>mochten</i>	liked to (Note the change from g to ch .)
<i>sollen</i>	<i>sollte,</i>	<i>sollten</i>	(was / were) supposed to
<i>wollen</i>	<i>wollte,</i>	<i>wollten</i>	wanted to

Sample sentences:

Wir wollten nach Hause gehen.

We wanted to go home.

Der Ingenieur mußte die Maschine reparieren.

The engineer had to repair the machine.

Perfect Tenses

The auxiliary verb of the modals is *haben*. In the formation of both the present and past perfect tenses of the modal verbs we are introduced to a variation on the

“double infinitive” phenomenon. Rather than a past participle, you will see the infinitive form of the modal next to the dependent infinitive.

Present perfect:

Die Studentin hat diese ganze Woche fleißig lernen müssen.

The (woman) student has had to study hard this entire week.

Past perfect:

Der Ingenieur hatte die Maschine am Sonntag reparieren können.

The engineer had been able to repair the machine on Sunday.

Note that the modal perfect tenses affect the position of the auxiliary verb when it is in a subordinate clause. Instead of appearing at the very end of the clause as usual, it will appear **before** the double infinitive, and even before an adverb, if there is one. The auxiliary verb is bolded in these examples:

Present perfect:

*Die Studentin beklagte, daß sie diese ganze Woche **hat** fleißig lernen müssen.*

The (woman) student complained that she has had to study hard this entire week.

Past perfect:

*Die Fabrik funktionierte weiter, da der Ingenieur die Maschine am Sonntag **hatte** reparieren können.*

The factory continued to function because the engineer had been able to repair the machine on Sunday.

Future Tense

To form the future tense of the modal we use *werden* and its forms as we do for all future tenses. Thus, using our sentences from the present tense, we have in the future tense:

Der Student wird fleißig lernen müssen.

The student will have to study hard.

Mein Sohn wird ins Kino gehen wollen.

My son will want to go to the cinema.

Again the dependent infinitives go into final position. The difference between the structure of the future and perfect tenses is that the future uses *werden* and its forms, the perfect tenses *haben* and its forms.

Unit: 10: Modal verbs

3. Modal Verb Usages

- a. *mögen* can also be translated as "to like" instead of "to like to": *Das Kind mag Eis* (The child likes ice cream).

In addition *mag* can mean "may" suggesting possibility: *Das mag wahr sein.* (That may be true.)

- b. *können* can also be translated as "to know" in the sense of skills, e.g. *Sie kann Deutsch.* (She knows German). See also note f) below, which explains how this works.

- c. *sollen* is often used to distance the speaker from someone else's claim, like English "is said to," "is supposedly," or "allegedly":

Dieses Buch soll interessant sein.

This book is said to be interesting. [or:] This book is supposedly interesting.

And as demonstrated further in section g) below, you will often encounter present-tense usages of *sollen* with this special meaning which refer to a past event:

Sie soll auch einen dritten Brief geschrieben haben.

She allegedly wrote a third letter, too.

- d. *wollen* has two other common usages. As you will be able to tell from context, it can mean "to claim to" rather than "to want to":

Der Professor will diese Tatsache entdeckt haben.

The professor claims to have discovered this fact.

wollen can also be used like a regular, non-modal verb (even taking a direct object), like English "to want a thing":

Er will das Buch.

He wants the book.

e. *dürfen* and *müssen*

Because *müssen* and its forms so closely resemble English “must,” it is easy to mistranslate it, above all in the negative sense. For example:

Wir müssen nicht nach Hause gehen.

We do not have to go home.

müssen means “have to” and the *nicht* negates it. Thus *müssen* plus a negative means “to not have to,” **NOT** “must not.” Thus it would be a common mistake by English speakers to **misunderstand** this example as “We must not go home.”

The same danger applies when translating *dürfen*:

Wir dürfen nicht nach Hause gehen.

We are not allowed to go home. [or:] We must not go home.

An English speaker might misunderstand this sentence as: “We are allowed to not go home.”

- f. Implied infinitives: More often than in English, in German you may see modal verbs used in a sentence without any corresponding infinitive verb. In these cases, the context provides enough information to make the sentence comprehensible. Note b) above mentioned one common example (in which the implied infinitive was *sprechen*) and here are three more:

Willst du jetzt nach Hause?

Do you want to go home now?

Es ist kalt hier auf dem Balkon. Wir müssen bald ins Zimmer.

It’s cold here on the balcony. We’ll have to move inside soon.

Kommst du mit ins Kino? Nein, ich mag nicht.

Are you coming with (us/me) to the movies? No, I don’t want to.

g. With perfect and passive infinitives:

Modal verbs can also be used with dependent verbs that are not in infinitive form, such as to refer to a past event or with a passive-voice dependent verb. Note in these examples the difference in tense between the modal verb and its dependent verb. In the following four examples, the modal verbs are all in present tense, but modal verbs can potentially be used in any tense,

independent of the tense of the dependent verb. Watch for those tense differences and adapt your understanding of the meaning accordingly. In all cases, you can count on the dependent verb appearing at the end of the clause and in infinitive form, i.e., not conjugated to match a particular subject.

With perfect infinitives:

Mein Sohn soll das Buch gelesen haben.
My son is supposed to have read the book.

Der Zug muß neulich abgefahren sein.
The train must have departed recently.

With passive infinitives:

Diese Aufgabe muß getan werden.
This exercise must be done.

Der neue Prozeß kann schnell entwickelt werden.
The new process can be developed quickly.

Note: The dependent verbs stand in final position.

h. Past participle with **ge-**:

It is possible to form a past participle of the modals beginning with **ge-** and ending in **-t**, i.e., *gedurft*, *gekonnt*, *gemußt*, *gemocht*, *gesollt* and *gewollt*. However, these are only used when:

i. The modal's special meaning is used as in:

Er hat den Film gemocht.
He liked the film.

ii. The infinitive verb is not present in the sentence, only implied:

Hat er das tun können? Ja, das hat er gekonnt.
Was he able to do that? Yes, he was able to.

Unit: 10: Modal verbs

4. Subordinate Clause as Sentence

Subject

More often than in English, in German you will encounter subordinate clauses that in fact function as the sentence subject. Identify the subject, verb, and predicate in each of these examples:

Ob sie mit uns ins Kino gehen darf, bleibt unklar.

It's still not clear whether she (will be/is) allowed to go to the movies with us.

[or:] Whether she (will be/is) allowed to go to the movies with us is not clear.

Daß sie jetzt mit uns ins Kino geht, ist schön!

The fact that she is now going with us to the movies is great!

[or:] It's great that

she is now going with us to the movies!

Note that there are variations on this structure which you should be equally able to recognize:

Unklar bleibt, wie wir dahin kommen.

It's still unclear how we're going to get there.

Es war doch das Beste, daß wir gestern nicht ausgegangen sind.

It worked out for the best that we didn't go out yesterday.

Unit: 11: Infinitive usages

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Translate clauses involving multiple verbs, specifically including *lassen*, *sehen*, and *hören* as the primary verb.
- Identify and translate infinitive phrases.

Unit: 11: Infinitive usages

2. Verbs that Function Like Modals

- a. *sehen* = "to see" and *hören* = "to hear"

With *sehen* and *hören*, a dependent infinitive is used and thus a double infinitive is formed in the perfect tenses.

Present:

Er sieht den Zug ankommen.

He sees the train arrive.

Sie hört ihren Bruder singen.

She hears her brother singing.

[or:] She hears her brother sing.

Present perfect:

Er hat den Zug ankommen sehen.

He saw the train arrive.

Sie hat ihren Bruder singen hören.

She heard her brother sing(ing).

Simple past:

Er sah den Zug ankommen.

He saw the train arrive.

Sie hörte ihren Bruder singen.

She heard her brother sing(ing).

- b. *lassen*

This verb has several uses:

- i. *lassen* – to leave. In this case it functions like any other verb:

Er läßt mich allein.

He leaves me alone.

Er hat mich nie allein gelassen.

He never left me alone.

- ii. *lassen* + (an infinitive) – to let, to allow

Er läßt ihn gehen.

He lets him go.

Er hat ihn gehen lassen.

He (has) let him go.

In this case, a dependent infinitive is used and in the perfect tenses a double infinitive, just as with the modal verbs.

- c. *lassen* + (an infinitive) – to have something done.

Wir lassen ein Haus bauen.

We are having a house built.

Wir haben unser Auto reparieren lassen.

We have had our car repaired.

Again, you see a dependent infinitive, with a double infinitive in the perfect tenses. Note that there is no visible difference between usage 1.b.ii above and this usage. Now that you are aware of both possible meanings for this construction, you can rely on real-world sense-making to decide which meaning is intended.

- d. *sich lassen* + (an infinitive) – as a substitute for the passive voice (compare Unit 9). More specifically, this usage is exactly equivalent to (and is preferred over) a combination of the modal verb *können* with passive voice. It might help you to think about how this usage of *lassen* is similar to 1-b-ii above: something “lets itself be done.”

Dieses Wort läßt sich nicht leicht übersetzen.

Dieses Wort kann nicht leicht übersetzt werden.

This word cannot be translated easily.

Das Fenster läßt sich öffnen.

Das Fenster kann geöffnet werden.

The window can be opened.

Unit: 11: Infinitive usages

3. Infinitive Phrases

Modal verbs, as you have already learned, are accompanied by a dependent infinitive without *zu* (to) because the “to” is inherent in the modal: *Er muß gehen* (He has **to** go). However, both English and German employ common verbs such as “to begin,” that we use with a dependent infinitive (“It begins to rain.”). Likewise, adding a bit more complexity, both English and German use dependent infinitives that have their own predicates (“It is his plan **to develop** a new engine.”).

a. Verbs with infinitives and *zu*

Heute beginnt es zu schneien.

Today it (begins / is beginning) to snow.

Wir haben beschlossen, unsere Ferien in Deutschland zu verbringen.

We have decided to spend our holiday in Germany.

Der Ingenieur versucht, einen neuen Plan zu entwickeln.

The engineer is trying to develop a new plan.

The dependent infinitive stands, as usual, in final position in the sentence, but it is preceded by a *zu*. If the dependent infinitive involves an entire phrase, as in our second and third examples, this phrase is separated from the main clause by a comma. Note that the structure of longer infinitive phrases appears to an English speaker to be in reverse order.

When the dependent infinitive is a separable-prefix verb, the *zu* appears between the prefix and the stem of the verb, as in:

Er vergaß, das Fenster aufzumachen.

He forgot to open the window.

Modal verbs can also appear in these constructions:

Ich hoffe, eines Tages deutsche Zeitungen ohne Wörterbuch lesen zu können.

I hope to be able to read German newspapers without a dictionary someday.

In the same way English does, German permits infinitive phrases to refer to completed actions, by using an infinitive form of present-perfect tense. Compare the preceding, modal example with the following, completed-action example. Notice how the helping verb of the present-perfect tense (in this case, *haben*) fits into the phrase at the same place the modal verb did above:

Sie verspricht, vor nächster Woche eine deutsche Zeitung gelesen zu haben.

She promises to have read a German newspaper before next week.

or:

She promises that she will have read a German newspaper before next week.

Here is an extensive but not exhaustive list of German verbs that can be used with dependent infinitives and **zu**. You will notice that they are, for the most part, counterparts of English verbs which function in the same way.

<i>anfangen / beginnen</i>	to begin
<i>aufhören</i>	to stop / to cease
<i>befehlen</i>	to order
<i>beschließen</i>	to decide
<i>brauchen</i>	to need
<i>drohen</i>	to threaten
<i>hoffen</i>	to hope
<i>pflügen</i>	to be used to (in the habit of)
<i>scheinen</i>	to seem / to appear
<i>vergessen</i>	to forget
<i>verlangen</i>	to demand
<i>vermögen</i>	to be capable
<i>versprechen</i>	to promise
<i>versuchen</i>	to try />to attempt
<i>wagen</i>	to risk

<i>wünschen</i>	to wish
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<i>zögern</i>	to delay
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Note when translating such constructions that English sometimes requires the gerund form (**-ing**) of the dependent verb:

Gestern fing es zu regnen an, und heute regnet es immer noch.
It started raining yesterday and it's still raining today.

b. Infinitive clauses with nouns

Das ist ein Befehl, vorwärts zu ziehen.
That is a command to move forward.

Das ist ein Versuch, die neu entdeckten Mineralen zu untersuchen.
That is an attempt to test the newly discovered minerals.

c. The verb *sein* plus *zu* and an infinitive

In terms of how it is translated, this construction is quite different from those above. Consider the following examples:

Dieses Buch ist zu lesen.
The book is to be read.

In Minnesota sind viele Seen zu sehen.
In Minnesota many lakes are to be seen.

It is sometimes more natural in English to express this meaning using a passive voice construction with the modal verb "must" or "can." We could optionally translate the first sentence as "This book must be read," or the second as "In Minnesota many lakes can be seen." In fact, the *sich lassen* passive construction in 1. d) above carries a meaning similar to this construction.

Note that the above two examples do **not** have an adjective as the predicate of *sein*. When you **do** see an adjective there, the meaning will be easy to read, since English uses this same construction to express the same meaning:

*Dieses Buch ist **schwierig** zu lesen.*
This book is hard to read.

*Im starken Winde wird das Boot **leicht** umzukippen sein.*
In a strong wind, the boat will be easy to tip over.

Unit: 11: Infinitive usages

4. Common Infinitive Constructions

As is true for all dependent constructions, including the infinitive clauses described above, it is helpful to remember that German abides by two rules that give you visual cues about the structure of sentences:

1. All dependent constructions, whether clauses or phrases, are separated from main clauses by a comma or commas.
2. Verbs stand in final position in dependent clauses and phrases.

There are three prepositions that in infinitive clauses take on special but commonly used meanings:

- a. *um . . . zu* + infinitive = "in order to"

Sie lernt fleißig, um das Examen zu bestehen.
She studies hard in order to pass the exam.

- b. *ohne . . . zu* + infinitive = "without" + present participle.

Wir sind nach Frankreich gereist, ohne Paris zu besuchen.
We travelled to France without visiting Paris.

- c. *anstatt* (sometimes *statt*) . . . *zu* + infinitive = "instead of" + present participle.

Anstatt zu arbeiten, sind wir ins Kino gegangen.
Instead of working we went to the cinema (movies).

Unit: 12: Da- compounds

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Identify and translate *da-* and *hier-* words.
- Identify and translate *da-* and *wo-* clauses.

Unit: 12: Da- compounds

2. *Da-* Compounds

German can use words formed by affixing **da-** or **dar-** to the beginning of a preposition in order to refer back to something. In its most basic usage, we usually translate a *da-* compound into English as a preposition followed by a pronoun.

Er hat einen Bleistift. Er schreibt damit.

He has a pencil. He is writing with it.

Hier ist ein Stuhl. Sie sitzt darauf.

Here is a chair. She is sitting on it.

Note that the form **dar-** is used when the preposition begins with a vowel.

Unit: 12: Da- compounds

3. Some Common *Da-* Words

In older forms of English and often in English-language legal documents, there are a large variety of words formed with the prefix **there-**, such as “therefore,” “thereby,” “therein,” “thereafter,” etc. In German there are a number of similar adverbs, which represent special meanings of **da-** compounds (remember that one of the meanings of *da* is “there”).

Be sure not to confuse these **da-** words with the **da-** compounds described above. The difference is that these adverbs use **da-** to refer not to a specific object already mentioned in the text, but rather to a more abstract concept, such as a time or logic relationship. **Da-** words have their own entries in your dictionary, whereas simple **da-** compounds as above do not.

Sie bringt immer einen Regenschirm, damit sie nie naß wird.

She always brings an umbrella, so that she never gets wet.

Er sprang von der Mauer. Dabei brach er das Bein.

He jumped from the wall. In the process he broke his leg.

Sie kaufte die Aktien rechtzeitig und wurde dadurch reich.
 She bought the stock at the right time and thereby became rich.

Ich habe kein Geld. Dafür bin ich gesund und glücklich.
 I have no money. On the other hand, I'm healthy and happy.

Following are some commonly used **da-** words:

<i>dabei</i>	in the process, in this matter, there, at the same time, as well
<i>dadurch</i>	thereby, in doing so
<i>dafür</i>	instead, on the other hand
<i>dagegen</i>	but, in comparison, on the other hand, whereas
<i>daher</i>	therefore, that is why
<i>damit</i>	so that, because of that, with that / this
<i>danach</i>	accordingly
<i>daneben</i>	compared with (something or someone), at the same time, as well as (something, that)
<i>darauf</i>	after that
<i>darin</i>	in this respect
<i>darüber hinaus</i>	beyond that, furthermore
<i>darum</i>	because of that
<i>darunter</i>	among them
<i>dazu</i>	along with (it / that), in addition to (it / that), for (it / that), about (it / that)

Unit: 12: Da- compounds

4. Hier- Words

Again, just as in older English "herewith," "hereupon," and "heretofore," German has parallel constructions. Examples are *hiermit*, *hierauf*, *hierzu*. We translate the

hier- with "it," "that," or "those," whichever fits the context, along with the preposition as appropriate. For example:

Hiermit schließen wir diese Übung.

With this we end this exercise.

Hierzu brauchen wir viel Geld.

To do that we need a lot of money.

[or:] For this purpose we will need a lot of money.

[or:] To achieve that we need a lot of money.

Unit: 12: Da- compounds

5. **Da-** Clauses

Some **da-** compounds are used before a clause beginning with *daß* or a dependent infinitive construction with *zu*. These are anticipatory **da-** words:

Mein Vater hat nichts dagegen, daß wir oft ins Kino gehen.

My father has nothing against the fact that we go to the movies often.

[or:] My father has nothing against our going to the movies often.

Wir denken oft daran, nach Deutschland zu reisen.

We often think of travelling to Germany.

In both of these sentences, the **da-** compound serves the grammatical function of allowing the entire dependent clause to serve as the object of the preposition within the **da-** compound. In other words, in the first sentence, you are learning to recognize that the entire *daß* clause is the object of the preposition *gegen*. Likewise, in the second sentence, the **dar-** prefix serves like a signpost so that you will see the neighboring infinitive clause as the object of the preposition *an*. Observe how this same relationship gets expressed quite literally in the English translations.

Be sure to remember that the preposition captured inside of a **da-** compound still communicates its normal meaning within its local clause. In the first example above, note how the meaning of *gegen* is still crucial to understanding the first clause, as part of the idiomatic phrase *nichts gegen etwas haben*. In the second example, note how *an* is still functioning in its capacity of determining which meaning of *denken* is in use here (see dictionary for *denken + an*).

By the way, generally speaking, when the **da**-word refers to an idea in which the subject is different from the subject of the main clause, the **da**-word will point to a dependent clause (a complete statement with subject, verb, predicate). See the first example above. Whereas when the subjects are the same, an infinitive phrase with *zu* is used, as in the second example above.

More examples for you to work through on your own:

Morgen sprechen wir darüber, wie wir das bezahlen werden.

Tomorrow we'll talk about how we're going to pay for that.

Eine Vielzahl von Fehlern in medizinischen Doktorarbeiten ist auch darauf zurückzuführen, dass die Betreuungssituation nicht so gut ist.

A number of errors in medical dissertations can also be traced back to the fact that the advising situation is not so great.

Sie träumt davon, eine Pflanze zu werden.

She dreams of becoming a plant.

Unit: 12: Da- compounds

6. Wo- Words

In addition to the question words you learned about in **Unit 1**, more complex question words exist that follow the same approach as **da**- compounds. By prefixing any preposition with **wo**- or **wor**-, a "what?" (German *was*?) question is posed.

Womit schreiben Sie?

With what are you writing?

Worauf stehen Sie?

On what are you standing?

Unit: 12: Da- compounds

7. Wo- Clauses

Wo- words also appear sometimes as equivalents to relative pronouns when they refer to inanimate objects:

Das Haus, worin ich wohne, ist neu.

The house in which I live is new.

This sentence has the same meaning as the sentence: *Das Haus, in dem ich wohne, ist neu.*

Der Stuhl, worauf sie steht, ist unsicher.

The chair on which she is standing is unsafe.

This sentence has the same meaning as: *Der Stuhl, auf dem sie steht, ist unsicher.*

You may find the

Review Units 9-12 exercise more valuable now or as a later review opportunity.

Unit: 13: Extended adjective constructions

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Identify and translate extended adjective constructions.

Unit: 13: Extended adjective constructions

2. Extended Adjective Constructions

Using Participles

In Unit 7 we learned how present and past participles can be used as adjectives in German, e.g., *ein gekochtes Ei* ("a boiled egg" or "an egg that is boiled") and *der singende Vogel* ("the singing bird" or "the bird that is singing"). Thus you can see that the participle can be translated with a relative clause beginning with "that."

German, unlike English, can provide even more extensive information about the noun simply by placing an entire phrase as a modifier before a noun. For example, an entire participial phrase of any length can appear between a noun and its article:

ein in Wasser gekochtes Ei

an egg boiled in water / an egg that is boiled in water

ein in heißem Wasser gekochtes Ei

an egg boiled in hot water / an egg that is boiled in hot water

ein in heißem Wasser gekochtes und dann gegessenes Ei

an egg boiled in hot water and then eaten / an egg that is . . .

The use of such constructions is quite common in scientific and professional literature and, consequently, we must learn how to identify such constructions and how to translate them.

Note in the above examples that there is no finite (conjugated) verb and that the participles have endings, which indicates that they are functioning as adjectives. Thus we are dealing with a phrase modifying a noun, not with a sentence. Note, too, that the introductory word is followed immediately by a preposition, which is one common indicator of an extended adjective construction. Extended adjective constructions using a participial phrase, such as the examples above using the past participles *gekocht* and *gegessen*, are the most common type. For example, the structure of *der im Käfig singende Vogel*, which uses the present participle *singend*, can be understood as:

der

introductory word (article / adjective) +

im Käfig

prepositional phrase +

singende

participial adjective +

Vogel

noun

To translate this phrase, we link the introductory word with the noun, e.g., *der + Vogel* ("the bird"), and then translate in reverse order: *singende + im Käfig* ("singing in the cage").

Example sentences using participles:

Münchener sind die in München wohnenden Leute.

"Münchener" are the people living in Munich.

[or:] "Münchener" are the people who live in Munich.

Ich habe ein in Stuttgart gebautes Auto.

I have a car built in Stuttgart.

Unit: 13: Extended adjective constructions

3. More Examples of Extended Adjective Constructions

Using prepositional phrases and regular adjectives:

Diese Flüssigkeit ist kein in Wasser löslicher Stoff.

This fluid is not a substance soluble in water.

Die Kommission sucht die für diese Taten verantwortlichen Soldaten.

The commission is looking for the soldiers responsible for these deeds.

Without introductory articles / adjectives:

In Rußland gefundene Kunstwerke sollen zurückgegeben werden.

Art works found in Russia shall be returned.

Wasser und Öl sind zu festen Stoffen werdende Flüssigkeiten.

Water and oil are liquids that turn into solid substances.

Without prepositional phrases:

Hier wohnen das Landleben liebende Bauern.

Here live farmers who love life on the land.

Die die Literatur liebenden Studenten studieren oft Anglistik.

The students who love literature often major in English.

Er sucht den Lauf der Maschine betreffende Vorschriften.

He is looking for rules concerning the operation of the machine.

With two adjacent prepositions:

In für Strahlen undurchlässigen Stoffen wurde kein solches Molekül gefunden.

No such molecule was found in substances impermeable to rays.

Viele dieser Frauen werden auf in England sich befindenden Universitäten arbeiten.

Many of these women will work at universities situated in England.

Unit: 13: Extended adjective constructions

4. Translating Extended Adjective Constructions

No matter what kind of extended adjective construction you come across, always remember that none of the words appearing before the noun are the main verb of the sentence and that they all **belong together**.

The following examples explain methods to translate some of the example sentences from **the preceding section**.

Example: *Diese Flüssigkeit ist kein in Wasser löslicher Stoff.*

As soon as you see an introductory article or adjective followed by a prepositional phrase (such as *kein in Wasser . . .*), then find the word that follows the prepositional phrase (*löslicher*). The prepositional phrase is acting as a modifier of that subsequent word, so mark off the prepositional phrase and that modified word (a participial adjective or regular adjective) from the rest of the construction (*kein + Stoff*) and first translate what remains: "This fluid is not a substance." Then come back to the phrase you marked off (as described in Section 1 of this unit): "soluble"+ "in water," knowing that it is a modifier of "substance."

Example: *In Rußland gefundene Kunstwerke sollen zurückgegeben werden.*

If there is no article or adjective (such as *In Rußland . . .*), then separate the prepositional phrase (*In Rußland*) and its following adjective (*gefundene*) and translate the remaining word(s) (*Kunstwerke*) before translating the prepositional phrase and adjective: "works of art" + "found" + "in Russia"

Example: *Die die Literatur liebenden Studenten studieren oft Anglistik.*

When two articles appear together (*Die die*), you are dealing with either an extended adjective construction or a relative-pronoun clause. If it's the former, then recognize the first one as the beginning of the entire enclosing **noun phrase**. That tells you that everything in between is just modifiers of the main noun: the second (*die*) and the noun that follows it (*Literatur*) plus the word

after the noun (*liebenden*). Then follow the same procedure as above: “the” + “students” + (who are) “loving” + “the literature”

Example: *In für Strahlen undurchlässigen Stoffen wurde kein solches Molekül gefunden.*

If you come across two prepositions together (*In für*), then separate off the internal **prepositional phrase** (*für Strahlen*), as well as any remaining words (*undurchlässigen*). Then follow the same procedure as above: “in” + “substances” + “impermeable” + “for rays”

You can practice your analysis of some of this unit’s examples by playing the [Unit 13 Syntax Untangler](#) activity. (Link opens in a new window.)

Unit: 13: Extended adjective constructions

5. Further Advice Regarding Extended Adjective Constructions

Despite its length, an extended adjective construction is no different from a regular adjective: it appears before a noun and has the appropriate adjectival ending. If it appears in a series of adjectives then it will usually be separated from other adjectives (or extended adjective constructions!) by a comma:

ein in Stuttgart gebautes, deutsches Auto
a German car built in Stuttgart

das in Frankfurt stehende, von dem berühmten Architekten entworfene Gebäude
the building which was designed by the famous architect and is situated in Frankfurt

Occasionally an extended adjective construction will appear within another extended adjective:

das von dem in Frankfurt wohnenden Architekten entworfene Gebäude
the building designed by the architect who lives in Frankfurt

The outermost extended adjective construction modifies *Gebäude*: *das von . . . Architekten entworfene Gebäude*. The inner construction modifies *Architekten*: *dem in Frankfurt wohnenden Architekten*. Then we begin to translate in the following order:

das Gebäude entworfene von dem Architekten wohnenden in Frankfurt
the + building + designed + by the architect + living + in Frankfurt

In other words we do **not** read in a straight line but rather we move from beginning to end and then backwards, quite the opposite of what we would do in English. And when these constructions are nested inside each other, we read from the outermost to the innermost.

Although you may find these constructions frustrating at first, as you gain comfort via practice, you will come to appreciate how efficiently they allow complex relationships to be communicated.

Unit: 14: Subjunctive I

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Identify and translate the subjunctive I verbal mood.

Unit: 14: Subjunctive I

2. Subjunctive Mood

Up to this point we have dealt with sentences in the indicative mood, which is the verb mood used to communicate facts. Now we introduce the subjunctive mood of verbs, which signals hypothetical or contingent actions. In German it is also used in indirect discourse (reported speech), to reflect what someone thinks or feels about something, and in conditional sentences (i.e., “if . . . then” sentences). German has two forms of the subjunctive: Subjunctive I, which this unit covers and which relates to indirect discourse and some special uses; and Subjunctive II, which deals with conditional sentences and which is covered in Unit 15.

Unit: 14: Subjunctive I

3. Subjunctive I

In German, whenever someone else's statements are reported or their feelings or opinions are expressed, the subjunctive I mood is used, and that mood is signaled by distinctive forms of the conjugated verbs. Contrast these examples:

In the English sentence, "They say that she is going to Germany," the verbs "say" and "is going" are in the indicative mood.

In the German equivalent, *Man sagt, daß sie nach Deutschland reise*, the verb "sagt" is in the indicative mood, but the verb "reise" is in the subjunctive mood, because it is reported speech (**indirect** discourse).

The meaning of the mood change is to signal that the author of the sentence does not necessarily vouch for the truth of the statement; it allows a writer to remain neutral regarding what he or she is reporting. Note that if the statement is given as a **direct** quotation, then the indicative mood of the original statement remains: *Er sagte: "Sie reist nach Deutschland."*

The forms of the verb in the subjunctive are as follows (using the weak verb *reisen* (to travel) as our example):

Present Tense

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>reise</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>reisen</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>reiest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>reiset</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>reise</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>reisen</i>

Note: This only differs from the indicative mood in the second person singular and plural (**-est** and **-et** instead of **-st** and **-t**) and the third person singular (**-e** instead of **-t**). Compare the [chart of indicative endings](#) in Unit 2.

All verbs in German except for the verb **sein** follow this conjugation in the present tense subjunctive mood. Thus even the irregular (strong) verb **wissen** (to know a fact) follows the same pattern:

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
	<i>ich</i>	<i>wisse</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>wissen</i>

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST				
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>wissest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>wisset</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>wisse</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>wissen</i>

The only exception is, however, very important: *sein* (to be)

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>sei</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>seien</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>seiest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>seiet</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>sei</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>seien</i>

Note that *sein* takes no ending in the first and third person singular. These forms are important because they correspond to English "be" and "let be," dependent on context (explained in the [last section](#) of this unit). Compare the equivalent [indicative chart for *sein*](#) in Unit 1.

Past Tenses

The verb forms in the past tense subjunctive are likewise very simple. They are based upon the present tense forms of ***haben*** and ***sein*** plus the past participle of the verb in question.

Present perfect:

*Man sagt, daß sie nach Deutschland **gereist sei**.*

They say that she went (has gone) to Germany.

*Man sagt, daß er fleißig **gearbeitet habe**.*

They say that he (has) worked diligently.

Past perfect:

*Es wurde berichtet, daß sie nach Deutschland **gereist seien**.*

It was reported that they had travelled to Germany.

*Es wurde berichtet, daß sie das Examen **bestanden habe**.*

It was reported that she had passed the examination.

You can see that we translate the forms of *haben* and *sein* in the subjunctive past tense according to how the reported statement is introduced. Generally speaking, if the context is in the future tense or present tense (*man sagt*) then we translate the reported statement in simple past or present perfect; if the context is already in past tense (*es wurde berichtet*) then the reported statement is best translated in the past perfect tense.

Future Tense

Just as in the indicative mood, we can recognize future tense by the use of **werden** with an infinitive. The conjugated verb, *werden*, appears in its subjunctive I form:

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>werde</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>werden</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>werdest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>werdet</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>werde</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>werden</i>

Examples:

Man sagt, daß sie nach Deutschland reisen werde.

They say that she will travel to Germany.

Es wurde berichtet, daß sie nach Deutschland reisen werde.

It was reported that she would travel to Germany.

Note: The subjunctive forms of *werden* can optionally be translated as “would.”

Unit: 14: Subjunctive I

4. Challenges of Translation

In each of the sentences we have used to demonstrate the use of Subjunctive I, the conjunction *daß* (or *dass* in the new spelling) has been included. It is not necessary to include it when we are reporting speech, thoughts, etc., in German, because the **form of the verb** in the reported matter is the crucial signal to the reader that the statement is a reported one (thus not necessarily factually true!). The ability to specify this mood in German can be difficult to translate into English, since English has no such accuracy of verb moods.

Here are two different, but successful translations of a subjunctive I verb:

Die Zeitschrift berichtete, daß Gase aus der Höhle giftig seien.
The journal reported that gases from the cave are poisonous.

Die Zeitschrift berichtete über die Expedition. Die Gase aus der Höhle seien giftig.

The journal reported on the expedition. According to the report, the gases from the cave are poisonous.

In the first example, the subjunctive I meaning is successfully conveyed by the clarity in the English sentence that the "are" claim is only according to the journal. Whereas in the second example, which is broken into separate sentences, the English verb "are" is not sufficient to clarify that, so you need to **add an English expression to convey the meaning of German subjunctive I**.

Study this example:

Der Kanzler gab gestern eine Pressekonferenz. Er werde morgen nach China fliegen, da ein Abkommen jetzt vorbereitet sei. Im übrigen komme der chinesische Premier nächstes Jahr nach Deutschland.

The Chancellor gave a press conference yesterday. He stated that he will fly to China tomorrow, because a treaty is now prepared. The Chancellor also claimed that the Chinese Premier will visit Germany next year.

As you can see, you may find various ways to translate the subjunctive I mood, but there is no simple, direct way to translate it. You should study how English-language reports like this are phrased in news sources or scientific journals if you would like inspiration for other ways to express this.

Word Order

Besides using the subjunctive I mood in normal statement word order, as in the above example, German sentences sometimes omit a conjunction that joins two phrases. Since subordinating conjunctions affect word order ([see Unit 6](#)), omitting a conjunction can result in a "normal" word order where you may expect something else. For example, these two sentences have the exact same meaning:

Man sagt, daß sie nach Deutschland reise.
Man sagt, sie reise nach Deutschland.

Summary

In summary, you will not always see the conjunction *daß* before all that is reported, nor will you see repetition of the introductory phrase such as *Man sagt* or *Es wurde*

berichtet. In fact, once it is established that someone said, reported, thought or felt something about a subject, then the subjunctive I mood will be the only signal of whether the statement is a reported one or one presented by the author of the text as true.

Unit: 14: Subjunctive I

5. Other Uses of Subjunctive I

Sei and *seien* – “to let be”:

Es sei hier erwähnt, daß . . .

Let it be mentioned here, that . . .

[or:] Let us mention here that . . .

X und Y seien die Achsen.

Let X and Y be the axes.

Recipes, directions (usually with the pronoun “man” as the subject):

Man koche ein Liter Wasser.

Boil a liter of water.

Man nehme ein Pfund Schokolade.

Take a pound of chocolate.

Wishes and exhortations:

Lang lebe die Königin.

Long live the Queen.

Er ruhe in Frieden.

May he rest in peace.

Unit: 15: Subjunctive II

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Identify and translate the subjunctive II verbal mood.

Unit: 15: Subjunctive II

2. Subjunctive II Meaning

In the previous unit we dealt with the subjunctive as used in indirect discourse and a few other special cases. That was Subjunctive I. Subjunctive II is the form of subjunctive used in wishes and conditional sentences to signal whether a situation is hypothetical or not. Its most common usage is in “if . . . then” statements. For example, when the German words *wenn* (if) and *so* or *dann* (then) precede the clauses in the sentence, you can often expect the verbs to appear in their subjunctive II forms. This mood is usually expressed in English with the verb “would” or with the simple past form of the verb: “I would buy one, if I had the money.”

If the concept of the subjunctive mood is unfamiliar to you, an informal, but accurate, online introduction to the subjunctive mood as used in both English and German can be found at: <http://german.about.com/od/grammar/a/konjunktivII.htm> (link opens in new window).

Unit: 15: Subjunctive II

3. Subjunctive II Forms

Whereas the **subjunctive I forms** of the verbs are based on the infinitive form (*sei* from *sein*, *habe* from *haben*, etc.), the subjunctive II forms are based on the simple-past forms of the verbs.

The reading challenge for you is that whereas subjunctive I verb forms are always clearly, visibly unique to subjunctive I, subjunctive II forms are only distinctively unique for **some irregular** verbs. For **regular** and some other irregular verbs, the subjunctive II present-tense forms are completely identical to the indicative (normal) **simple-past** verb forms. Fortunately, for this very reason, it is for **irregular** verbs that you will more often encounter subjunctive II usages.

Present Tense

Taking the **irregular** verbs *haben* and *sein* as examples, note that the verb **endings** are all the same as for subjunctive I (which is a helpful cue) and that the

roots are the verbs' **simple-past forms** (which is a similarity you'll need to watch out for):

PERSON		SINGULAR		PLURAL
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>hätte / wäre</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>hätten / wären</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>hättest / wärest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>hättet / wäret</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>hätte / wäre</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>hätten / wären</i>

For these two very common verbs you can also see that the easily recognizable differences from the simple-past verb forms (e.g., *hatte / war*) are: 1) the umlaut and 2) – in some cases – the signature additional syllable (spelled with **-e-**) that is shared by subjunctive I and II. For other irregular verbs, consult the irregular-verb chart in your dictionary to check whether a particular verb form you see is simple-past indicative or present-tense subjunctive II.

For **regular** verbs and any irregular verbs that have no such visible distinction, you will need to consider context, such as the *Wenn ... , dann ...* construct, to make that reading decision.

Examples demonstrating both regular and irregular verbs:

Wenn er viel Geld hätte, (so) reiste er nach Deutschland.

If he had a lot of money, he would travel to Germany.

Wenn sie reich wäre, (so) kaufte sie ein neues Haus.

If she were rich, she would buy a new house.

Wenn ihre Eltern kämen, (dann) gingen sie ins Restaurant.

If their parents came, they would go to a restaurant.

Here's a time-saving tip to help you recognize subjunctive II for some common irregular verbs whose vowels do **not** take an umlaut to signal subjunctive II mood: Verbs whose past-tense, singular, 1st- and 3rd-person forms do not end with an **-e**, such as *gehen (ging)*, *bleiben (blieb)*, etc., **do** get an **-e** ending in their subjunctive II form. The top example here is in indicative past tense, and the lower one is in subjunctive II present tense:

Ging er? Ich blieb....

Did he go ...? I stayed

Ginge er Wenn ich bliebe,

If he were going ... If I were to stay ...

Past Tense

As with subjunctive I, the subjunctive II past tense follows the model of German present-perfect tense. (So there are no "simple past" subjunctive forms at all.) So when you encounter a present-perfect construction which uses the above subjunctive-II forms of the auxiliary verb *haben* or *sein* instead of their normal present-tense indicative forms, then you are dealing with past tense subjunctive II mood.

Wenn sie nach Deutschland gereist wären, (so) hätten sie den Kölner Dom gesehen.

If they had travelled to Germany then they would have seen Cologne cathedral.

Wenn der Ingenieur die Maschine richtig repariert hätte, (dann) wäre der Unfall nicht geschehen.

If the engineer had repaired the machine correctly, (then) the accident would not have happened.

See how this same pattern works even when a modal verb is involved:

Ich hätte das gestern machen sollen.

I should have done that yesterday.

Wir brachten unsere Schlafsäcke mit, falls wir übernachten hätten müssen.

We brought our sleeping bags along, in case we would have had to stay overnight.

Can you construct how the above examples would appear if they were indicative (normal) statements instead of subjunctive II?

Unit: 15: Subjunctive II

4. Würde Construction

This construction is a common way of expressing the subjunctive II mood. You will encounter it as predominant in spoken, informal, and contemporary German generally, and for those verbs whose subjunctive II form of the verb is

indistinguishable from simple-past tense. Like the English “would” construction, it is based on the subjunctive II form of *werden* plus an infinitive, which makes it quite easy to read for English speakers:

PERSON	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
1ST	<i>ich</i>	<i>würde</i>	<i>wir</i>	<i>würden</i>
2ND	<i>du</i>	<i>würdest</i>	<i>ihr</i>	<i>würdet</i>
3RD	<i>er/sie/es</i>	<i>würde</i>	<i>sie/Sie</i>	<i>würden</i>

Examples:

*Wenn Sie fleißig lernten, so **würden** Sie das Examen **bestehen**.*

If you studied hard, you would pass the exam.

*Wenn ich mehr Zeit hätte, **würde** ich um die ganze Welt **reisen**.*

If I had more time, I would travel around the whole world.

*Wenn sie die Ruinen entdeckt hätten, **würden** sie ein Buch darüber **geschrieben haben**.*

If they had discovered the ruins, they would have written a book about it.

The above examples could also have been expressed using subjunctive II forms of the main verbs. This is less likely, but in any case, the meanings would be identical:

*Wenn Sie fleißig lernten, so **bestünden** [or:] **beständen** Sie das Examen.*

If you studied hard, you would pass the exam.

*Wenn ich mehr Zeit hätte, **reiste** ich um die ganze Welt.*

If I had more time, I would travel around the whole world.

*Wenn sie die Ruinen entdeckt hätten, **hätten** sie ein Buch darüber **geschrieben**.*

If they had discovered the ruins, they would have written a book about it.

Unit: 15: Subjunctive II

5. Challenges of Translation

It is important to note the following points:

- a. *hätte* and its forms can be translated as "had" or "would have."
- b. *wäre* and its forms can be translated as "were," "would be" and "would have."
- c. *würde* and its forms can be translated as "would" when used with other infinitives, "would become" by themselves; "would be" or "were" in the passive voice.
- d. Subjunctive II is also sometimes used to "soften" a request, question, or statement, simply making it more polite. Usually this translates fairly directly into English, but sometimes it will help you to notice this particular intention when translating.
- e. Sometimes the rules of English will require you to translate German subjunctive mood using the English subjunctive construction "were to (infinitive verb)":

Wenn ich es heute kaufen würde, ginge der Preis morgen sicher noch tiefer.

If I were to buy it today, the price would surely fall even further tomorrow.

- f. In "if – then" sentences, the verb is in final position in the "if" clause, the clauses are separated by a comma, and the "then" clause is the main sentence. Also, the words *dann* or *so* may be omitted from the "then" clause.
- g. You will also encounter "if – then" statements without *wenn*. Your clue will be that the verb appears in first position, which otherwise only occurs in questions or in commands:

In indicative (normal) mood:

Nimmt der Widerstand zu, (dann) mindert sich der Strom.

If resistance increases, then current decreases.

The equivalent sentence in subjunctive mood:

Nähme der Widerstand zu, minderte sich der Strom.

If resistance were to increase, current would decrease.

More examples:

Hätte ich viel Geld, (so) würde ich ein Haus kaufen.

Had I a lot of money, then I would buy a house.

[or:] If I had a lot of money, I would buy a house.

Führe sie nur öfter Rad, brauchte sie weniger Blutdruckmedikamente.
 If she would just bike more often, she would need less blood-pressure medication.

Unit: 15: Subjunctive II

6. "As If" Clauses

In German, "as if" clauses are expressed by *als ob* or *als wenn* or *als* followed by the subjunctive form of the verb. For example,

Das Kind sieht aus, als ob es krank wäre.
 The child looks as if it were ill.

Der Manager tat, als wenn er entlassen worden wäre.
 The manager acted as if he had been fired.

Es schien, als hätten wir den ganzen Tag geschlafen.
 It seemed as if we had slept the whole day.

Unit: 15: Subjunctive II

7. Subjunctive II Forms of Modal Verbs

In **Unit 10** we dealt with the modal verbs, *dürfen*, *können*, *müssen*, *mögen*, *sollen* and *wollen* and we learned that the **lack** of an umlaut on conjugated forms of the first four was an indicator of simple past tense. When an umlaut **does** occur, that indicates the subjunctive II mood:

<i>dürfte</i>	would be allowed to / might
---------------	-----------------------------

<i>könnte</i>	would be able to / could
---------------	--------------------------

<i>müßte</i>	would have to
--------------	---------------

<i>möchte</i>	would like to
---------------	---------------

Sollte and *wollte* do not differ visually from their indicative simple past forms. They mean "should" or "would be supposed to," and "would want to," respectively.

Examples:

Dürften die Gefangenen jetzt nach Hause gehen, was würden sie zuerst essen?

If the prisoners were allowed to go home now, what would they eat first?

Wenn ich es wollte, dann würde ich es auch machen.

If I wanted to, I would just do it.

Unit: 16: Finishing touches

1. Objectives

In this unit you will learn how to:

- Correctly translate a number of “false friends.”
- Identify and translate a number of common idioms.
- Translate four common particles.
- Identify and translate commands in imperative mood.
- Identify and translate reflexive constructions that are functioning as a passive-voice equivalent.

Unit: 16: Finishing touches

2. False Friends

By this point in your experiences with German you will have noticed that, despite the existence of thousands of words which both look like and share the same meaning as English words, there are a few which look like English words but whose meanings are completely different. Visual similarities of other kinds can also be misleading. Here are the most common of these so-called “false friends” – words that are often confused:

FALSE FRIEND

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH

<i>aktuell</i> (current, up-to-date)	<i>eigentlich</i> (actual, actually)
--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

<i>also</i> (thus, therefore)	<i>auch</i> (also)
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<i>bald</i> (soon, shortly)	<i>kahl</i> (bald)
-----------------------------	--------------------

FALSE FRIEND	NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH
<i>bekommen</i> (to get, to receive)	<i>werden</i> (to become)
<i>erst</i> (only, not until)	(when used with time expressions It means “first” when used as an adjective: <i>das erste Teil</i> [the first part]).
<i>etwa</i> (approximately)	<i>etwas</i> (something)
<i>eventuell</i> (possibly, in that case)	<i>schließlich / endlich</i> (eventually)
<i>fast</i> (almost)	<i>fest</i> (firm, solid) or <i>schnell</i> (fast, quick)
<i>fehlen</i> (to be lacking or missing) – there is no one-word English equivalent	
<i>gelangen</i> (to arrive, to attain) (tip: regular verb!)	<i>gelingen</i> (to succeed) (tip: irregular verb!)
<i>der Rat</i> (advice, counsellor)	<i>die Ratte</i> (rat)
<i>reichen</i> (to reach, to suffice)	<i>riechen</i> (to smell, to reek)
<i>der Roman</i> (novel)	<i>der Römer</i> (Roman person)
<i>schon</i> (already, even)	<i>schön</i> (beautiful)
<i>wer</i> (who, whoever)	<i>wo</i> (where)
<i>wohl</i> (probably, indeed)	<i>gut</i> (well)

Unit: 16: Finishing touches

3. Some Common Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions

es gibt / es sind

In Unit 2 you learned about the idiom *es gibt* (there is / are). This is used in general statements such as:

Es gibt viele Leute in New York.

There are many people in New York.

When we are talking about a specific number of people / objects, then you will see the form *es sind* (there are):

Es sind zwanzig Studenten in diesem Zimmer.

There are twenty students in this room.

es

In both the above examples the pronoun *es* is translated as "there." Similar uses of it are:

Es geschah im Jahre 1990 ein Erdbeben in San Franzisko.

There occurred an earthquake in San Francisco in 1990.

Es spielte ein Kind in dem Garten.

There was a child playing in the garden.

In both of these examples we could ignore the *es* (there) and simply say "An earthquake occurred in San Francisco in 1990" and "A child was playing in the garden."

abhängen von (to depend on)

Es hängt davon ab, ob wir das Geld haben.

It depends upon whether we have the money.

Meine Urlaubspläne hängen vom Chef ab.

My vacation plans are contingent upon my boss.

sich befassen mit (to deal with)

Dieses Buch befaßt sich mit der Geschichte des Automobils.

This book deals with the history of the automobile.

es geht um (to be a matter / issue of)

Es geht um die Finanzen.

It is an issue of finances.

gelingen (to succeed)

Es ist mir gelungen, die Aufgabe zu beenden.

I succeeded in finishing the task.

Es ist den Engländern gelungen, über den Stillen Ozean zu segeln.

The Englishmen succeeded in sailing across the Pacific Ocean.

This verb is what we call an impersonal verb: the grammatical subject is *es*, and the verb's actor is in the dative case. We, however, ignore the *es* and translate the dative pronoun / noun as the subject.

sich handeln um (to be a matter of, to deal with)

Hier handelt es sich um das neue Modell.

Here we are dealing with the new model.

[or:] This has to do with the new model.

Es handelt sich darum, Geld zu verdienen.

It is a matter of earning money.

liegen an (to be due to / to be the cause of)

Das liegt an den Katastrophen in diesem Land.

That is due to the catastrophes in this country.

Es liegt daran, daß die Autofirma in die Verlustzone gerutscht ist.

The cause is that the auto company slid into the loss column.

denken an (to think about, to think of)

Haben Sie oft an Ihre Tante gedacht?

Did you often think about your aunt?

[or:] Has your aunt often come to mind?

Prepositions Used Idiomatically

In Unit 5 we listed the major prepositions and their most common meanings. You should have noticed by this point in the course that a preposition – just as in English – will **always** take on an idiomatic meaning when used with a certain verb or noun. Note the varied translations of *um* and *an* in the preceding examples. While it is a good idea to learn idiomatic expressions, you will be able to understand prepositions correctly only if you always consider the context of the sentence.

For example, in the following sentence *für* is best translated as “in” to fit our English idiom. You would first discover this by consulting your dictionary entry for *interessieren*.

Der Student interessiert sich für die Musik.

The student is interested in music.

Likewise, in the next sentence, *auf* is best translated as “for.” You would first learn that when you consult your dictionary entry for *warten*.

An der Straßenecke wartet der Vater auf seine Kinder.

The father waits for his children at the street corner.

Two examples of an idiomatic combination with a noun are *zum Wohl!* and *zu Hause* which you would find explained in your dictionary under *Wohl* and *Haus*, respectively.

When in doubt about the meaning of a preposition, consult the dictionary entry for the preposition’s object (noun) and/or the verb of the clause. You may see that the noun and/or verb (along with the preposition) together take on an idiomatic meaning when used in combination.

Unit: 16: Finishing touches

4. Particles

You will have seen and will continue to see in German-language texts the adverbs that are listed below. They are used often in German to add **shades** of meaning and emphasis to German sentences, and are not usually translatable with one-word equivalents. In fact, it is sometimes better to avoid trying to add a corresponding word to your translation. Instead, simply take the effect of these particles into consideration as you select the most appropriate translations of other words and phrases in the sentence.

auch also, even

doch really, nevertheless, but certainly, after all

ja certainly, to be sure

schon already, even

Unit: 16: Finishing touches

5. Imperative Mood

The imperative mood is used in forming commands, and can be recognized based on unusual word order, unusual verb forms, and / or an exclamation point at the end of the sentence. The verb will appear at the beginning of the sentence (as do English imperatives). In the second person singular (*du*-form), an **-e** is added to the stem of regular verbs as follows, although this **-e** may be omitted:

Bring mir den Salz! [or:] *Bringe mir den Salz!*
Bring me the salt!

If the stem of the verb ends in a **-d** or a **-t**, the final **-e** is never omitted. Verbs featuring a vowel change from an **e** to an **i** in the stem retain this change in the imperative, and omit the final **-e**. Second person plural (*ihr*-form) imperatives retain their present-tense forms. The formal *Sie*-form also is identical with the present tense, but *Sie*-imperatives include this pronoun immediately after the verb. Separable-prefix verbs retain the separation of stem and prefix. Study the following examples:

Finde mir meinen Hut!
Find me my hat!

Gib mir das Buch!
Give me the book!

Singt bitte lauter, Kinder!
Please sing louder, children!

Sprechen Sie bitte langsamer, Herr Schmidt.
Please speak more slowly, Mr. Schmidt.

Mach(e) das Fenster zu, Wolfgang!
Close the window, Wolfgang!

The verb *sein* is irregular in the imperative form, as the following commands indicate:

Sei nicht so hastig, Wolfgang!
Don't be so hasty, Wolfgang!

Seid nicht nervös, Kinder!
Don't be nervous, children!

Seien Sie ein bißchen rücksichtsvoller, Herr Schmidt.

Be a bit more considerate, Mr. Schmidt.

The first-person plural (“we”) imperative in German is simpler than its English counterpart. It corresponds to English statements beginning with “Let’s . . .”:

Lesen wir die Zeitung!

Let’s read the newspaper!

Fahren wir im Sommer nach Kalifornien!

Let’s drive to California this summer!

Unit: 16: Finishing touches

6. Reflexive Constructions as Substitutes for the Passive Voice

Certain reflexive forms may serve as substitutes for the passive voice. They may often be translated with the words “can be,” although there are also other possible translations:

Dieses Buch liest sich leicht.

This book can be read easily. [or:] This book is easy to read.

Dieser Satz übersetzt sich nicht!

This sentence cannot be translated. [or:] This sentence is untranslatable!

You may find the

Review Units 13-16 exercise more valuable now or as a later review opportunity.

Unit: Reference

1. Cardinal Numbers

0	null
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1	eins; ein/e
2	zwei
3	drei
4	vier
5	fünf
6	sechs
7	sieben
8	acht
9	neun
10	zehn
11	elf
12	zwölf
13	dreizehn
14	vierzehn
15	fünfzehn
16	sechzehn
17	siebzehn
18	achtzehn
19	neunzehn
20	zwanzig
21	einundzwanzig
22	zweiundzwanzig
30	dreiig
40	vierzig
50	fünfzig
60	sechzig

70	siebzig
80	achtzig
90	neunzig
100	hundert
101	hunderteins; -eine(r,s)
102	hundertzwei
110	hundertzehn
121	hunderteinundzwanzig
200	zweihundert
700	siebenhundert
1.000	tausend
1.001	tausendeins; -eine(r,s)
2.000	zweitausend
100.000	hunderttausend
1.000.000	eine Million
2.000.000	zwei Millionen
1.000.000.000	eine Milliarde

When number words modify a noun, the absence of an adjective ending indicates that the number itself is singular, whereas numbers do get appropriate plural adjective endings when the number word is used in a plural sense:

Mehr als tausend Vögel fielen vom Himmel.
More than a thousand birds fell from the sky.

Hunderttausende Vögel flogen über das Meer.
Hundreds of thousands of
birds flew over the sea.

Unit: Reference

2. Ordinal Numbers

These counting words usually function as modifiers of a noun, so they will appear with the appropriate ending to match case, gender, and number of the noun being counted.

<i>erst-</i>	first
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<i>zweit-</i>	second
---------------	--------

<i>dritt-</i>	third
---------------	-------

<i>viert-</i>	fourth
---------------	--------

<i>fünft-</i>	fifth
---------------	-------

<i>sechst-</i>	sixth
----------------	-------

<i>siebt-</i>	seventh
---------------	---------

<i>acht-</i>	eighth
--------------	--------

<i>neunt-</i>	ninth
---------------	-------

<i>zehnt-</i>	tenth
---------------	-------

<i>elft-</i>	eleventh
--------------	----------

<i>fünfzehnt-</i>	fifteenth
-------------------	-----------

<i>zwanzigst-</i>	twentieth
-------------------	-----------

<i>einundzwanzigst-</i>	twenty-first
-------------------------	--------------

<i>dreiigst-</i>	thirtieth
-------------------	-----------

<i>hundertst-</i>	hundredth
-------------------	-----------

<i>hunderterst-</i>	hundred and first
---------------------	-------------------

<i>hundertzehnt-</i>	hundred and tenth
----------------------	-------------------

<i>zweihundertst-</i>	two hundredth
-----------------------	---------------

<i>tausendst-</i>	thousandth
-------------------	------------

<i>millionst-</i>	millionth
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Unit: Reference

3. Fractions

<i>die Hälfte / halb</i>	half
<i>eineinhalb / anderthalb</i>	one and a half
<i>zwei einhalb</i>	two and a half
<i>ein Drittel</i>	one third
<i>ein Viertel</i>	one fourth, a quarter
<i>ein Fünftel</i>	one fifth
<i>ein Sechstel</i>	one sixth
<i>ein Siebtel</i>	one seventh
<i>ein Achtel</i>	one eighth
<i>ein Neuntel</i>	one ninth
<i>fünf fünf Sechstel</i>	five and five sixths
<i>sieben Zwölftel</i>	seven twelfths
<i>ein Hundertstel</i>	one hundredth
<i>ein Tausendstel</i>	one thousandth

Unit: Reference

4. Calculations

+	<i>und; plus</i>
=	<i>ist; gleich; macht</i> <i>Eins und eins macht zwei. (1+1=2)</i>
-	<i>minus; weniger</i>

×	<i>mal</i> <i>Vier mal sechs gleich vierundzwanzig. (4 × 6 = 24)</i>
÷	<i>geteilt durch</i> (divided by)
3 ²	<i>drei hoch zwei</i> (three to the second power)
√	<i>(Quadrat)wurzel</i> (square) root

Unit: Reference

5. Weights and Measurements

<i>das Kilogramm</i>	<i>1 Kilogramm = 1000 Gramm</i>
<i>der Pfund</i>	<i>1 Pfund = 500 Gramm</i> Note: 1 pound (American) = 454 grams
<i>der/das Liter</i>	liter
<i>der/das Meter, Millimeter, Zentimeter</i>	meter, milli-/centimeter,
<i>Kubikzentimeter, Kubikmeter</i>	cubic centimeter, cubic meter
<i>Quadratmeter, Quadratkilometer</i>	square meter, square kilometer

Masculine and neuter nouns describing measurement, number, or weight are always expressed in the singular:

Ich hätte gern drei Pfund Kaffee.
I would like three pounds of coffee.

Zwei Glas Apfelsaft, bitte!
Two glasses of apple juice, please.

Er trank zwei Liter Bier.
He drank two liters of beer.

Unit: Reference

6. Times

<i>die Stunde (Stunden)</i>	hour
<i>die Minute (Minuten)</i>	minute
<i>die Sekunde (Sekunden)</i>	second
<i>drei Stunden, dreiundvierzig Minuten und zwölf Sekunden</i>	3 hours 43 minutes and 12 seconds
<i>eine halbe Stunde</i>	a half hour; half an hour
<i>eine Viertelstunde</i>	a quarter of an hour
<i>eine Dreiviertelstunde</i>	three quarters of an hour
<i>Wie spät ist es?/ Wieviel Uhr ist es?</i>	What time is it?
<i>es ist ein/zwei/usw. Uhr</i>	it's one/two/etc. o'clock
<i>es ist zehn (Minuten) nach zwei</i>	it's ten (minutes) after two
<i>es ist zehn (Minuten) vor zwei</i>	it's ten (minutes) before two
<i>es ist Viertel nach zwei</i>	it's a quarter after two
<i>es ist Viertel vor zwei</i>	it's a quarter of two
<i>es ist halb zwei</i>	it's one thirty
<i>es ist zwei Uhr morgens/nachmittags</i>	it's two o'clock in the morning/afternoon
<i>es ist sieben Uhr morgens/abends</i>	it's seven o'clock in the morning/evening
<i>um elf Uhr</i>	at eleven o'clock
<i>gegen elf Uhr</i>	at around/about eleven o'clock
<i>um Punkt vier Uhr</i>	at four o'clock on the dot
<i>um Mitternacht</i>	at midnight
<i>um wieviel Uhr</i>	at what time

Unit: Reference

7. Dates

MONTHS

Januar January
Jänner January
Februar February
März March
April April
Mai May
Juni June
Juli July
August August
September September
Oktober October
November November
Dezember December

DAYS OF THE WEEK

Sonntag Sunday
Montag Monday
Dienstag Tuesday
Mittwoch Wednesday
Donnerstag Thursday
Freitag Friday
Samstag Saturday
Sonnabend Saturday

der 1. August August first, the first of August

am 1. August on the first of August

am Montag on Monday

Montags on Mondays

am Montag, d. 1. August on Monday, the first of August

vom 12. bis (zum) 14. August from the 12th to the 14th of August

Den wievielten haben wir heute? / Welches Datum haben wir heute?

What is today's date?

Heute haben wir den 1. August / Heute ist der 1. August

Today is the first of August.

neunzehnhundertzweiundneunzig 1992

die Zwanziger the 20s (a particular decade within a century)

im 20. Jahrhundert in the twentieth century

v.Chr. B.C.

n.Chr. A.D.

In German, unlike English, dates don't always need to be introduced by a preposition:

Ich komme Montag.
I'm coming on Monday.

Sie ist 1985 geboren.
She was born in 1985.

Unit: Reference

8. Syntax Terminology

Regarding elementary syntax terms please see "[Two Things You Will Need to Succeed](#)." The following higher-level syntax concepts will help you recognize larger-scale units of meaning when reading a German sentence.

Noun Phrase

The group of words that modify a noun. The value to you of recognizing noun phrases is the certainty you gain that words **outside** of the noun phrase cannot be modifiers of this noun, and vice versa, everything inside applies to this noun, not to some other part of the sentence. The leftmost word in a noun phrase is often an article (definite or indefinite). This concept is introduced in this textbook in the [Unit 4 section on adjective endings](#). The underlined words are the noun phrases in the following examples:

Der starke Junge ißt einen Apfel.
Viele Bäume gehören zu diesem wohl überstrapazierten Förster.

In all cases the rightmost word will be the noun itself, although [genitive noun chains](#) are in fact rightward extensions of the noun phrase, simply adding another sub-noun phrase. Example:

Gesunde Kinder des vorigen Jahrhunderts aßen mindestens wöchentlich zwei Äpfel.

You can alternatively read genitive noun chains as independent noun phrases, to help you keep straight the relationships between the parts of the larger genitive noun chain:

Gesunde Kinder des vorigen Jahrhunderts essen mindestens wöchentlich zwei Äpfel.

Extended adjective constructions are just extensions of the noun phrase within the “normal” boundaries of the noun phrase. Example:

Gebäude der Hauptstädte vieler Länder leiden unter schwereren, saurem Regen zuzuschreibenden Schäden als Gebäude in anderen Städten.

Again, you can choose to further analyze the noun phrases within these extended noun phrases, to help avoid confusion:

Gebäude der Hauptstädte vieler Länder leiden unter schwereren, saurem Regen zuzuschreibenden Schäden als Gebäude in anderen Städten.

Even amidst such complexity, you can still rely on each noun phrase as a completely enclosed unit of meaning, not to be muddled with things outside of it.

Prepositional Phrase

This topic is covered in the Unit 5 section **Prepositional Phrases**. Essentially they are just a preposition plus its associated noun phrase (see above).

Unit: Practice

Review Units 1-4

You should be able to translate these German texts after completing Units 1 through 4 of this textbook. English translations of these exercises follow below for you to check your work.

1. Wen haben Sie gern? – Meine Verwandten habe ich gern, aber auch viele andere Menschen.
2. Das Auto hatten die Nachbarn aber gestern noch nicht. – Nein, das haben sie erst seit heute.
erst seit heute – just since today
3. Du hast 10 Franken, ich habe 20 Franken, zusammen haben wir also 40 Franken. – Nein, ihr habt nur 30 Franken, du bist dumm!
der Franken – Swiss franc (unit of currency)
4. Wen haben wir da? – Das ist ein Freund. Er war schon lange nicht mehr hier.
schon lange – for a long time

5. Die Sterne, die Sonne, der Mond und die Planeten sind Himmelskörper. Die Erde hat einen Mond und andere Planeten haben viele Monde.
6. Die Frequenz des Tones beträgt 440 Hz.
7. Die Seiten eines Quadrats bilden vier rechte Winkel.
8. Der Inhalt des Buches zeigt den Fachleuten eine Lösung des Problems.
9. Die Nutzung der Sonnenenergie verschafft der Umwelt eine Entlastung von Kohlenmonoxid und -dioxid.
die Entlastung – relief (from a load or stress), exoneration
10. Die Leute fuhrten auf der Autobahn, verbrachten etwas Zeit in der Stadt, kauften einige Sachen, tranken ein Glas Mineralwasser, und kamen endlich nach sechs Stunden wieder nach Hause.
11. Jeder Mensch in dem Zimmer wußte solche Tatsachen, aber manche da gaben es nicht zu.
12. "Euer Haus kostete sicher viel zu viel" – dies sagte unser Onkel Wolfgang, als er das Zimmer verließ.
13. Ihre Nachbarn bewohnten ihre Wohnung drei Jahre lang, und dann verloren sie alles in der großen Flut.
14. Der Freundin der Schwester leiht der Student die Vorlesungsnotizen. Hoffentlich gibt sie dem Studenten die Vorlesungsnotizen vor der Prüfung wieder.
15. Eine Steigerung der Löhne stärkt die Kaufkraft der Konsumenten und gibt der Wirtschaft einen Impuls. Die Beschleunigung der Inflation ist nur eine Nebenerscheinung.
die Kaufkraft – buying power
16. Eine Senkung der Zinsrate bremst den Zufluß des Auslandskapitals. Dadurch fällt der Wechselkurs der Inlandswährung. Aber ein niedriger Wechselkurs bringt der Exportwirtschaft Zuwachs.
dadurch – thereby, that causes, which causes
17. Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist ein Bund von sechzehn Ländern. Sie hat ein Parlament, aber auch die Länder haben eigene Parlamente: jenes heißt Bundestag, diese heißen Landtage.
18. Der Vertrag legt die Verpflichtungen und Rechte aller Vertragspartner fest. Er führt außerdem die Bedingungen einer vorzeitigen Kündigung an.
19. Die Biographie des Autors zeigt dem Leser nur einen Teil der Komplexität literarischer Werke.
20. Die Romantiker verstanden das Leben als ein fortwährendes Dichten. Dies setzten sie der nüchternen Prosa ihrer Zeit entgegen.
die Romantiker – (here:) contributors to the Romantic period of German cultural history (late 18th–early 19th century); can be translated as "the Romantics"

Suggested Translations

1. Whom do you (formal) like? I like my relatives, but also many other people.

2. Yesterday the neighbors didn't have the car yet, though. – No, they just got it today. (They've only had it as of today).
3. You (familiar plural) have 10 francs, and I have 20 francs, so together we have 40 francs. – No, you (familiar plural) only have 30 francs, you (familiar singular) fool!
4. Whom have we here? – That's a friend. It's been a long time since he was here. (He hasn't been here for a long time).
5. The stars, the sun, the moon, and the planets are celestial bodies. The Earth has one moon and other planets have many moons.
6. The frequency of the tone is 440 Hz.
7. The sides of a square form four right angles.
8. The book's contents show the specialists a solution to the problem.
9. The use of solar energy lessens the burden of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide on the environment.
10. The people drove on the *Autobahn* (highway), spent some time in the city, bought some CDs, drank mineral water, and finally came back home after six hours.
11. Every person in the room knew such facts, but many there did not admit it.
12. "Surely your house cost much too much" – this is what Uncle Wolfgang said (when / as) he left the room.
13. (Her / their) neighbors (lived in / inhabited) their apartment for three years, and then they lost everything in the great flood.
14. The student is lending the lecture notes to his sister's friend. (Hopefully / I hope) she's giving the lecture notes back to the student before the test.
15. A wage increase strengthens the consumers' buying power and gives the economy a boost. Increased inflation is only a secondary symptom.
16. A decrease in the interest rate slows the influx of foreign capital. The exchange rate of domestic currency is thereby lowered. But a low exchange rate brings growth to the export economy.
17. The Federal Republic of Germany is a federation of 16 states. It has a parliament, and each state has its own parliament. The former is called the "Bundestag," the latter are called "Landtage."
18. The contract establishes the duties and rights of all signatories (of all contracting parties). Along with this, it indicates the conditions for premature termination.
19. Biographical information about the author gives the reader only a partial view of the complexity of literary works.
20. The Romantics understood life as a continuous poetic writing. They opposed this to the sober prose of their time.

Unit: Practice

Review Units 5-8

You should be able to translate these German texts after completing Units 1 through 8 of this textbook. English translations of these exercises follow below for you to check your work.

1. Wo in Deutschland regnet es am meisten? Nicht in Hamburg, sondern in München.
2. "Hunger ist der beste Koch" und "Das höchste ist aber die Liebe" sind Sprichwörter. Dieses sagt Klaus gern, aber jenes sagt er am liebsten.
3. Sein singender Vogel stört mich viel, aber dein bellender Hund stört mich am meisten. Ich werde unbedingt mehr als je zuvor schreien, wenn ich diesen Lärm nochmals höre!
4. Immer mehr Leute werden krank – es wird wohl eine neue Grippe sein, die jetzt herumgeht.
5. Das Gelernte ist natürlich nicht immer richtig, und das Geschriebene nicht immer wahr.
6. Die Abhandlung behandelt die Handhabung radioaktiven Materials und seine Lagerung. Sie stellt nach wie vor ein großes Problem dar.
7. Mit der Auflösung des Subjekts in der Moderne löste sich auch die Auffassung vom Autor als Originalgenie auf. Parallel verlief die Loslösung von der Philosophie des Idealismus.
8. Zwischen 1988 und 1998 hat die EU ihre Exporte in die mittel- und osteuropäischen Beitrittsländer um das 6,5fache, die Importe um das 4,5fache gesteigert.
das Beitrittsland – country joining or applying to join the EU
9. Weil die Umwelt-Beamten in Frankreich auf die Einhaltung der Vogelschutzrichtlinie dringen, protestieren die französischen Jäger.
10. Die größten Maßhalter unter den Spülmaschinen, Kühl- und Gefrierschränken verbrauchen heute fast 40 Prozent weniger Strom als ihre Vorfahren vor etwa zehn Jahren.
Maß halten – to act, behave, or function in moderation
11. Bei der Herstellung dieses Computers hat man keine Kosten gescheut und den neuesten Stand der Forschung zur Anwendung gebracht.
12. Nachdem der Wechselkurs des Dollar weiter gesunken war, haben sich die Exporte erhöht. Das bestehende Handelsdefizit ist zwar kleiner geworden, man hat es aber noch nicht ganz beseitigt.
das Handelsdefizit – trade deficit
13. Das Problem ihrer Beseitigung außer acht lassend, hat die Produktion von Giftgas kommenden Generationen viele Probleme bereitet.
außer acht lassen – to leave out of consideration

14. In der Bundesrepublik, im Vergleich mit anderen EG-Ländern, stehen die Betriebe bei weitem am kürzesten während der Ferien still.
15. Kommunikation, auch politische, ist an Sprache und sprachlich vermittelte Welterfahrung und Weltdeutung gebunden.
die Weltdeutung – interpretation of the world
16. Nachdem man die Grenze zwischen der DDR und der BRD geöffnet hatte, ist die weitere Entwicklung der Ereignisse den Händen der überraschten Politiker entglitten.
entgleiten (entgleitet, entglitt, (ist) entglitten) – to slip away from, to escape control from
17. Studenten, die schon eine andere Fremdsprache gelernt haben, werden sich schon mit diesem Thema beschäftigt haben.
18. Bislang hatten die Statistischen Landesämter Verkehrsunfälle nur nach dem Alter der Fahrzeugführer oder nach den Lichteverhältnissen ausgewertet, die zum Zeitpunkt des Unfalls herrschten.
der Fahrzeugführer – driver of a vehicle
19. Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft (AG) für Frauen in Forschung und Lehre unterstützt die Kommission für Gleichbehandlung, deren Vorsitzende eine Frau aus der AG ist, und den Arbeitskreis für Gleichbehandlungsfragen, deren Vorsitzende ebenfalls ein Mitglied der AG ist.
die Kommission – the commission
die Gleichbehandlung – equal treatment
das Arbeitskreis – working council, working circle, working group (compare *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*)
20. Die Forscher veränderten zunächst das Viren-Erbmaterial. Dieses schleusten sie in Affennierenzellen ein, mit deren Hilfe die kompletten neuen Viren entstanden.

Suggested Translations

1. Where in Germany does it rain the most? Not in Hamburg, but rather in Munich.
2. "Hunger is the best cook" and "But the highest thing is love" are sayings. Klaus likes to say the latter, but he prefers to say the former.
3. His singing bird disturbs me quite a bit, but your barking dog disturbs me most. If I hear this noise one more time I will definitely scream more than ever before!
4. More and more people are getting sick – there is probably a new strain of flu going around now.
5. That which is learned is, of course, not always right, and that which is written not always true.
6. The treatment (treatise, article) treats the handling of radioactive material and its storage. Now as then, it presents a big problem.
7. With the dissolution of the subject in the modern age came also the dissolution of the conception of the author as originary (or original) genius. Parallel to this occurred the disengagement from the philosophy of Idealism.

8. Between 1988 and 1998 the EU increased its exports into the potential EU-member countries in Eastern and Central Europe by 6.5 times, and its imports by 4.5 times.
9. Because the environmental officials in France insist on enforcing the directive for the protection of birds, the French hunters are protesting.
10. Among dishwashing machines, refrigerators and freezers, the most energy-efficient utilize almost 40 percent less electricity today than their predecessors of ten years ago.
11. In the production (manufacture) of this computer they spared no cost and took advantage of the latest research.
12. After the exchange rate of the dollar had sunk further, the exports increased. The existing trade deficit has indeed shrunk, but they have not yet obviated it entirely.
13. Leaving aside the problem of its disposal, the production of poison gas has left coming generations many problems.
14. In the Federal Republic, compared to other EC countries, companies halt production during holidays by far the least.
15. Communication, including political communication, is bound with language and linguistically mediated experience and interpretation of the world.
16. After they had opened the border between the GDR and the FRG, further development of events eluded the surprised politicians' grasp.
17. Students who have already learned another foreign language will have already dealt with this topic.
18. Up to now, the State Statistical Offices had evaluated traffic accidents only in terms of the age of the driver or the light conditions prevailing at the time of the accident.
19. The Working Group for Women in Research and Teaching supports the Commission for Equal Treatment, whose chair is a woman from the Working Group, as well as the Working Council on Equal Treatment Issues, which is also chaired by a member of the Working Group.
20. The researchers first changed the virus' gene material, which they then introduced into monkey kidney cells, which in turn allowed the complete new viruses to reproduce.

Unit: Practice

Review Units 9-12

You should be able to translate these German texts after completing Units 1 through 12 of this textbook. English translations of these exercises follow below for you to check your work.

1. Wir haben nichts machen können, weil uns die Zeit fehlte. Um die Aufgabe fertig schreiben zu können, brauchen wir einfach viel mehr Zeit.
2. Hans hatte eigentlich etwas ganz anderes machen wollen, als der Abend anfang. Er wollte zu Hause sitzen und lesen, anstatt ins Kino zu gehen.
3. Worüber sprechen die Leute? Ein Mann ist aus dem Restaurant gerannt, ohne seine Rechnung zu bezahlen.
4. Wenn man beide Filme des Regisseurs vergleicht, ist es fast unglaublich, daß der erste Film von demselben Regisseur gedreht worden ist wie der zweite.
5. Der Teig für frische Brötchen war vorgeformt und tiefgefroren von großen Nahrungsmittelkonzernen angeliefert worden und wurde in elektronisch gesteuerten Öfen fertig ausgebacken.
6. Das Europäische Parlament wird zwar seit 1979 von den Bürgern der Mitgliedstaaten direkt gewählt, verfügt aber nicht über die Befugnisse moderner nationalstaatlicher Parlamente, denen Gesetzgebung, Budgetrecht, Regierungsbildung und Regierungskontrolle zustehen.
die Gesetzgebung – legislation, the making of law
7. Gegen die Regeln des Sportverbandes wurden in den letzten Jahren auf einigen Turnieren Geldpreise vergeben. Es soll aber künftig verhindert werden, daß Veranstalter, die Preisgelder aussetzen möchten, gezwungen sind, sich mit ihren Turnieren außerhalb des Verbandes zu bewegen.
Preisgelder aussetzen – to offer, establish, or underwrite prize monies
8. Als Quelle von Nutzholz wird die Buche, von der sich etymologisch das Wort "Buch" herleitet, in der Möbelindustrie ebenso geschätzt wie bei den Eisfabrikanten, die ihr Holz gern als Stiel verwenden – schönes Ende für einen der bewundernswertesten, aber auch rigorosesten Überlebenskünstler unter den Bäumen.
der Überlebenskünstler – survival artist
9. Damit in der landwirtschaftliche Produktion Vermischungen mit genetisch manipulierten Produkten verhindert werden können, ist Warenfließtrennung zwischen Lebens- und Futtermitteln gefordert worden.
die Warenfließtrennung – (consider *Ware*, *Fluß*, and *Trennung* in this context of economic/business supply channels)
das Futtermittel – animal feed
10. In aller Stille hat sich das Verteidigungsministerium von dem Versprechen verabschiedet, den Tieffluglärm mit Hilfe neuartiger Flugsimulatoren zu verringern.
11. Ursprünglich wollte sich das Verteidigungsministerium die Verlagerung von Tiefflugausbildung mehr als eine halbe Milliarde Euro kosten lassen.
12. Mehr als 3000 denkmalgeschützte Gebäude hat die einstige preußische Beamten- und Garnisonstadt Potsdam immer noch vorzuweisen, obwohl sie in den letzten Tagen des Krieges schrecklichen Bombardements ausgeliefert war.
denkmalgeschützt – classified as a historical monument
die Garnisonstadt – garrison town

13. Die sogenannte "Rakete" aus der Schule – ein Klimaanlage, der von den Schülern selber entworfen und gebaut wurde – läßt sich leicht dorthin transportieren, wo sie gebraucht wird. Dabei wird sie nicht mehr kosten als andere Klimaanlagen: rund 2.000 Euro.
14. Das Gemeinschaftsrecht wahrt der Gerichtshof in Luxemburg, der seine Aufgabe aber eher darin sieht, die Mitgliedstaaten auf Integrationskurs zu halten, als die Gemeinschaftsorgane in ihre Schranken zu weisen.
15. Daraus folgt zuallererst, daß die notwendige Parlamentarisierung der EG von einer deutlicheren Kompetenzabgrenzung zwischen der Gemeinschaft und den Mitgliedstaaten begleitet werden muß.
die Kompetenzabgrenzung – limiting of jurisdiction, definition of boundaries of authority
16. Nachdem er die alte Wasserburg von seinem Freund Knobelsdorff hatte umbauen lassen, genoß der Kronprinz sein Schloß Rheinsberg, "diesen Ort der Studie, das Heim der Freundschaft und Ruhe."
die Wasserburg – castle surrounded by a moat
Knobelsdorff – personal name
Rheinsberg – place name
17. Vor über 200 Jahren ließ Friedrich II dieses Sumpfbgebiet des Oderflusses trockenlegen, ein Jahrhundertwerk, auf das er mit Recht stolz war.
Friedrich II – Frederick the Great, 1712–1786
der Oderfluß – the Oder river in Germany
18. Der Konzertmeister entscheidet in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Dirigenten und den Stimmführern über das Programm, wobei – und das ist der große Unterschied – nicht selten Werke aus seiner Feder stammen.
der Stimmführer – orchestra section principal, "first chair"
19. Wußttest du schon davon Bescheid, daß der Verleger doch zur Buchmesse kommen wird?
20. Im Hochhaus in Wiesbaden, in der Zweigstelle in Berlin, und in Büros in Düsseldorf und Bonn ermitteln 3300 Mitarbeiter, darunter Volkswirte und Mathematiker, die Zahlen, die als Statistik den Durchblick möglich machen sollen.

Suggested Translations

1. We (have not been / were not) able to do anything because we had no time. In order to be able to finish writing the assignment, we simply need more time.
2. Hans had actually wanted to do something completely different at the beginning of the evening. He wanted to sit at home and read instead of going to the movies.
3. What are the people talking about? A man ran out of the restaurant without paying his bill.
4. If one compares both of the director's films, it is almost unbelievable that the first film was made by the same director as the second.

5. The dough for fresh rolls had been delivered, pre-formed and deep-frozen, by large foodstuff companies, and was baked (to completion) in electronically controlled ovens.
6. Since 1979, the European Parliament has indeed been elected directly by the citizens of the member states, but it does not have the power of the modern national parliaments, which have control over the passage of laws, the budget, and government formation and operation.
7. Against the rules of the sporting association, cash prizes were awarded at several tournaments in recent years. In the future, however, it will be less likely that organizers who wish to offer cash prizes are forced into presenting their tournaments independently from the association.
8. As a source of utilizable timber, the beech tree, from which the word "book" is derived etymologically, is treasured in the furniture industry as much as by ice cream manufacturers, who like to use its wood as a stirring rod – a contemptible end for one of the most admirable as well as most rigorous survival artists among trees.
9. In order to be able to avoid mixtures with genetically manipulated products in agricultural production, separation between supply channels of food for human and animal consumption has been urged.
10. Without announcing it, the Defense Ministry (went back / reneged) on its promise to diminish the noise from low-flying planes with the help of new flight simulators.
11. The Defense Ministry was originally prepared to spend more than a half billion euro to change the location of low-altitude flight training.
12. The former official- and garrison-city of Potsdam can still boast of more than 3,000 buildings which are protected as historical monuments, even though it suffered horrible bombardments in the last days of the war.
13. The so-called "rocket" from the school – an air conditioner designed and built by the pupils themselves – can be easily transported to the place where it is needed. At the same time it will not cost more than other air conditioners: around 2,000 euro.
14. The court in Luxemburg guarantees the communal law, but sees its task more in keeping the member states on a course of integration than in putting the communal bodies in their place.
15. From this it follows first and foremost that the necessary parliamentarization of the EC must be accompanied by a clearer delimitation of authority and jurisdiction between the Community and the member states.
16. After he had had his friend Knobelsdorff rebuild the old Wasserburg, the crown prince enjoyed his Rheinsberg Castle, "this place of study, the home of friendship and peace."

17. Over two hundred years ago, Frederick the Second had this swampland of the Oder River drained, a (major / landmark) achievement of which he was rightfully proud.
18. Working with the conductor and the section leaders, the concertmaster decides about the program to be played, whereby – and here lies the big difference – it is not rare that he has written the works.
19. Did you already know that the publisher is coming to the book fair after all?
20. In the high-rise in Wiesbaden, in the branch office in Berlin, and in offices in Düsseldorf and Bonn, 3,300 employees, among them economists and mathematicians, investigate the numbers which, in the form of statistics, are supposed to make insight possible.

Unit: Practice

Review Units 13-16

You should be able to translate these German texts after completing Units 1 through 16 of this textbook. English translations of these exercises follow below for you to check your work.

1. Laß mich jetzt in Ruhe!
2. Fragen Sie mich nichts darüber, Herr Schmidt!
3. Diese Tür öffnet sich nicht. Gib mir meine Schlüssel!
4. Vor allem wäre es wichtig, jetzt eine verantwortliche Umweltpolitik zu entwickeln, bevor es zu spät wird.
5. Es bleibt noch dieser neue Lyriker aus Niedersachsen zu entdecken. Jetzt ist eine Anthologie von ihm erschienen, die – auf Weisung des Autors – mit dem neuesten Schaffen beginnt und am Anfang seiner Karriere endet.
6. Nach den Auftragseingängen, einem wichtigen Indikator für die künftige Beschäftigungslage, könnte sich der Abschwung noch verschlimmern.
der Auftragseingang – order entry, receipt from orders
7. Im Herbst des letzten Jahres gelang es dem Romancier ein triumphaler Einzug in die Auslagen der deutschen Buchläden.
die Auslage – display
8. Die entlang des Rheins sich befindenden Wasserwerke waren diejenigen, die zuerst Alarm schlugen, weil sie das Wasser nicht mehr zu Trinkqualität aufbereiten konnten.
Alarm schlagen – to raise / sound the alarm
9. Die Zuhörer hörten den von der Regierung eingeladenen Sänger singen, ohne ihn ein einziges Mal mit Beifall zu unterbrechen.

10. Die Politiker meinten, viel Behutsamkeit sei nötig, um das Vertrauen zu schaffen, ohne das eine globale Umweltpolitik nicht auskommen könne.
11. Mit Blick auf die Abstimmung sagte der Kandidat, daß das Scheitern nicht so schlimm sei. Schlimm sei nur, nichts versucht zu haben.
12. Aus diesem elfstelligen Code ließe sich dann nachträglich Hubraum oder Pferdestärke der Unfallfahrzeuge entschlüsseln.
elfstellig – eleven-digit
13. Die Buche ist mittlerweile, wie der aus 7000 Wissenschaftlern, Forstwirtschaftlern, Waldbesitzern und anderen Freunden des Waldes bestehende Forstverein verkündete, stärker als jede andere Baumart, etwa Eiche und Kiefer, zu Schaden gekommen.
14. Mit Hilfe einer in Köln gezeigten, großangelegten Foto- und Textdokumentation (Titel: "Das langsame Sterben des Waldes"), für die Förster Möhring mit seinem halbmeterlangen Teleobjektiv regelmäßig die Kronen sterbender Bäume fotografiert hat, suchen die beiden Aktivisten nachzuweisen, daß eine fehlerhafte Methodik der behördlichen Schadensermittler zu Fehlinterpretationen und damit zu unrealistisch günstigen Bewertungen führt.
Möhring – personal name
15. Nach dem Autor des Artikels hätten Bewunderer seit jeher die Stadt gerühmt. Als "die schönste der Erde" habe Alexander von Humboldt Salzburg im 19. Jahrhundert gepriesen, Franz Schubert habe von einem "himmlischen Tal" geschwärmt, und Hugo von Hofmannsthal sagte, daß die Schönheit dieser Stadt unantastbar dastehe. Heute aber, behauptet ein Kandidat, zerstöre sich die Stadt. Die Altstadt sei durch Spekulation gedroht.
16. Skeptiker gäben zu bedenken, daß Aluminium erheblich teurer wäre als Stahl, dazu ökologisch bedenklich wegen der gewaltigen Energiemengen, welche die Umwandlung des Rohstoffs Bauxit in brauchbares Aluminium verschlänge.
17. Der Bundesbank, per Gesetz verpflichtet, vorrangig für Preis- und Währungsstabilität zu sorgen, bliebe wohl nur eine Reaktion: noch weiter rauf mit den Zinsen, ein neuer Dreh an der Rezessionsspirale, in Deutschland und weltweit.
18. Auf einem Symposium in München brachte der Autor Cees Nooteboom seine Haltung auf den Punkt: "Schriftsteller sind Menschen, die über Länder schreiben, die in Wirklichkeit nicht existieren, oder die Länder, die wohl existieren, mit Bergen ausstatten, die es in Wirklichkeit nicht gibt."
19. Das potentielle Mißverständnis ist Methode in seinem Roman; "polyinterpretabel" solle ein gutes Buch sein, proklamiert der Literat und erinnert an ein Bild von Umberto Eco: Je mehr Interpretationen möglich sind, desto besser läuft die Maschine Buch.
Umberto Eco – Italian philosopher and author 1932–
20. Die Phantasie sei schließlich die Macht, die bewirke, "daß es sich zwischen unseren beiden unendlichen Abwesenheiten hier auf Erden aushalten läßt."

Suggested Translations

1. Leave me alone (in peace) now!
2. Don't ask me anything about it, Mr. Schmidt!
3. This door doesn't open (isn't opening). Give me my keys!
4. Above all, it would be important to develop a responsible environmental policy now, before it gets too late.
5. What remains is to discover is this new poet from Lower Saxony. Now an anthology of his works has appeared which – at the author's behest – begins with his most recent creations and ends with works from the beginning of his career.
6. According to ordering records, an important indicator of the future employment situation, the recession could get even worse.
7. The (works of) this novelist succeeded in a triumphant march into the German bookstore displays in the fall of last year.
8. The waterworks located along the Rhein were the ones which first sounded the alarm because they could no longer purify the water to drinkable / potable quality.
9. The listeners heard the singer invited by the government sing without once interrupting him with applause.
10. The politicians thought that much caution is necessary in order to create the trust without which a global environmental policy cannot succeed.
11. With an eye to the vote, the candidate said that failing is not so bad. Bad is only to have tried nothing.
12. From (utilizing) this eleven-digit code, the cubic capacity or horsepower of the vehicle involved in the accident could be deciphered (ascertained) after the fact.
13. As the Forest Society, comprised of 7000 scientists, forest economists, woodlands owners and other supporters announced, the beech has meanwhile been damaged more than any other type of tree, for example oak and pine.
14. Utilizing an impressive photo and text documentation, which was exhibited in Cologne (Title: "The Slow Death of the Forest") and for which Forester Möhring regularly photographed the tops of dying trees with his half-meter-long telephoto lens, both activists are attempting to prove that erroneous methodology is leading government damage overseers to false interpretations and with that to unrealistically optimistic assessments.
15. According to the author of the article, admirers have always praised the city. In the 19th century, Alexander von Humboldt lauded Salzburg as "the most beautiful city on Earth," Franz Schubert swooned about a "heavenly valley," and Hugo von Hofmannsthal said that the city's beauty was sacrosanct. Today, however, one candidate maintains, the city is destroying itself. The old section of the city is threatened by speculation.

16. Skeptics would voice the concern that aluminum would be much more expensive than steel; in addition it would pose ecological problems because of the large amounts of energy which would be consumed in transforming the raw material bauxite into utilizable aluminum.
17. There would remain only one reaction for the Federal Bank, obligated by law especially to secure the stability of prices and currency: raise the interest rates again, one more turn on the spiral of recession in Germany and worldwide.
18. At a symposium in Munich, the author Cees Nooteboom summed up his stance thusly: "Writers are people who write about countries which do not exist in reality, or who give to countries which probably do exist mountains which don't."
19. Potential misunderstanding is a method in his novel; the man of letters proclaims that a good book should be "polyinterpretable," and reminds us of an image of Umberto Eco's: the more possible interpretations, the better runs the machine that is the book.
20. Finally, fantasy is the power which has as its effect "that we can endure that life on Earth which we have between both of our infinite absences."



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